

**United Nations**  
**Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia**  
**(SPECA)**

**REPORT**  
**OF THE 10<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**  
**OF THE PROJECT WORKING GROUP**  
**ON TRANSPORT AND BORDER CROSSING**  
**(PWG-TBC)**

(ISSYK-KUL, KYRGYZSTAN, 24 MARCH 2005)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION .....	3
A.	ORGANIZATION .....	3
B.	ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA .....	3
C.	ATTENDANCE .....	3
D.	OPENING OF THE SESSION .....	3
1.	<i>Opening Statement from H. E. Mr. A.T. Azhikeev, Vice-Minister of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic.</i> .....	3
2.	<i>Opening Statement from H. E. Mr. T.B. Abylgazin, Vice-Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan</i> .....	3
3.	<i>Welcome message from Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP</i> .....	4
4.	<i>Welcome message from Ms. Brigita Schmögnerova, Executive Secretary of UNECE</i> .....	4
II.	PROCEEDINGS .....	5
A.	REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN ON THE 9TH SESSION SPECA PWG-TBC .....	5
B.	REPORT BY SPECA PWG-TBC NATIONAL COORDINATORS .....	6
	<i>Kyrgyz Republic</i> .....	6
	<i>Republic of Kazakhstan</i> .....	6
C.	REPORTS BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON ACTIVITIES AT THE SUBREGIONAL / REGIONAL LEVEL .....	7
	<i>UNECE</i> .....	7
	<i>UNESCAP</i> .....	8
	<i>TRACECA (Central Asia)</i> .....	8
	<i>EurAsEC (Kazakhstan)</i> .....	9
	<i>Guidelines to improve efficiency of SPECA PWG-TBC</i> .....	9
	<i>Capacity building in developing transit transport cooperation of landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia</i> .....	9
D.	SPECA PWG-TBC PROGRAMME OF WORK, 2005-2006 .....	10
III.	MAJOR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	10
IV.	ADOPTION OF THE REPORT .....	12
V.	ANNEXES .....	13
	<i>Annex 1. Agenda, 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the SPECA PWG-TBG</i> .....	14
	<i>Annex 2. List of participants</i> .....	15
	<i>Annex 3. Guidelines to improve efficiency of SPECA PWG-TBG</i> .....	18
	<i>Annex 4. Capacity building in developing transit transport cooperation of landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus</i> .....	23
	<i>Annex 5. SPECA PWG-TBC Programme of Work, 2005-2006</i> .....	28
	<i>Annex 6. Accession Status to International Agreements and Conventions</i> .....	30
	<i>Annex 7. Draft Agenda, 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the SPECA PWG-TBG</i> .....	31

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Organization**

The 10<sup>th</sup> session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC) was held on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005 in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan. The Meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic. It was organized jointly with the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan as the lead SPECA country in the field of transport.

### **B. Adoption of the Agenda**

The Meeting adopted its agenda unanimously. The Agenda is attached as Annex I.

### **C. Attendance**

The session was attended by delegation from the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. Delegation from the Republic of Uzbekistan participated as an observer. The representatives of UNECE, UNESCAP, EurAsEc, USAID, IGC-TRACECA, Islamic Development Bank, as well as the private sector also attended the session. The list of participants is attached as Annex II

### **D. Opening of the Session**

#### **1. Opening Statement from H. E. Mr. A.T. Azhikeev, Vice-Minister of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic.**

H.E. Mr. Aizat Toktorbekovich Azhikeev welcomed the participants and noted that Kyrgyzstan attaches great importance to the SPECA programme, which has a significant potential for development of transit transport cooperation between Central Asian countries. He also noted that Kyrgyzstan will provide continuous support to the SPECA PWG-TBC, as evidenced by the fact that the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the PWG-TBC is held in Kyrgyzstan, and expressed hope that the activity of the group would be aimed at providing further assistance to the participating countries in solving transit transport problems.

