



United Nations

UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 392 — 4 - 8 October 2010



INNOVATIVE WOOD PRODUCTS ARE THE FUTURE TIMBER COMMITTEE SESSION, 11-14 OCTOBER 2010

The Timber Committee of the UNECE meets again this year on 11-14 October to review the latest international developments relevant to the forest sector. For the first time, the Timber Committee Market Discussions and Policy Forum will be held jointly with the Society of Wood Science and Technology. There will be various events taking place during the week including:

- Market Discussions
- A Policy Forum "Building codes and standards: Influence on material use and construction practices"
- The Timber Committee session with a segment on international developments affecting the sector
- An exhibit and poster session on innovative wood products

All meetings will take place in and around rooms XVIII and XXIII, in the E-Building of the Palais des Nations. □

For more background information on the Timber Committee session, please visit our website at: <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=302>.

2010 SPECA ECONOMIC FORUM, GENEVA, 18-19 OCTOBER 2010



The 2010 Economic Forum of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) entitled "Strengthening regional cooperation in Central Asia: a contribution to long-term stability and sustainable development of Afghanistan" is taking place on 18-19 October 2010 in Geneva. The Representative of Afghanistan at the 4th session of the SPECA Governing Council on 13 November 2009 in Bishkek spoke about the need for closer economic cooperation between Central Asia and Afghanistan as an important contribution to the long-term stabilization and reconstruction of the latter. In light of the favorable reaction of other SPECA member countries to his statement it was decided to devote the 2010 Economic Forum to this important topic.

High-level representatives of SPECA member countries, partner organizations and decision-makers and experts with first-hand experience from the field will examine how strengthened regional cooperation in Central Asia could more effectively contribute to achieving long-term stability in Afghanistan. The Economic Forum will explore a broad range of opportunities for strengthening regional economic cooperation: its agenda builds on the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS), which is the vision of the Government and the international development community for the future of the country.

To put the work of the Economic Forum in a broader

context, the meeting will start with a high-level panel discussing the close interrelationship between the security, stability and sustainable economic development of Afghanistan and Central Asia. Subsequent sessions will deal with such key areas of regional cooperation as trade, transport, investment, infrastructure development and joint management of shared resources. These main areas are closely interlinked. The revival of regional and continental trade is the single most important potential engine for positive change in the region. Naturally, such revival cannot happen without heavy investment in the development of transport and transit infrastructure, i.e. roads, railways, electrical power lines, pipelines. Regionally coordinated energy infrastructure development is critical to allow the region to benefit from its abundant natural resources. The shared nature of such resources calls for a regional approach to tackle regional problems.

With several projects already up and running, the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) - jointly supported by UNECE and ESCAP - provides a suitable framework for the implementation of human and institutional capacity-building activities in key areas of regional cooperation that could contribute to sustained stability in Afghanistan and to the development of Central Asia at large. The closing session of the Forum will address the role that SPECA can play as a framework for political consultations, capacity and institution building.

SPECA was established in 1998 and is jointly supported by UNECE and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It has seven member countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It covers six thematic areas: water and energy, transport and border crossing, trade, statistics, knowledge-based development and gender and economy.

Its objective is to strengthen the human and institutional capacity of its member countries to strengthen subregional cooperation. Offering a neutral UN umbrella, relevant international legal instruments and norms of which the UNECE is a custodian and the in-house expertise of the two Regional Commissions, SPECA is able to effectively address complicated and often politically sensitive issues of regional cooperation.

In accordance with established practice, the Economic Forum will take place immediately prior to the session of the SPECA Governing Council (Geneva, 19 October 2010) which will allow senior policymakers from SPECA member countries to consider how the results of the Forum could be better integrated in the practical activities of the Programme. □

For more information about the Economic Forum, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/speca/documents/ecf/2010/econfor10.html> or contact Marton Krasznai at: Marton.krasznai@unece.org.



4TH SEE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRADE FACILITATION, THE SINGLE WINDOW, AND DATA HARMONIZATION ALBANIA, 27-28 SEPTEMBER 2010

On 27-28 September 2010, UNECE organized in Durres, Albania, together with the Ministry of the Economy, Trade, and Energy of Albania, a fourth Regional Southeast European Conference on Trade

Facilitation, the Single Window and Data Harmonization. This regional initiative started in Ohrid, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in December 2006, and has led to the creation of a Single Window in that country, the second example in Europe after Sweden.

Facilitation, the Single Window and Data Harmonization. This regional initiative started in Ohrid, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in December 2006, and has led to the creation of a Single Window in that country, the second example in Europe after Sweden.

