



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/CECI/CONF.2/1
23 January 2008

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION

International Conference on Investing in Innovation:
Promoting New Opportunities in the UNECE Region

Geneva, 10-11 April 2008

INFORMATION NOTICE*

Note by the Secretariat

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The activities of the UNECE Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration (CECI) aim to contribute to strengthening the competitiveness of Member States' economies by promoting knowledge-based development and innovation. One of the thematic areas identified in the Programme of Work of CECI for 2006-2008 and beyond is the promotion of an enabling environment for efficient financial intermediation in support of innovative development. In line with these mandates, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe is organizing an International Conference "Investing in Innovation: Promoting New Opportunities in the UNECE Region". This International Conference will also be a contribution to the activities of the UNECE in connection with the Financing for Development process, including the review of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.

* Prior to the session, delegates (with the exception of delegates from the Geneva-based Missions) are requested to present themselves with a valid identification card/passport at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, Avenue de la Paix 8-14, (a map is attached) for the issuance of an identification badge. Delegates encountering problems in accessing the Palais des Nations should contact the secretariat at ceci@unece.org or telephone: +41 22 917 15 55.

2. Innovative enterprises face specific financing constraints, especially in the early stages of their existence. At the same time, innovative enterprises with high growth potential may provide excellent investment opportunities to would-be investors. The Conference will address issues related to the financing of innovative enterprises and the associated investment and networking opportunities. It will also provide a platform for a policy dialogue on these issues among various stakeholders, including government officials, investors, entrepreneurs, business associations and academia. This Information Notice provides details regarding the objectives, organization and participation in this Conference.

II. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

3. Entrepreneurship and innovation are recognized as pillars of economic growth and job creation. Innovation can provide responses to environmental and social challenges, transforming them into business opportunities. However, financing innovation is a risky endeavour, plagued by uncertainty and information gaps. Various specialised financial intermediaries, both private and public, have emerged in an attempt to address these difficulties. In addition to specific programmes of public support, government policy needs to pay attention to the general implications of the regulatory environment on the various stages of the financing cycle. Barriers to cross-border investment may constrain investors' returns, against the background of an increasingly globalized venture capital industry. In many countries with economies in transition, public efforts to develop local funds are coupled with the growing realisation of the existing investment opportunities by global players.

4. The Conference aims to bring together various groups of stakeholders involved in different aspects of the financing-*cum*-investment process to share experiences, identify trends and propose policy approaches to create better conditions for the financing of innovative activities, with a particular emphasis on the implications for countries with economies in transition. To this effect, it will address key policy-relevant issues such as:

- (a) The importance of overall framework conditions in creating entrepreneurial opportunities and facilitating appropriate financing;
- (b) The role of specialised financial intermediaries, such as business angels and venture capital investors, and the links between them;
- (c) Corporate venture capital as a source of finance and technological dynamism;
- (d) The relations between research institutions and financial intermediaries and its impact on the commercialization of research;
- (e) Capacity-building programmes to enhance the investment readiness of new enterprises and the skills of investors;
- (f) The international dimension of venture capital investing (formal and informal) and the initiatives to remove barriers to cross-border investment;
- (g) The emerging opportunities in countries with economies in transition and the progress in developing a local venture capital industry;
- (h) The financing of innovation in areas that are critical to ensure a sustainable development, addressing environmental and energy efficiency concerns (eco-innovation, cleantech); and
- (i) The role of public policies in correcting financial markets imperfections and creating investment opportunities for innovative enterprises.

5. The outcomes of the Conference, including presented papers and materials reflecting the discussions, will provide an input for the formulation of policy recommendations on improving the regulatory environment for the financing of innovation-related activities, which will be discussed at the third session of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration. A report on the Conference will be prepared and presented to this session of the CECI. The outcomes of this Conference will also support the activities of the CECI in other thematic areas, in particular, in connection with the creation of a supportive environment for innovative development and knowledge-based competitiveness and the strengthening of the role of intellectual property rights in innovative development.

III. VENUE

6. The Conference will take place in the Conference Room V, Palais des Nations, Geneva (Switzerland) on 10-11 April 2008 at the following address: 8-14, Avenue de la Paix.

IV. ORGANIZATION

7. The registration of participants will start at 8.30 a.m. on 10 April. The Conference will start on the same day at 10.00 and finish on 11 April at 18.00.

8. The Conference will be organized into several working sessions dealing with different themes. The sessions' moderators will briefly introduce their topics; this will be followed by presentations, roundtables and a general exchange of views. The moderators will conclude by summing up the discussion.

V. PARTICIPATION

9. Participation is open to interested parties from the UNECE member countries and other Member States of the United Nations, representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and other international and non-governmental organizations interested in the activities of UNECE. Besides government officials and representatives from international organization, participation from industry associations, investors and entrepreneurs is also expected.

VI. CONFERENCE FEE AND OTHER EXPENSES

10. No conference fee is charged for the participation in the Conference. Travel, accommodation, medical insurance and other expenses are borne by participants.

VII. PASSPORTS AND VISAS

11. All participants should be in possession of a valid passport, with an entry visa (if required), which can be obtained from the diplomatic representation of Switzerland accredited to their country of residence. It is advisable to make such visa applications well in advance of the date required. The UNECE Secretariat will provide letters to the Swiss authorities (i.e. consulates) confirming the Conference attendance for those participants who need such a letter and request it directly from the UNECE Secretariat.