#### **2. Opening Statement from H. E. Mr. T.B. Abylgazin, Vice-Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan**

H.E. Mr. Talgat Baitemirovich Abylgazin made his opening speech. He underlined the significance of SPECA as an effective mechanism and called on continuation of coordinated efforts on

implementation of the Action Programme for Transit Transport Cooperation for SPECA countries and the Almaty Programme of Action.

He also noted that the session is being held on the eve of an important event organized in the year of celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN - the UN International Meeting on the role of International, Regional and Sub-regional Organizations for the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, to be held on 29-31 March 2005 in Almaty.

### **3. Welcome message from Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP**

Mr. Barry Cable, Director, Transport and Tourism Division, UNESCAP, delivered a message on behalf of Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary, UNESCAP.

In his statement the Executive Secretary expressed his gratitude to the Government of Kyrgyzstan for hosting the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the PWG-TBC. He also expressed his appreciation to Mr. T. Abylgazin, Vice-Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan for continuing activities as the lead country of SPECA in the field of transport. He noted that close cooperation in organizing the 10<sup>th</sup> session of PWG-TBC is testament to the spirit of cooperation amongst SPECA countries.

He noted that UNESCAP representatives would provide more detailed information on the activities of the Commission in the field of transport in support of SPECA, including the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and Drafting the Intergovernmental Agreement on Facilitation of International Road Transport in the SCO region. He also stressed the importance of the Programme of Work 2005-2006, which is based on the Action Programme for Transit Transport Cooperation for SPECA countries, and which would be considered by the participants.

### **4. Welcome message from Ms. Brigita Schmögnerova, Executive Secretary of UNECE**

Mr. Michalis Adamantiadis, Regional Advisor on Transport of UNECE delivered a statement from Ms. Brigita Schmögnerova, Executive Secretary of UNECE.

In her statement the Executive Secretary welcomed the participants and expressed her gratitude to the Government of Kyrgyzstan and the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic for hosting this meeting in Issyk-Kul, as well as to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for its work and contribution to the Programme as the lead SPECA country in the field of transport.

She emphasized that, recognizing specific development needs and problems of landlocked and transit developing countries, UNECE provides assistance for the development of transport to the participating countries and thus promotes their economic development and welfare growth.

UNECE is implementing a Pilot Project for the facilitation of participation of Central Asian and Caucasus countries in the meetings of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee and selected subsidiary bodies, with funding from the European Union. UNECE works jointly with UNESCAP on development of Euro-Asian transport linkages, where increased attention is given to development of transport linkages between SPECA countries. Also, UNECE / UNESCAP jointly prepared a new Project proposal on Capacity Building in Developing Transit Transport Cooperation of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries in the SPECA Subregion. She also expressed hope that the new project will gain support at the 10<sup>th</sup> session of SPECA PWG-TBC and will receive financial assistance from the donors.

## **II. PROCEEDINGS**

### **A. Report of the Chairman on the 9th session SPECA PWG-TBC**

H.E. Mr. Abylgazin briefly reported on implementation of decisions made at the 9th session of SPECA PWG-TBC. He highlighted positive results of regional cooperation under the framework of the UNESCAP Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development Project (ALTID). In particular, the signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network by the SPECA member countries among 26 countries at Shanghai in April 2004 is a positive outcome of the first component of ALTID project. In this regard, Kazakhstan works on definitive accession to the Agreement.

With regards to the second component of the ALTID project, SPECA countries continued their work on development of the Northern Corridor of the Trans-Asian Railway (TAR). In particular, he expressed appreciation for the UNESCAP's initiative on drafting the Intergovernmental Agreement on TAR. He noted that the signing of the Agreement in 2006 by the countries concerned, including SPECA countries, will create an impetus for further development of transit transport potential of the SPECA Subregion in line with the Action Programme for Transit Transport Cooperation for SPECA countries adopted by the 8th session of PWG-TBC in Baku. The Chairman also expressed appreciation of the UNECE Pilot Project for the facilitation of participation of Central Asian and Caucasus countries in the meetings of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee and selected subsidiary bodies, as well as to the Advisory mission of UNESCAP in December 2004 on improving the efficiency of SPECA PWG-TBC.

