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UNECE PARTICIPATION IN 3RD GLOBAL REVIEW OF AID FOR TRADE

UNECE actively participated in the Third Global Review of Aid for Trade (AFT), organized by the World Trade Organization (WTO) on 18-19 July 2011 in Geneva.

Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary, was a panellist at a special session on "Aid for Trade and Asia: Promoting Growth for All of Asia" on 19 July. He recalled that UNECE had initiated its work on an Aft Roadmap for SPECA (the Special Programme of the United Nations on the Economies of Central Asia) in 2008. Until then, little attention had been given to the needs of transition economies in Central Asia, as Aid for Trade concentrated on the least developed countries (Afghanistan is the only country of that group in Central Asia).

He noted that UNECE had prepared a study on bilateral and multilateral trade liberalization agreements in Central Asia in 2007 (*Regional Trade Integration in Central Asia: The way to modernize, attract investment and new technologies*), which concluded that probably the most important trade issue in



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Trade Facilitation Recommendations and a range of technical standards for the simplification of trade and automated information exchange. These global standards, which are developed by experts from around the world, provide the backbone for today's global trade infrastructure and are implemented in developed and developing countries alike. Several of them, such as the UN Layout Key and the UN Trade Data Element Directory, are referenced in the current WTO trade facilitation negotiations under the Doha Round.

Mr. Kubiš stressed that, "We see trade facilitation as a fundamental tool to enhance the participation of developing and transition economies in the global economy. This is particularly true for SMEs. To support this, we have developed a range of tools, capacity building and advisory programmes to assist SPECA, and all developing and transition economy countries, to implement trade facilitation measures, such as the

implementation of simplified and efficient business processes, trade document systems, paperless trade and the Single Window."

Aid for Trade

Aid for Trade (AFT) is a WTO initiative arising from the Doha Development Round. It is a response to the demand from developing countries to receive assistance in order to be able to: 1) take advantage of freer trade – by developing their capacity to produce tradable goods and services as well as their transport and trade-facilitation infrastructures; 2) meet commitments made under the WTO.

AFT has become a mechanism for encouraging and monitoring development assistance for trade, thereby allowing donors to better coordinate this aid and beneficiary countries to hold donors accountable for promises to provide more trade related assistance. A large review meeting is held every two years. The third review took place on 18-19 July.

It is important to note that there is no Aft Fund and no central coordination where countries can apply for Aft funding. All funding decisions are made independently by donors who report these to OECD as being part of Aid for Trade. There are also no official Aid for Trade mechanisms to assist beneficiary countries to identify their Aft priorities and develop relevant projects for funding, although the Enhanced Integrated Framework performs this role for least-developed countries, none of which are in the UNECE region. For other low and middle-income countries, this assistance is provided primarily by inter-governmental organizations such as the United Nations and some development banks.

Starting in 2009, UNECE has coordinated work between SPECA countries and a range of agencies (ITC, ITFC, UNDP, UNIDO, WTO) to raise awareness about Aft in the SPECA region; supported studies to help countries identify priority areas for Aft; and has held an Aft Roadmap for SPECA Ministerial Conference in Baku in December 2010. As a follow-up to Baku, a SPECA Aft Roadmap Implementation and Monitoring Council is being set up.

For more information, see: <http://live.unece.org/tradewelcome/aid-for-trade-roadmap-for-speca-initiative>.

the region is non-tariff barriers, notably heavy trade and border-crossing procedures. Consequently, an important area for improvement of regional trade is trade facilitation: the simplification, harmonization, standardization and automation of trade procedures and the accompanying information flows. This is an area where UNECE has special expertise, via its Centre for Trade Facilitation and electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), which has developed over 30 key

To promote and assist SPECA countries in using these tools, UNECE works closely with other United Nations agencies as well as with the secretariats and relevant committees under the CIS, EurAsEC and the Customs Union as well as with the OSCE border crossing college based in Tajikistan and individual countries. For example, together with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNECE established the United Nations

Network of Experts in trade facilitation (UNNEXT), which has been particularly successful in supporting Single Window Implementation projects in SPECA countries.