VIII. PRELIMINARY REGISTRATION

12. Interested parties are invited to fill out the attached Registration Form (Annex I) and return it by **22 March 2008** at the latest to the following address:

Mr. José Palacín
Room 449, UNECE
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Fax: (+41 22) 917 01 78
E-mail: jose.palacin@unece.org

or

Ms. Ludmila Sedlmajer
Room C.405, UNECE
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Fax: (+41 22) 917 01 78
E-mail: ludmila.sedlmajer@unece.org

IX. DOCUMENTATION

13. The Secretariat will prepare a detailed Provisional Programme which will be circulated to participants one week before the Conference.

14. Interested experts are invited to prepare papers and briefing notes relating to topics addressed in the Conference as indicated in item 4 of the Information Notice.

15. Papers to be presented at the Conference should be submitted to the UNECE Secretariat by **27 March 2008** in one of the UNECE working languages (English, French or Russian). Submission of papers in electronic format (Word for Windows, Powerpoint), preferably by e-mail is strongly encouraged. Copies of papers will be available in the meeting room during the Conference.

X. INTERPRETATION AND VISUAL AIDS

16. Simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Russian, facilities for projecting slides, as well as computer facilities for computer-aided presentations (e.g. Power Point) will be provided.

XI. TRAVEL AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS

17. Participants are requested to make their own hotel and travel arrangements to and from Geneva (Annex III).

XII. FURTHER INFORMATION

18. Further information on the Conference can be obtained from:

Mr. José Palacín
Economic Affairs Officer
ECID/UNECE Secretariat
Tel.: +41 22 917 16 43
Fax: +41 22 917 01 78
E-mail: jose.palacin@unece.org

ANNEX I

[ENGLISH ONLY]

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

International Conference “Investing in Innovation: Promoting New Opportunities in the UNECE Region”
--

Date 10-11 April 2008

Participant

Mr. Family name First name

Ms.

Participation Category

Head of Delegation <input type="checkbox"/> Delegation Member <input type="checkbox"/> Observer Country <input type="checkbox"/>	Are you based in Geneva as a representative of your permanent mission ? YES NO <i>(delete non applicable)</i>	Observer Organization <input type="checkbox"/> NGO (ECOSOC Accred.) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Specify Below) <input type="checkbox"/>
Participating <u>From / Until</u> <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		

Document Language Preference English French Other

Official Occupation (in own country) Passport or ID Number Valid Until

Official Telephone N°. Fax N°. E-mail Address

Permanent Official Address

Address in Geneva

Accompanied by Spouse Yes No

Family Name (Spouse) First Name (Spouse)

On Issue of ID Card Participant Signature Spouse Signature Date	Participant photograph if form is sent in advance of the conference date. Please PRINT your name on the reverse side of the photograph	Spouse photograph if form is sent in advance of the conference date. Please PRINT your name on the reverse side of the photograph	Security Use Only Card N°. Issued Initials, UN Official
---	---	--	--

ANNEX II

LIST OF HOTELS

relatively well placed with regard to the Palais des Nations (prices are indicative and may change)

[ENGLISH ONLY]

Pax**	Price in CHF/single room
68, Rue du 31 Décembre CH -1207 Geneva Tel.: (+4122) 787 50 70 Fax: (+4122) 787 50 80	105
Strasbourg-Univers***	Price in CHF/single room
Rue Pradier 10 1201 Geneva Tel.: (+4122) 906 58 00 Fax: (+4122) 738 42 08	140
Mon-Repos***	Price in CHF/single room
131, Rue de Lausanne 1202 Geneva Tel.: (+4122) 909 39 09 Fax:(+4122) 909 39 93	155
Capitole***	Price in CHF/single room
15 Rue de Berne CH -1201 Geneva Tel.: (+4122) 909 86 26 Fax:(+4122) 741 22 45	139
Nations***	Price in CHF/single room
62, Rue du Grand-Pré 1202 Geneva Tel. 022/748 08 08 Fax 022/734 38 84	170
Montana***	Price in CHF/single room
23, Rue des Alpes CH -1201 Geneva Tel. (+4122) 732 08 40 Fax /+4122) 738 25 11	125
Moderne***	Price in CHF/single room
1, Rue de Berne CH -1201 Geneva Tel. (+4122) 732 81 00 Fax 022/738 26 58	80/130

Ramada Encore Genève****	Price in CHF/single room
12, Route des Jeunes (La Praille) CH -1227 Carouge/GE Tel. (+4122) 309 50 00 Fax (+4122) 309 50 05	130
Hotel Montbrillant****	Price in CHF/single room
2, Rue Montbrillant CH -1201 Geneva Tel.: (+4122) 733 77 84 Fax: (+4122) 733 25 11	139
Manotel Edelweiss****	Price in CHF/single room
2, Place de la Navigation CH -1201 Geneva Tel.: (+4122) 544 51 51 Fax: (+4122) 544 51 99	195
Grand Pre****	Price in CHF/single room
Rue du Grand Pré, 35 1202 Geneva Tel.: (+4122) 918 11 11 Fax: (+4122) 734 76 91	169
Manotel Chantilly****	Price in CHF/single room
Rue de la Navigation 27 Geneva CH-1202 Tel.: (+4122) 544 40 40 Fax: (+4122) 544 40 99	129
Intercontinental****	Price in CHF/single room
7-9 chemin du Petit-Saconnex 1211 Genève 19 Tel. (+4122) 919 32 61 Fax (+4122) 919 38 38	250
Crowne Plaza*****	Price in CHF/single room
34, Route François Peyrot CH -1218 Geneva Tel. (+4122) 747 02 63 Fax (+4122) 747 03 03	190

ANNEX III - MAP OF THE PALAIS DES NATIONS

[ENGLISH ONLY]