## **B. Report by SPECA PWG-TBC National Coordinators**

### **Kyrgyz Republic**

H.E. Mr. Azhikeev, Vice-Minister of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic, reported on activities of Kyrgyzstan.

He stressed the importance of the Almaty Programme of Action, which addresses special needs of landlocked countries. He pointed out, however, that due to a large number of components, the programme is difficult to implement, and in accordance with the UNESCAP guidelines, SPECA countries should determine their own priorities in the Programme and implement them by phases / stages. In the opinion of Kyrgyzstan, Programmes of work of international organizations (UNECE, UNESCAP, CIS, ECO, SCO and others) should include implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, as well as any special projects of interest to SPECA countries. He also informed the meeting that in accordance with the Almaty Programme of Action, the national plan of Kyrgyzstan on implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action was drafted. The plan is now being approved by the concerned Ministries and Agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic. Also, a working group on implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action was established with participation of Ministries and Agencies concerned of the Kyrgyz Republic.

He also suggested that bilateral consultations on border-crossing issues are organized during regular sessions of the PWG-TBC with participation of UNECE and UNESCAP. He also noted that representatives of Customs authorities of SPECA countries should participate in the PWG-TBC sessions.

### **Republic of Kazakhstan**

The national coordinator of Kazakhstan reported on activities in the field of transport in 2004.

In general, Kazakhstan completed its work on restructuring of the railway sector. However, further development of the sector required adoption of a new Programme on Restructuring of Railway Transport for 2004-2006, so implementation of the Programme will continue in 2005. The activity of a working group comprising of transport authorities on freight and container services from Kazakhstan and China resulted in the launch of container block train services. In total, there were 234 container block trains in Kazakhstan in 2004. Kazakhstan continued reconstruction, rehabilitation and construction activities of their roads of national importance. Technical specifications of roads in Kazakhstan exceed minimal specification stipulated in the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and are close to European standards.

According to their technical specifications, the majority of roads are of class II. At present Kazakhstan works on joining the International motor insurance card system «Green card».

Mr. Abylgazin also suggested that SPECA member countries consider participating in the international system of motor driver liability insurance «Green Card». Besides, in accordance with the Intergovernmental agreement on international road transport between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, starting July 1, 2004 all international road transport between the parties is carried out on “no-permit” basis. Kazakhstan works on a similar agreement with Tajikistan, and plans to negotiate the same agreements with Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. It also works on harmonization and simplification of border crossing procedures.

### **C. Reports by International Organizations on activities at the subregional / regional level**

#### **UNECE**

Mr. Michalis Adamantiadis presented the joint UNECE-UNESCAP Euro-Asian Transport Links project component of the UNDA Capacity Building project on Interregional Transport Linkages, which is jointly implemented by the five UN regional commissions over the period 2003-2006, and expressed UNECE’s gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> Expert Group Meeting on developing Euro Asian Transport Linkages, in Almaty, on 9-11 March 2004.

He stressed that in the two Expert Group Meetings that have been organized under the Euro-Asian Transport Links project component, Government representatives from 17 countries in the Euro-Asian region agreed on the main elements of a strategy for the development of Euro-Asian Transport Links, and on the major road and rail transport routes connecting Europe and Asia to be considered for priority development. Country representatives also agreed on approaches to developing the routes, including: assessment of the technical conditions of the adopted routes; identification and analysis of the main physical and non-physical obstacles along these routes through a time/cost analysis; identification of main transshipment points along the routes; completion of a Geographic Information System (GIS) database; and identification of priority projects along the selected routes. He mentioned that removing border crossing obstacles and hindrances through implementing the relevant international agreements and conventions and formulating national action plans, are also in the focus of the countries involved under this project and will be among the issues to be discussed at a 3<sup>rd</sup> Expert Group Meeting to be convened in June 2005.

