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Public-Private Partnerships

UNECE and Philippines sign Memorandum of Understanding establishing a Specialist Public-Private Partnership Centre on Health



On 22 November 2012, Sven Alkalaj, UNECE Executive Secretary, and Enrique T. Ona, Health Secretary of the Philippines, signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing a Specialist Centre on Health in the Philippines on the basis of a public-private partnership. The official ceremony took place in Manila at the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, where the Specialist Centre is located.

Mr. Alkalaj said the Centre would be operating under the auspices of the UNECE's International Centre of Excellence on Public-Private Partnerships. "With this project", he said, "we wish to target specifically the socially and economically disadvantaged and ensure that through disseminating best practices among countries, the weaker and more vulnerable members of our societies benefit".

The UNECE's International Centre of Excellence consists of a small coordinating hub in Geneva and Specialist Centres in different countries throughout the world, which are responsible for specific sectors (e.g. roads, water, waste disposal, renewable energy).

Dr. Ona said that the signature of this MoU "symbolized the institutionalization of our long-term relationship with UNECE". It was, he said, "very timely in view of the current thrust of our government recognizing the essential role of the private sector in pursuing national growth and development objectives".

He added that this new Centre demonstrates that a PPP can be a viable instrument to develop infrastructure in pursuit of the country's ambition to achieve universal health care for all Filipinos, especially the poor.

The National Kidney and Transplant Institute has already introduced successful public-private partnerships that emerged as a solution to the scarcity of funds to furnish the hospital with state-of-the-art machines for patients suffering from end-stage renal disease. The project was undertaken through a long-term lease arrangement (build-operate-transfer) with a private partner so that new and modern equipment could be acquired and housed under a new centre.

The Specialist Centre on Health will be responsible for identifying best practice in PPP in health. It is expected to become the international focal centre on PPP in the health sector.

The Philippines will also benefit from this when shaping its own PPP programme for the health sector. The Centre will help train government officials in the new skills required to do PPP in the health sector, such as project management and private financing, which most governments lack.

The goals of the UNECE's International Centre of Excellence in Public-Private Partnerships are to:

- identify international PPP best practice
- help governments to successfully implement best practices
- encourage shared learning, especially between countries that are new to PPPs and those with mature PPP programmes.

The UNECE welcomes the initiative taken by the Government of the Philippines and expects more countries to join the International PPP Centre of Excellence and to take a lead in developing Specialist Centres in those specific sectors which are their national priorities.

Through its International PPP Centre of Excellence and the Specialist Centre on Health, the UNECE will continue to work closely with the Asian Development Bank and the World Health Organization, one example of this successful cooperation was the recent joint conference on Public-Private Partnership in Health: "Developing Models, Ensuring Sustainability: Perspectives from Asia and Europe", held in Manila, from 23 to 25 October.

On the occasion of his visit to Manila, the Executive Secretary of the UNECE held bilateral meetings with Albert F. del Rosario, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, and Manila Mayor Alfredo S. Lim, who explained his initiatives to provide free education and health care to Manila's low income families. □



UNECE and Asian Development Bank plan to reinforce cooperation



On the occasion of his visit to the Philippines, UNECE Executive Secretary, Sven Alkalaj, visited the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The visit, on 23 November, was part of his strategy to reinforce UNECE cooperation with international financial institutions, especially in the projects to be launched as part of the implementation of the Rio+20 outcomes and the post-2015 Development Agenda.

During his visit, Mr. Alkalaj met with ADB President, Haruhiko Kuroda, to discuss ways to re-launch the cooperation amongst the two institutions. A natural framework for enhanced cooperation could be offered by the two already existing programmes—SPECA (the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, jointly supported by UNECE and ESCAP) and CAREC (ADB's programme for Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation). The programmes share seven member countries.

President Kuroda welcomed the proposal to strengthen cooperation and suggested that concrete projects for cooperation should first be identified at the expert level during the coming months.

Potential areas for joint activities identified in the discussions with President Kuroda, and subsequently in three meetings with ADB senior managers, include Public-Private Partnerships, transboundary water management, trade facilitation and the implementation of Single Windows, cross-border transport agreements and possibly energy.

As a first step, increased participation of UNECE and ADB experts in the relevant meetings organized by other institutions will be encouraged. □

SPECA

Central Asian economic-cooperation forum to seek lessons from South and South-East Asian integration

2012 SPECA Economic Forum

Government leaders and researchers from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, together with intergovernmental organizations and financial institutions working in Central Asia gather in Bangkok on 27 and 28 November for the 2012 SPECA (United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia) Economic Forum.

Under the theme "Strengthening Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Central Asia by Sharing the Asian Experience", the 2012 SPECA Economic Forum aims to learn from the successes and challenges of regional economic integration in similar blocs. These include in particular the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Greater Mekong Subregion, a development project of the Asian Development Bank.

The event, convened by UNECE and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), will discuss ways to harness regional integration to drive the post-2015 global development agenda in Central Asia.

SPECA addresses key economic and environmental cooperation issues among its members, directly influencing sustainable development, stability and security in the region. Following the June 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), SPECA is facilitating stronger regional cooperation aimed at balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development as pledged by world leaders at the Conference.

SPECA Project Working Group on Trade to discuss challenges to the development of regional trade and investment

On the eve of the Forum, on 26 November, the seventh session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Trade will be dedicated to "Capacity-Building for Evidence-based Trade and Investment Policymaking". The meeting will focus on the "Challenges to the development of regional trade and investment" in SPECA countries, and review the progress being made in implementing the Baku Ministerial Declaration on Aid for Trade.

Presentations of concepts and methodologies for trade facilitation and paperless trade implementation will also be made. The meeting will be the first to be co-chaired by Turkmenistan, together with Tajikistan, thus marking an enhancement of Turkmenistan's contribution to regional trade development and policy cooperation.

Review of work in Afghanistan

As part of the Programme's role in supporting the reconstruction and stabilization efforts in Afghanistan, the Forum will be preceded by a side event on 26 November entitled "Review of Work in the SPECA Framework in Support of Implementation of the Decisions of the Fifth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan".

SPECA Governing Council meets for 7th session

The Forum will be followed by the 7th session of the SPECA Governing Council, the top policymaking body of the Programme. The Governing Council will review the work programme, set priorities for future work and elect the next Chair (country). □

For more information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/speca/welcome.html> and <http://northcentral-sro.unescap.org/speca.html>.

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