



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

FOLLOW-UP MEETING OF THE 2010 SPECA ECONOMIC FORUM

**“Launching a Plan of Action to Strengthen Stability and Sustainable Development
of Afghanistan through Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia”**

(Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 7-8 June 2011)

INFORMATION NOTICE

I. INTRODUCTION

In its Decision 3 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2010/3) adopted at the fifth session in Geneva on 19 October 2010, the SPECA Governing Council expressed its gratitude to the Government of Turkmenistan for its generous offer to co-organize with the UNECE and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia (UNRCCA) a meeting on economic cooperation with Afghanistan as a follow-up to the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum in Ashgabat in the first half of 2011. In accordance with this decision, the follow-up meeting “Launching a Plan of Action to Strengthen Stability and Sustainable Development of Afghanistan through Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia” will take place in Ashgabat on 7 and 8 June 2011.

This Information notice provides some details regarding this meeting jointly organized by the Government of Turkmenistan, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia.

II. VENUE

The meeting will take place on 7 and 8 June 2011 in the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan (Archabil Shayoly 108, Ashgabat). The meeting will start at 09:30.

III. ORGANIZATION

Registration of participants will start at 08:30 on 7 June 2011. The meeting will be held from 09:30 until 13:00 and from 15:00 until 18:00 on 7 June and from 09:30 until 13:00 on 8 June 2011.

IV. PARTICIPATION

Participation is open to interested parties from Member States of the United Nations, representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and other international and non-governmental organizations interested in the activities carried out within the framework of SPECA. Besides government officials, participation from academia and the business community is also expected.

V. CONFERENCE FEE

No conference fee is charged for participation. Travel and accommodation expenses are borne by the participants.

VI. PRELIMINARY REGISTRATION

Interested parties are invited to fill in the Registration form and return it by **27 May 2011** at the latest to:

Mr. Jon CHURCH UNECE Liaison Officer UNRCCA Fax: +993 12 48 16 07 or +1 212 963 4648 / +39 0831 1837 101 E-mail: churchj@un.org (please cc: agayev@un.org)	and	Ms. Tatiana APATENKO Research Assistant UNECE/ECID Fax: +4122 917 01 78 E-mail: Tatiana.apatenko@unece.org
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VII. PASSPORTS, VISAS AND REGISTRATION IN THE COUNTRY

For all participants coming from abroad, visa support will be provided by the UNRCCA. All participants need to submit a copy of the passport to UNRCCA (e-mail: churchj@un.org, agayev@un.org, fax: +993 12 48 16 07 / +1 212 963 4648 / +39 0831 1837 101) not later than **27 May 2011**. The visa processing requirement is five working days. Participants will receive a digital copy of the visa support letter by return e-mail or fax. To obtain a visa, participants will have to print and produce it to passport control authorities at the Ashgabat international airport or, alternatively, to the Embassy of Turkmenistan in their country of residence. Participants are advised to have US\$ 50 with them.

Participants planning to stay in Turkmenistan for more than 72 hours (120 hours if travelling on a UN passport) are required to **register in the country**. Arrangements will be facilitated by the UNRCCA. Participants should have 2 passport size photos, 2 photocopies of their passport and the original passport. Participants will also be provided with a specific form. 2 copies of the completed form should be submitted to the UNRCCA upon arrival in Ashgabat, together with the rest of the required documentation. Passports will be returned as soon as the procedure is completed.

VIII. ACCOMODATION

A suitable number of single rooms, including luxury suites, are pre-booked by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan at the **Grand Turkmen Hotel ******* (address: Gorogly Street 7, phone: +993 12 510 555; single room: US\$ 65 per night, including breakfast) for participants from outside Ashgabat. Alternatively, depending on availability, participants may stay at the President Hotel ***** (single room: US\$ 165 per night, including breakfast). The bookings will be confirmed by the UNRCCA upon receipt of registration forms.

Each participant is expected to cover the cost of his or her own board and accommodation.

IX. TRANSPORTATION

A **shuttle service** between the hotel and the meeting venue will be arranged by the organizers.

From the airport participants can take an official taxi (yellow) to the hotel. Cost of travel by taxi is approximately TMT 10 (10 Turkmenistan manats).

X. DOCUMENTATION

The UNECE Secretariat has prepared the Annotated provisional programme of the meeting which can be found at the SPECA webpage of the UNECE website at the following address: www.unece.org/speca.

Papers and other documents to be presented at the meeting should be submitted in the English or Russian languages to the UNECE Secretariat (addressed to Mr. Marton Krasznai, marton.krasznai@unece.org) by no later than **27 May 2011** in electronic format (Word for Windows), preferably by e-mail. The papers submitted by this date will be posted on the SPECA webpage and be available for downloading. A limited number of copies of papers in the language of submission will be available in the conference room during the event.

Project proposals to be presented at the meeting will be circulated to registered participants beforehand in electronic format.

XI. INTERPRETATION AND VISUAL AIDS

Simultaneous interpretation in English and Russian and facilities for computer-aided presentations (e.g. PowerPoint) will be provided.

XII. FURTHER INFORMATION

Currency and exchange offices

Turkmenistan's official currency is Turkmenistan manat (TMT). The current exchange rate is US\$ 1 = TMT 2.85. It is a fixed exchange rate that is applied by all exchange offices. Payments can be made only in manats and exchange offices are common in Ashgabat. There is an exchange office at the airport, where participants can exchange US\$ or EUR for TMT. There are no ATMs on international circuits and credit cards are accepted in major hotels only.

Weather

Turkmenistan has an extremely continental climate. In June, the average temperature in Ashgabat ranges between 21 and 36 °C.

Additional information

Programme: Mr. Marton Krasznai, UNECE Regional Advisor (e-mail: marton.krasznai@unece.org, phone: +41 2 917 2760)

Mr. Armands Pupols, UNRCCA Political Officer (e-mail: pupols@un.org, phone: +993 12 481 612)

Logistics: Mr. Jon Church, UNECE Liaison Officer (e-mail: churchj@un.org, phone: +993 12 481 612, cell phone: +993 65 810 169)

Ms. Bahar Kulberdyeva, UNRCCA Finance Assistant (e-mail: kulberdyeva@un.org, phone: +993 12 481 612)

In Ashgabat, there is no need to dial 993 12 before the number for landlines, for cell phones please dial 993 6X or 8006X. When calling from abroad, participants can also reach the UNRCCA using the following numbers: +1 212 963 46 49 (US) or +39 0831 1837 000 (EU). There is no cell phone roaming service currently operating in Turkmenistan.