He also reported on the implementation of the UNECE's new pilot project, funded by the EU, for the facilitation of participation of Central Asian and Caucasus countries in the Meetings of ITC and selected SBs, through financing country experts participation (September 2004 – June 2005). He stressed that in spite of the short period since its beginning the project has already achieved useful results. Its implementation offered valuable contribution in the harmonization process of the transport legislation, as well as to the integration of the transport systems of the beneficiary countries with those of other UNECE member countries, and has provided substantial assistance towards the development of Euro-Asian transport connections. Based on the positive evaluation of the beneficiary countries from the implementation of this Project, the secretariat envisages requesting the EC to consider co-financing this Project for one additional year.

### **UNESCAP**

In the presentation from UNESCAP it was outlined that in the field of transport UNESCAP gives a lot of attention to implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, both in the work of SPECA PWG-TBC, and in projects of great interest to the PWG-TBC member countries.

An example of such projects can be the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, which has been signed by all SPECA member countries, with Uzbekistan being the only country that definitively acceded to the Agreement. Active work is being done on drafting a similar agreement on Trans Asian Railway Network.

The list of other projects includes: Identifying Investment Needs and Priorities for the Development of the Asian Highway Network; Demonstration runs of the container block trains along the Trans Asian Railway; implementation of UNESCAP resolution 48 / 11 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures (potentially all SPECA countries can accede to the conventions specified in the resolution in 2005); assisting in establishing national interagency trade and transport facilitation commissions/ committees; drafting the SCO Intergovernmental agreement on facilitation of international road transport; development of training materials on Intermodal transport; development of Euro Asian transport linkages.

Also, the importance was stressed of the International Meeting on the role of International, Regional and Sub-regional Organizations for the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action to be held in Almaty, 29-31 March 2005.

### **TRACECA (Central Asia)**

The Meeting was provided with information on TRACECA, which reflected objectives, activities and progress of work of the organization.



### **EurAsEC (Kazakhstan)**

The Meeting was also provided with information on EurAsEC regarding its activities in the SPECA region.

#### **Guidelines to improve efficiency of SPECA PWG-TBC**

Mr. V. N. Timofeev, UNESCAP Advisor on Transport, presented the guidelines as an outcome of the very first analysis of SPECA PWG-TBC activities since 1998 when it was established.

The analysis of the PWG-TBC activities was performed at the end of 2004 during the UNESCAP's advisory mission on the initiative of the Ministry of Transport and Communication of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the lead SPECA country in the field of transport.

As the result of the analysis, main problem areas of the PWG-TBC activities were identified and a complex approach to improve efficiency of the group was presented. Draft guidelines were discussed during a special meeting at the Ministry of Transport and Communication of the Republic of Kazakhstan in December 2004 and sent to the SPECA member countries in due time before the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the PWG-TBC.

During the presentation, a representative from KazATO suggested amending paragraph 29 with suggestion of demonstration runs by trucks from SPECA Subregion to the sea ports. Representatives of EurAsEC and TRACECA suggested amending paragraph 30 on undertaking active and coordinated actions jointly by Kazakhstan, UNESCAP, CIS, ECO, SCO, as well as EurAsEC and TRACECA.

#### **Capacity building in developing transit transport cooperation of landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia**

Mr. Michalis Adamantiadis, Regional Advisor on Transport of UNECE, presented a new joint UNECE-UNESCAP Project proposal on Capacity building in developing transit transport cooperation of landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia (Annex 4), aimed at assisting SPECA countries in developing efficient transit transport systems among them and between them and their transit developing neighbours UNECE and UNESCAP are currently seeking funding from International Financial Institutions and donors for ensuring the implementation of this project over the period 2006-2009. The preliminary estimate of the project cost is USD 750 000.