As on previous occasions, leading experts from UNECE, UNCTAD, the European Commission and the World Customs Organization (WCO) briefed participants about the innovative instruments which are available to countries willing to implement the Single Window for export and import clearance. Albania is one of the most advanced countries which implement UNCTAD's ASYCUDA World system. If Albania decides to develop a Single Window to allow economic agents to file all required data only once, ASYCUDA can offer the platform for filing and distribution of this data among all requiring agencies. The country may become a testing ground for developing a Single Window using ASYCUDA. The European Union representatives informed that the EU is now catching up with a programme, led by the European Commission, to establish national Single Window systems, which would exchange information on the basis of established UN and WCO standards.

The second major objective of the conference was to assist countries in preparing bilateral and corridor-based exchange of data, as a first step towards establishing regional interoperability of Single Window systems. After the seminar, the Customs authorities of Albania carried out bilateral negotiations with those of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro, which led to the finalization and signature of two bilateral agreements on data exchange. It was agreed that the three countries, UNECE, UNCTAD, and possibly WCO and the European Commission, will organize further capacity building on the use of international standards in such electronic corridors. This work may be combined with the One UN programme in Albania. □

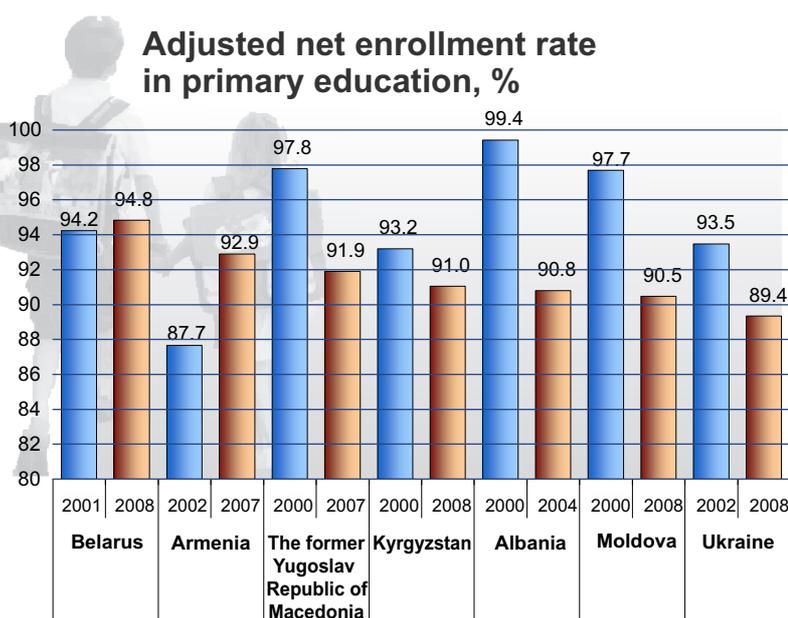
Facilitation, the Single Window and Data Harmonization. This regional initiative started in Ohrid, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in December 2006, and has led to the creation of a Single Window in that country, the second example in Europe after Sweden.

As on previous occasions, leading experts from UNECE, UNCTAD, the European Commission and the World Customs Organization (WCO) briefed participants about the innovative instruments which are available to countries willing to implement the Single Window for export and import clearance. Albania is one of the most advanced countries which implement UNCTAD's ASYCUDA World system. If Albania decides to develop a Single Window to allow economic agents to file all required data only once, ASYCUDA can offer the platform for filing and distribution of this data among all requiring agencies. The country may

For more information, contact Mario Apostolov at: mario.apostolov@unece.org.

FACTS AND FIGURES

PRIMARY EDUCATION STILL REQUIRES UPHOLDING EFFORT IN SEVERAL UNECE COUNTRIES



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

(http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=2867_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC)

Note: Net enrolment rate in primary education is the share of children in primary schooling ages who are enrolled in primary education or have completed primary school prematurely.

Millennium Development Goal number 2 aims to achieve universal primary education for all. This goal promotes fundamental rights to education for everyone, starting from childhood, and is commonly measured by the net enrolment rate (NER) in primary education. Adjustment is made on this indicator by taking into account early achievers.

Despite the progress made in many countries of Eastern and South-eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia towards universal access to basic education, during the last decade, enrolment rates were marked by a downward trend in other countries in the region. A decade ago, the enrolment rate in primary education exceeded 93 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, 97 per cent in the Republic of Moldova and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and 99 per cent in Albania. The latest available statistics show significantly lower levels in all these countries despite the stated focus on improving the quality and level of education. If addressing the issue of the quality of education has become a major objective in these countries attention should not be diverted from children in marginalized groups whose schooling is at the heart of this Millennium Development Goal. □

Information Service
United Nations
Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
CH-1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland

Tel.: +41 (0) 22 917 44 44
Fax: +41 (0) 22 917 05 05
E-mail: info.ece@unece.org
<http://www.unece.org>

Follow UNECE on:
<http://www.youtube.com/user/UNECE>
http://twitter.com/UN_ECE
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/UNECE/332016013671>