



Economic and Social Council

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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration

International Conference on Policies to Address Financing and Entrepreneurial Challenges in High-growth Innovative Firms

Helsinki, Finland, 2-4 June 2010

Information notice

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The Programme of Work of the UNECE Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration (CECI) in 2009-2010 adopted at the third session of CECI held on 3-5 December 2008 envisages the organization in 2010 of a policy-oriented event focusing on high-growth innovative firms. At that session CECI also “welcomed a stronger emphasis on capacity-building activities and policy advisory services in the Programme of Work for 2009-2010”. At its fourth session held on 28-30 September 2009, CECI “encouraged member States to fully benefit from the opportunities offered by its international expertise in various thematic areas”.
2. In the autumn of 2009, the Government of Finland proposed the organization of an International Conference in Helsinki in 2010, which would address policy issues covered by different thematic areas of the CECI Programme of Work. Following a series of consultations, it was agreed to hold the International Conference on Policies to Address Financing and Entrepreneurial Challenges in High-growth Innovative Firms in Helsinki, Finland, from 2 to 4 June 2010.
3. The Conference will focus on knowledge sharing and discussion of policies and good practices in several CECI thematic areas. The international participants will include policymakers as well as representatives of business and academic communities, including invited participants from countries with economies in transition. Therefore, the Conference discussions would also involve learning components, thus making a direct contribution to capacity-building.
4. In order to reinforce the learning component of the programme, the Conference will also include site visits to selected public and business institutions in Finland dealing with the issues considered at the Conference, where the visitors would have the possibility to learn how these questions are dealt with in practice.

5. This Information notice provides some details regarding the organization and participation in the upcoming Conference.

II. Objectives and format

6. The main objective of the International Conference on Policies to Address Financing and Entrepreneurial Challenges in High-growth Innovative Firms is to provide a platform for a broad exchange of practical experiences and lessons learned among policymakers, representatives of business and academia, and other experts and practitioners on good practices and policies of promoting the development of high-growth innovative firms, in particular taking into account the new conditions that have emerged after the global economic and financial crisis.

7. The Conference programme will be structured into several thematic sessions, each session would cover different areas of the policy agenda for promoting the development of high-growth innovative firms.

8. The sessions of the Conference will be broken down in two main parts. The first part will consist of presentations by leading experts in the corresponding thematic area. The second part will include presentations of national experiences in the corresponding thematic area by the participants of the Conference from countries with economies in transition, which would be followed by a general discussion of these experiences.

9. The Conference will consider, in a series of consecutive sessions, several sets of issues related to the promotion of high-growth innovative enterprises, including:

(a) "Promoting innovative entrepreneurship: policy challenges", which would include topics, such as the implications of the global crisis for policies targeting innovation and entrepreneurship; the role of these policies in promoting faster post-crisis recovery and new policy initiatives prompted by the crisis;

(b) "Joining forces in facilitating 'creative destruction': public-private cooperation in innovation support institutions", which would include topics such as the role of public and private innovation support institutions in breeding firms with high-growth potential; facilitating technology transfer from publicly funded research institutions to industry; and new forms of public-private cooperation in these areas; and

(c) "How future market leaders can develop their growth potential? The challenge of early-stage financing", which would include topics, such as the specificities of financing innovative enterprises and recent developments in this area; the problem of early identification of firms with high growth potential; and the role of public financing and good practices in public programmes promoting the financing of innovative firms.

10. As part of the process of sharing of practical experiences, the participants would be offered an opportunity to join a study tour to various institutions dealing with the issues considered in the Conference in a practical way.

III. Organization and venue

11. The International Conference will be organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and will take place from 2 to 4 June 2010 in Helsinki, Finland.

12. The Conference venue will be the House of the Estates (Address: Snellmaninkatu 11), which is located in the vicinity of the Senate Square opposite the Bank of Finland.

IV. Participation

13. Participation is open to interested parties from UNECE member countries and other member States of the United Nations, representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and international organizations participating in the activities of UNECE. Broad participation of government officials and experts, representatives of the business and academic communities as well as the civil society is welcome.

14. Governments are invited to inform national entities and institutions, business and industry associations, academic institutions and other relevant organizations about the upcoming Conference and encourage participation of experts.

V. Conference fee

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

VI. Passports and visas

16. 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 Finland in their country of residence. It is advisable to make such visa applications well in advance of the date required.

VII. Preliminary registration

17. Interested parties are invited to fill in the attached Registration Form (Annex) and return it by 21 May 2010 at the latest.

VIII. Documentation

18. Participants are invited to prepare papers and briefing notes relating to topics to be addressed at the Conference as indicated in item 9 of the Information Notice.

19. Papers and other documents to be presented at the Conference should be submitted in the English or Russian languages to the UNECE secretariat (addressed to Mr. José Palacín) by 21 May 2010 in electronic format (Word for Windows), preferably by e-mail. A limited number of copies of papers in the language of submission will be available in the meeting room during the Conference.

20. When submitting the documents, participants are requested to indicate, in which of the Conference sessions specified in item 9 of the Information Notice they would like to present the paper or briefing note.

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

IX. Interpretation and visual aids

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

X. Travel and hotel reservations

23. Participants are requested to make their own travel arrangements to and from Helsinki.

24. There is a preliminary agreement with the Hotel Scandic Grand Marina (Address: Katajanokanlaituri 7, 00160 Helsinki) for a bloc reservation of 60 rooms (double and single) available at preferential rates for the period from 1 to 4 June 2010 (each participant is responsible for the payment). Hotel Scandic Grand Marina is conveniently located in walking distance from the Conference venue, the Helsinki House of the Estates. Participants wishing to avail of this time-limited option should contact immediately Mr. José Palacín for further details.

25. Alternatively participants can make their own hotel arrangements.

XI. Further Information

26. Further information on the International Conference can be obtained from:

Mr. José Palacín
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Palais des Nations, Room 449
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Tel.: (+4122) 917 1643
Fax: (+4122) 917 0178
E-mail: jose.palacin@unece.org

Annex

Registration form

This form should be filled in and returned as soon as possible and not later than 18 May 2010 to:

Mr. José Palacín
ECID/UNECE
Palais des Nations, Room 449
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Fax: (+41 22) 917 0178
E-mail: jose.palacin@unece.org

(Please type or write in block capitals in English)

Family name (Mr., Ms.):

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First name:

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Nationality:

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Professional position:

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Affiliation and professional address:

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Telephone (please include country and city codes):

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Telefax (please include country and city codes):

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E-mail

address:.....