The participants listened with great interest to the presentation of the project and gave a positive evaluation of the project's goals and objectives.

#### **D. SPECA PWG-TBC Programme of Work, 2005-2006**

The 2005-2006 Programme of Work (Annex 5), prepared by UNECE / UNESCAP in line with the Action Programme for Transit Transport Cooperation for SPECA countries adopted by the 8th session of PWG-TBC and the Almaty Programme of Action, was presented for consideration of the Meeting.

The main thrust areas of the program of work are as follows:

- (a) Formulation and adoption of the SPECA road and rail networks;
- (b) Establishment and functioning of national transport facilitation committees / commissions;
- (c) Accession to and implementation of international conventions recommended by the Group;
- (d) Establishment of the SPECA PWG-TBC databases on: (i) international routes; (ii) projects implemented or being implemented from 2000 by various international and other organizations; and (iii) border crossing problems;
- (e) Analysis of major selected routes within the SPECA region using the UNESCAP time / cost methodology.

Participants of the meeting supported the main thrust areas of the PWG-TBC Programme of Work 2005-2006 and noted that the Programme is in line with the practical interests of SPECA countries.

### **III. MAJOR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

After presentation and consideration of documents and information as stipulated in the Agenda of 10<sup>th</sup> Session of SPECA PWG-TBC, the Group arrived at following major conclusions and recommendations:

1. The Meeting stressed the increasing importance of PWG-TBC (comprising six landlocked countries) in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action through the Action Programme for Transit Transport Cooperation for the SPECA countries adopted by the 8<sup>th</sup> session of PWG-TBC in 2003.
2. To provide guidance to the Group in line with the Almaty Programme of Action and the SPECA Action Programme for Transit Transport Cooperation the Meeting endorsed the Guidelines to Improve Efficiency of the SPECA PWG-TBC (Annex 3). It also recommended that such evaluations should be carried out regularly every 2-3 years.

3. Accordingly the Meeting recognized the following thrust areas of the Group for 2005-2006:
  - (a) Formulation and adoption of the SPECA road and rail networks;
  - (b) Establishment and functioning of national transport facilitation committees / commissions;
  - (c) Accession to and implementation of international conventions recommended by the Group (Annex 6);
  - (d) Establishment of the SPECA PWG-TBC databases on: (i) international routes: (ii) projects implemented or being implemented from 2000 by various international and other organizations; and (iii) border crossing problems;
  - (e) Analysis of major selected routes within the SPECA region using the UNESCAP time / cost methodology.
  
4. The Meeting also recognized that: (a) the development of subregional project proposals for joint submission to potential donors, and (b) bilateral consultations on border-crossing issues, should be given high priority to bring the Group's activities more in line with the practical interests of the SPECA member countries. It recommended that the first bilateral consultations on border-crossing issues of prime interest to the Kyrgyz Republic and its immediate neighbors should be carried out during the 11<sup>th</sup> session of PWG-TBC.
  
5. The Meeting stressed that financial support to the SPECA PWG-TBC activities is crucial for the success of the Group in view of budget constraints of the SPECA member countries. To meet minimum requirements of the Group, financial support is needed for: (a) participation of at least two representatives (transport and Customs) from each of the SPECA countries in sessions of PWG-TBC; (b) implementation of the PWG-TBC Work Programme at national level; (c) participation of at least one representative each of the SPECA member countries in major related international meetings. The Meeting urged the Governments of the SPECA member states as well as UNECE, UNESCAP, TRACECA, EurAsEC, WB, ADB, IDB and other financial institutions to pursue the matter. The Meeting also requested Islamic Development Bank to consider the possibility of providing financial support for the participation of at least two representatives (transport and Customs) from each of the SPECA countries in sessions of SPECA PWG-TBC.
  