As the globalization of trade and the vertical integration of production chains continues, interregional collaboration in trade facilitation implementation becomes increasingly important. To this end, UNECE has established a joint United Nations Regional Commission (UNRC) approach to Trade Facilitation. As the first development under this initiative, a

joint project to enhance the participation of developing and transition countries in global supply chains was launched. The first event under this project will be a global conference on "Transforming Global Trade: Single Windows and Global Supply Chains in the next decade" to be held in Geneva on 12 and 13 December. During this panel discussion, the Islamic Trade Finance Corporation also highlighted the Aid for Trade Roadmap for the SPECA Ministerial Conference in Baku in December 2011 and its follow-up mechanism, both coordinated by UNECE. □

An audio recording of the panel discussion is available at: http://www.wto.org/audio/2011_07_19_a4t_stream2a_e.mp3.

TWO NEW FILMS ON UNECE WATER PROJECTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

UNECE has just released two films on its water projects in Central Asia.



The first film showcases the project "Capacity building for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia". It shows how Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan cooperate to ensure the safety of the Kirov Dam, located in Kyrgyzstan, upstream from the

Kazakh city of Taraz. The film presents the views of the residents living in the area as well as representatives of local authorities and UNECE experts. The project is funded by the Governments of Finland and the Russian Federation. It is part of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). □

Watch it on UNECE's YouTube channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/UNECE#p/a/u/0/R-h41xj4yK8>.



The second film focuses on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz Chu and Talas Rivers Commission, which was inaugurated in 2006 with the support of UNECE. It explains how the Commission created a mutually beneficial way for Kazakhstan and

Kyrgyzstan to share responsibility for water infrastructure used by both countries and how this example could be extended in the region. The support to the Chu and Talas Rivers Commission is provided by a joint UNECE-OSCE project funded by the Government of Finland. □

*Watch it on UNECE's YouTube channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/UNECE#p/a/u/1/aLyHbmdloFY>.
For further information on UNECE's water projects in Central Asia, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/centralasia.html>.*

6TH SESSION OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN, 5-7 JULY 2011



The sixth meeting of the UNECE Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links (EG EATL) was organized in partnership with the Government of Kazakhstan, and jointly with the OSCE Centre in Astana and the OSCE Secretariat in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 5-7 July.

The EG EATL is tasked with assisting in the development of efficient, safe and secure Euro-Asian connections that could provide additional inland transport options for trade flows between Europe and Asia. The EG has been one of the key contributors to the implementation of commitments originating from the "Joint Statement on Future Development of Euro-Asian Transport Links", signed by the Ministers of Transport of 19 EATL countries involved in Phase I (2003-2007) of the EATL project, in Geneva, in February 2008, a statement which itself warranted the creation of the Group and the continuation of the EATL project in a new Phase II (2008-2011).

On 5-7 July 2011, the Expert Group:

- Approved the update and extension of the EATL priority routes and related GIS maps prepared by the secretariat on the basis of country inputs covering the 27 countries

involved; and the results of the EATL infrastructure investment plan, which evaluated and prioritized 404 projects with a total value of US\$ 246 billion.

- Requested the appropriate bodies of UNECE to extend the mandate of the EG for two more years in order to allow it to continue its work in a new EATL Phase III; and to seek political support and commitment from participating governments for the continuation of the work through the organization of a meeting of Ministers of Transport of EATL countries;
- Invited the Trans-European Motorway (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) Projects and UNECE secretariat to explore operational interaction of the TEM and TER Projects with EATL for developing joint activities; and governments, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, international financial institutions, businesses and donors to consider co-funding future project activities.

In addition, delegates discussed transport developments in Central Asia and related national experiences along the Euro-Asian Links, as well as the UNECE-OSCE Handbook on best practices at borders, which was reviewed, along with future prospects, opportunities and plans for Euro-Asian transport links and the EATL project.

The next session of the group will be hosted by the Government of the Russian Federation and is tentatively scheduled to take place on 24-25 October 2011 in Astrakhan. □

For more information, please visit: http://www.unece.org/trans/main/wp5/wp5_ge2_06.html.

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