



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

**2017 SPECA ECONOMIC FORUM
“Innovation for the SDGs in the SPECA region”**

(Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 5-6 December 2017)

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

It is increasingly recognized that technological, social, organizational, economic, and institutional innovation are all necessary to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted in September 2015. This is very relevant for the SPECA region. Renewed efforts and fresh approaches could use technology to diversify the economy, create sustainable, high-quality jobs, reduce inequality, promote connectivity, combat climate change, effectively manage water and energy resources, and address environmental challenges.

As the long-standing engagement of the United Nations with SPECA countries on innovation performance show, innovation-driven economic diversification tops the policy agendas across SPECA countries: in the shape of far-reaching public investment and a range of promotion efforts to modernize economic activities and spur new, including export-oriented ones. Sometimes, results fall behind expectations. The 2017 SPECA Economic Forum, in response, will bring together policymakers and specialists to assess progress, examine good practices, and agree on policy principles that will help Governments rethink and improve the way how they develop and implement policies and measures, and monitor progress. All sessions will bring forward cooperation, exchange of experiences, and transferring knowledge across borders.

The discussions of the 2017 SPECA Economic Forum will lead to recommendations for the 12th session of the SPECA Governing Council to endorse – and, subsequently, to guidelines for practitioners on how countries can further improve their innovation systems as a driving force behind economic diversification and growth in line with the SDGs in the SPECA region.

5 December 2017

09.30 – 10.00 Registration of participants

10.00 – 11.00 OPENING OF THE 2017 SPECA ECONOMIC FORUM

Opening statements by the Chairperson (Representative of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan), UNECE Executive Secretary and ESCAP Executive Secretary

Statements by Heads of Delegation of the SPECA participating countries:

Afghanistan
Azerbaijan
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Tajikistan
Turkmenistan
Uzbekistan

Statements by representatives of international organizations

11.00 – 11.15 Coffee break

**11.15 – 12.30 SESSION I: NEW APPROACHES TO PROMOTING INNOVATION –
FROM MARKET-FIXING TO MARKET-SHAPING**

This framing session proposes fresh understanding on how innovation can underpin sustainable economic development in the SPECA region. A critical review of the role Governments and the international community play in addressing the specific structural challenges and opportunities will pinpoint leading areas of concern. This is the starting point for examining fresh approaches to promoting innovation for sustainable development at the subregional level. At the centre is a move from innovation policy as a tool to fixing or compensating for market failures towards one where policy helps create and shape new markets. This will serve as a framework for going deeper into specific challenges and policy areas that face the region in the subsequent substantive sessions – including those that UNECE has uncovered in a series of Innovation Performance Reviews.

Presentations:

UNECE background paper “Promoting innovation in Central Asia – shaping new markets”

[Topic to be added]

Mr. Umed Dovlatzod, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan

Getting the policies right: Trends and challenges in promoting innovation-driven sustainable growth in Central Asia. Findings of the UNECE Innovation Performance Reviews

Presentations by:

ESCAP
UNDP
OECD
Other organizations (t.b.c.).

Discussion

12.30 – 13.30 SESSION II: INNOVATION SYSTEMS IN THE SPECA COUNTRIES – PROMOTING INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In this session, SPECA countries will exchange experiences and approaches to innovation for sustainable development, and will examine the lessons learnt in building their innovation systems. Speakers will discuss issues related to: overall policy frameworks for improving innovation-led sustainable growth, recent reforms, and activities in the movement towards a market-shaping approach to innovation as a driver for the achievement of the SDGs. They will outline areas for regional cooperation.

Presentations by representatives of the SPECA countries:

Afghanistan
Azerbaijan
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan

13.30 – 15.00 Lunch break

15.00 – 15.45 SESSION II (Continued): INNOVATION SYSTEMS IN THE SPECA COUNTRIES - PROMOTING INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Presentations by representatives of the SPECA countries:

Tajikistan
Turkmenistan
Uzbekistan

Discussion

15.45 – 16.30 SESSION III: INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECA REGION

Representatives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, United Nations Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations High Representative for landlocked countries, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other partner organizations will be invited to make presentations.

Discussion

16.30 – 16.45 Coffee break

16.45 – 18.00 SESSION IV: INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES IN SPECIFIC AREAS

The following session will focus on practical experiences of innovation for sustainable development in several sectors, including improvement of technology transfers, diversification

of the economies, shaping a functioning market for a circular economy, overcoming the limitations of landlockedness through innovation in transport and trade, and existing approaches to improving innovation in resource-rich economies in the region.

Green Economy, Environmental Protection, and the SDGs

Innovation and Sustainable Energy

Discussion

6 December 2017

10.00 – 11.00 SESSION IV (Continued): INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES IN SPECIFIC AREAS

Concepts for Transport (Intelligent Transport Systems or e-TIR)

Paperless Trade, Single Window for Export and Import Clearance and Sustainable Development

Gender and the Sustainable Development Agenda

Discussion

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break

11.30 – 13.00 CLOSING OF THE 2017 SPECA ECONOMIC FORUM

Recommendations of the 2017 SPECA Economic Forum

Closing statements by representatives of Tajikistan, UNECE and ESCAP