6. The Meeting expressed its gratitude to the EU for the financial support rendered to SPECA member countries by co-funding the implementation of the UNECE Pilot Project for the facilitation of participation of Central Asian and Caucasus countries in the meetings of the UNECE Inland

Transport Committee and selected subsidiary bodies. Noting the positive impact from the implementation of this Project in supporting the efforts of the SPECA countries for further harmonization and integration of their transport systems with that of other countries, the Meeting requested UNECE and EU to consider co-funding the continuation of this Project in a new Phase.

7. Noting with interest the progress made in the implementation of the joint UNECE and UNESCAP project on the development of Euro-Asian Transport linkages, the Meeting, stressed the importance of the continuation of this joint project and activities beyond 2006. The Meeting requested the UNECE and UNESCAP to prepare a joint proposal for a new project phase 2007-2010 that would ensure the uninterrupted continuation and further development of this important activity, to be presented to the International Financial Institutions and donors for funding.

8. The Meeting expressed their appreciation and support for the new joint UNECE-UNESCAP project proposal on capacity building in developing transit transport cooperation of landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia, and requested UNECE and UNESCAP to present this project to the International Financial Institutions and donors for co-funding of its implementation, focusing on international routes from Central Asian countries to their main trade partners / countries in Europe and Asia (Annex 4).

9. The Meeting also noted the importance of proper technical support to be provided to the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan – the lead SPECA country in the field of transport, particularly in the establishment and maintenance of the SPECA PWG databases as well as conducting subregional surveys and projects. Relevant information was requested to be provided by Kazakhstan at the 11<sup>th</sup> session of SPECA PWG-TBC.

10. The Meeting endorsed the SPECA Programme of Work for 2005-2006 (Annex 5)

11. The Meeting also endorsed the Draft Agenda of the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the SPECA PWG-TBC (Annex 7) to be held in second quarter 2006 (with dates and venue to be established later).

12. The Meeting expressed its deep gratitude to the Government as well as Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic for excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

#### **IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

The Report of the 10<sup>th</sup> session of PWG-TBC was unanimously adopted on 24 March 2005 in Issyk-Kul.

## V. ANNEXES

**10th Session  
of the SPECA Project Working Group On Transport  
and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)**

24 – 25 March 2005, Issyk-Kul

**AGENDA**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Report of the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the PWG-TBC
4. Review of transit transport issues of Central Asia and the Caucasus region, with reference to the Programme of Work 2003-2004, the Action Programme for Transit Transport Cooperation for SPECA Countries, and the Almaty Programme of Action
  - a. Reports by SPECA National Coordinators on activities at the national level
    - i. Establishment and strengthening of facilitation committees
    - ii. Accession to and implementation of international conventions
    - iii. Road/rail transport to China
    - iv. Application of ESCAP methodology to evaluate transit transport
    - v. Inventory of border crossing problems and best practices
  - b. Reports by Observer Countries
  - c. Reports by International Organizations on activities at the subregional/ regional level
5. Draft Programme of Work 2005-2006
6. Review of draft agenda for the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the SPECA PWG-TBC
7. Other business
8. Adoption of the Report

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****10th Session of SPECA PWG on Transport and Border Crossing  
24 March 2005, Issyk-Kul (Kyrgyzstan)**

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**GUIDELINES**  
**to improve the efficiency of the SPECA Project**  
**Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)**

For the six landlocked member countries of SPECA, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, transport is an important area for subregional cooperation. This cooperation is being promoted through the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC). In view of its role in the development of the Euro-Asian transport system and the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action (2003), the work of the SPECA PWG-TBC has been given renewed prominence by all of the member countries as well as by its partner organizations.

As it gets ready to meet for its 10th session, the PWG-TBC has a valuable opportunity to strengthen its future work. The principal problem areas of PWG-TBC are presented below. These have been identified through an analysis of documents of its nine sessions conducted in 1998-2004, and available documents on transit/international transport development of the SPECA countries. Within each problem area, recommendations are given to improve the efficiency of the Group.

