



UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL ASIA (SPECA)

SPECA/WG-Trade/2021/EN/1

Sixteenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade
Hybrid (in person – International Hotel Tashkent - and online) session
16 November 2021

Agenda¹

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), are organizing the sixteenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade on 16 November 2021, before the 2021 SPECA Economic Forum *Sustainable Transport and Trade for Green and Inclusive Economy after the Pandemic* and the sixteenth session of the SPECA Governing Council (17-19 November 2021). The Working Group supports cross-border and regional cooperation for the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in Central Asia, notably for sustainable trade (SDG targets 17.10 and 17.11, etc.).

The session will review progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the *Ashgabat Initiative on reducing barriers to trade and transport using United Nations legal instruments, norms, standards, and recommendations while bolstering connectivity in the SPECA region*, and other SPECA deliverables:

- (1) collaboration among the SPECA countries in the WTO process and responses to the COVID-19 crisis,
- (2) SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy and Roadmap for its implementation,
- (3) further development and implementation of the Principles for Sustainable Trade in the subregion,
- (4) studies and recommendations on non-tariff barriers to trade in the subregion in the age of the pandemic; and
- (5) digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange, using the package of standards based on the UN/CEFACT Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model - support for implementation.

The Working Group will review national plans and progress in their implementation in the above areas. Participants are requested to contribute to the discussion with examples of their good practices, experience, and plans for regional cooperation under SPECA in the coming 2-3 years.

Target audience: trade policymakers from the SPECA countries; international development partners.

Mr. Abdurahmon Abdurahmonzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan and Chair of the SPECA Working Group on Trade and Mr. Badriddin Abidov, Deputy Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan will moderate this session. The overall objective is to foster exchange of experiences; mutual assistance to achieve trade facilitation, the trade-related SDGs, goals of the Ashgabat Initiative; SPECA Principles of Sustainable Trade, Trade Facilitation Strategy; public-private cooperation; and collaboration in the digitalization of trade and transport operations, aligned with UN standards.

¹ For information, please contact Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (e-mail: mario.apostolov@un.org; tel.: +41 22 9171134)

Time²

- 13:00 – 13:15
- Welcoming remarks (3-5 min each):
 - Moderators:
 - Mr. Abdurahmon Abdurahmonzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan, Chair of the SPECA WG on Trade
 - and Mr. Badriddin Abidov, Deputy Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan
 - Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECE
 - Ms. Rupa Chanda, Director of the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP
- 13:15 – 13:30 **Session 1: Report of the Chair of the SPECA WG on Trade**, including implementation of the recommendations of the Ashgabat Initiative and presentation of the publication of the 2019 SPECA events on connectivity, transport, and trade in the SPECA region
- 13:30 – 14:30 **Session 2: Regional trade policy cooperation** on sustainable trade; the WTO process, non-tariff measures, building back better after the COVID-19 pandemic
- Presentations:**
- *Framework for regional cooperation in the WTO process*
Mr. Badriddin Abidov, Deputy Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan
 - *Assessment of the readiness of the SPECA countries to implement the SPECA Principles of Sustainable Trade*,
Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE
- Discussion:**
- Perspectives of the SPECA countries (7 min each): Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan
- 14:30 – 14:45 *Coffee break*
- 14:45 – 15:30 **Session 3: Implementation of the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy and Roadmap**
- *Implementation of the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy*
Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE
 - *Updated study on the harmonization of border crossing procedures in the implementation of the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy*
Ms. Larisa Kislyakova, UNECE consultant
 - Reports on work for the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement:
 - *Guideline and implementation of TF enquiry points*

² Tashkent time

Ms. Aizhan Beiseyeva, UNECE consultant,

- *Assessment of the Readiness of Uzbekistan to Implement the WTO TFA and National Roadmap for Trade Facilitation Implementation*

Ms. Anastasia Belova, Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade, Uzbekistan

- *National Trade Facilitation Roadmap of Kyrgyzstan*

Mr. Aidarbek Samykbaev, Kyrgyzstan

- *Update on the implementation of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific*

Mr. Yann Duval, Head of Section on Trade Policy and Facilitation, ESCAP

- *UN trade facilitation and paperless trade Survey 2021: results for the SPECA countries* (<https://www.unescap.org/kp/2021/untf-survey-2021-carec>)

Dr. Ghulam Samad, Senior Research Officer, CAREC Institute

Discussion

15:30 – 15:50 **Session 4: Digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange**

- *Package of standards for the digitalization of multimodal transport data and document exchange and possibilities for its implementation in the SPECA subregion*

(<https://unttc.org/stream/electronic-trade-and-transport-documents-and-data>)

Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE

- *Digitalization of multimodal transport data and document exchange in Uzbekistan*

Mr. Sherzod Ata-Mirzaev, Ministry of Transport of Uzbekistan

- *Current practice of the EAEU countries on the Digital Transport Corridors ecosystem*

Mr. Alexei Bondarenko, Vice Chair, United Nations Centre on Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), associate professor, MGIMO University

Discussion

15:50 – 16:25 **Session 5: Regional Cooperation of National Trade Facilitation Committees in the SPECA Subregion** (co-organized with GIZ)

- Ms. Asel Uzagalieva, GIZ and/or representative of an NTFC in Central Asia

- Call for support to the NTFCs and their regional cooperation

Discussion

16:25 – 16:50 **Overall discussion on the way forward:**

- Ideas and plans to enhance cooperation, trade facilitation, sustainable trade, digitalization of trade and transport chains and multimodal transport under SPECA

16:50 – 17:00 **Conclusions**

Brief statements by Mr. Abdurahmon Abdurahmonzoda, Mr. Badriddin Abidov and representatives of the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats.