



BAKU MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Aid for Trade Roadmap for SPECA Ministerial Conference
Baku, Azerbaijan, 1-2 December 2010

We, the high representatives of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, gathered in Baku, Azerbaijan for the regional Ministerial Conference on Aid-for-Trade Roadmap for SPECA¹, held from 1 to 2 December 2010,

Recognizing the critical role of trade as an engine of economic growth and human development, and the advantages of increasing intra-regional trade among SPECA countries as well as trade between these countries and the rest of the world,

Taking note with appreciation of the serious efforts by the Governments of SPECA countries in the area of trade development, and of the continued support provided by specialized regional and international development organisations and donor agencies,

Having considered the strengths and weaknesses of the SPECA countries in the areas of productive capacity, export promotion, trade infrastructure, rules and regulations, processes and procedures, as identified in the Regional and National Reviews of Aid for Trade prepared by UNDP as background information for this conference,

Recalling the basic tenets of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Aid for Trade initiative, and particularly its emphasis on supporting the efforts of developing countries, including with economies in transition, and least developed countries to build their productive capacity, trade infrastructure and the necessary legal and institutional framework for capitalizing on emerging global and regional trade and development opportunities,

Expressing concern that some SPECA countries have, thus far, had limited benefit from the WTO Aid-for-Trade initiative,

Noting our high appreciation of the Aid-for-Trade Roadmap for SPECA Initiative and the support extended by international organizations and donor countries to this, first of its kind, broad inter-agency initiative,

¹SPECA is the United Nations Special Programme for Central Asia, Afghanistan and Azerbaijan which is supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). SPECA member countries are: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan,

Taking into account the key components proposed by the Aid-for-Trade Regional Review for guiding future Aid-for-Trade efforts, which are grouped under three priority areas: (i) Within-border supply-side measures; (ii) cross-border cooperation; and, (iii) the multi-lateral trading system,

Have adopted the following Declaration:

1. We reaffirm our commitment to raising the level of well-being of our peoples and of future generations.
2. We recognize the need for strengthening the productive capacity of our economies, promoting exports, enhancing trade facilitation, and supporting a more globally competitive trade environment in the SPECA region with a focus on poverty reduction.
3. We emphasize the necessity of taking targeted actions and measures to address existing weaknesses and bottlenecks to trade development, not only at the regional and national levels, but also to ensure more equitable development among the different regions within each country.
4. While noting that individual countries have their own specific needs and priorities, we agree on the following priority areas for trade development in the region:
 - I. Within-border supply-side measures**, at the country level, to raise the international competitiveness of the region's economies, enterprises, products and services. These measures could be grouped under three components: (i) Productive capacity and market development within selected sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing and tourism in the services sector, with a view to diversifying and increasing the value-added of exports; (ii) The establishment and/or reinforcement of existing trade support institutions and services so that they can effectively contribute to productive capacity development and increased exports of goods and services; (iii) Enhancement of the business environment through regulatory reforms, improved access to trade information and public/private sector cooperation.
 - II. Cross-border cooperation** to harness the potential for mutually beneficial trade among the SPECA countries and with other neighbours by improving: (i) Physical infrastructure; (ii) Institutional trade infrastructure, with a focus on trade facilitation; and, (iii) Market access.
 - III. Matters related to the multilateral trading system** to facilitate the beneficial integration of SPECA countries into the multilateral trading system by: (i) Building awareness and knowledge; (ii) Identifying common interests and acting on them; (iii) Consulting and cooperating on practical measures; and, (iv) Supporting SPECA countries during the process of their accession to the WTO, taking into account their development objectives, their trade facilitation efforts, and their specific needs as developing landlocked countries in transition to a market economy as well as, in the case of Afghanistan, the particular challenges associated with its vulnerable status as a landlocked, least developed country

5. We take note of the projects identified in the Action Matrices of the Aid-for-Trade Regional Review and National Aid-for-Trade Needs Assessments, and consider them as illustrative of the above-mentioned priority areas.
6. We call upon the specialized international organisations, development partners and donor countries to support the successful implementation of initiatives and measures that correspond to the above-mentioned areas and action matrices with technical assistance and financial resources.
7. We stress that international cooperation and assistance needs to be predictable and aligned with national priorities and channelled in ways that strengthen existing national and regional capacities.
8. To support all of the above and the regional Aid-for-Trade process, we call for the establishment of a SPECA Regional Aid-for-Trade Implementing and Monitoring Council. This Council would include major donors and implementing agencies with high-level national input being provided by the SPECA Project Working Group on Trade. The SPECA Regional Aid-for-Trade Implementing and Monitoring Council, in full consultation, coordination and cooperation with its national-level participants would:
 - a. Further develop the action matrices in the Aid-for-Trade Regional Review and the National Aid-for-Trade Needs Assessments.
 - b. Identify and prioritize projects corresponding to these action items, taking into full account project concepts notes distributed during this Ministerial Conference.
 - c. Actively pursue funding for those projects identified as priorities.
 - d. Encourage the exchange of information as well coordination among donors and implementing agencies in the region in order to best support priority actions.
9. In addition, we request that the above SPECA Regional Aid-for-Trade Implementing and Monitoring Council organize a major regional Aid- for-Trade donor conference within 18 months.
10. We express our resolve and commitment to engage in mutual consultations and cooperation, and engage with relevant international organizations, development partners and donor countries for the implementation of this Aid-For-Trade Road Map for SPECA.