**PROBLEM AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**A. ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES**

**I. Participation in the PWG should be broadened**

1. Given the complexity and wide range of actors involved in transport processes, the membership of the Project Working Group should be expanded to include representatives of customs and other agencies concerned with border crossing issues. Representatives of the private sector, such as transport associations, freight forwarders may also be invited.
2. Representatives of those neighbouring to the SPECA region should be invited to attend PWG-TBC Meeting as observers and be kept informed of SPECA activities.

**II. Insufficient period of time between invitations and sessions of PWG-TBC, and late submission of documents of the Groups sessions to participants**

***Recommendations:***

3. Invitations by Kazakhstan (lead SPECA country in the field of transport) to participate in sessions of PWG-TBC should reach the SPECA countries no less than one month before the meeting.
4. Tentative agenda of the next PWG-TBC session (adopted on each session of the Group) should clearly reflect organizations and countries responsible for the presentations of relevant documents for each agenda item.
5. Documents prepared for the next session of PWG-TBC should reach the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan no less than three weeks and the SPECA countries no less than two weeks before the session. This will facilitate translation and distribution of the documents.

**III. Technical support to PWG-TBC**

***Recommendations:***

6. It is desirable that the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan has a technical support unit to perform its lead role in the PWG-TBC. A draft Terms of Reference for such a technical support unit is presented in Enclosure 1.

**IV. Lack of state budget of SPECA countries to participate in the SPECA Programme, including sessions of PWG-TBC as well as relevant international meetings is a major problem affecting efficiency of SPECA**

***Recommendations:***

7. A special UN fund of the successful realization of the SPECA Programme should be established. At the minimum, funding is required for the participation of one transport expert and one customs officer from each of the SPECA countries for every session, and for financing relevant work at the national level carried out in accordance with the PWG-TBC programme of work. It would also be helpful to provide financial assistance to SPECA countries to participate in relevant international meetings, as has been started under the UNECE.

8. The practice of hosting sessions of PWG-TBC on a rotational basis among the SPECA countries should be encouraged.

9. When sessions of PWG-TBC are held in Kazakhstan, they should be held in Almaty to reduce expenditures involved by other SPECA countries as compared with those if the session takes place in Astana.

**V. SPECA Partner Organizations should step up efforts to respond to the needs of the SPECA countries as well as to support the activities in the PWG-TBC's work programme more effectively. SPECA member countries should also be actively encouraged to participate in Partner Organizations' activities**

***Recommendations:***

10. Those organizations which are members of the Project Working Group (UNECE, UNESCAP, CIS, ECO, SCO) should identify specific activities which they are committed to supporting during the biennium, in line with their own Programmes of work. The Project Working Group may propose projects to be supported by these organizations. These organizations may also develop new projects in collaboration with the Project Working Group.

11. SPECA countries should actively participate in the UNDA funded Euro-Asian Transport Linkages project and its follow-up actions, which is jointly implemented by UNECE-UNESCAP over the period 2003-2006.

12. SPECA countries should support the new UNECE-UNESCAP joint project proposal for Capacity Building in developing transit transport cooperation of landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia aimed at strengthening their national capacities and fostering cooperation to develop efficient, safe, sustainable and secure transit transport systems in the region.

13. In order to improve coordination amongst agencies, a database of projects (of international and subregional (SPECA) importance) completed or being implemented from 2000 by various international and other organizations, banks etc. should be established.

14. SPECA countries should actively participate in the meetings of the UNECE Inland transport Committee and its Subsidiary Bodies, where UNECE member countries negotiate all the international legal instruments in the field of transport that are considered indispensable for the establishment of an efficient, harmonized and integrated, safe and sustainable pan-European transport system. SPECA countries should also actively participate in the meetings of the UNESCAP Committee on Managing Globalization and Subcommittee on Transport Infrastructure, Facilitation and Tourism.

15. SPECA countries should undertake national legal procedures for their accession to and implementation of all UNECE International Agreements and Conventions in the field of transport, indicated in the protocol of the second session of the SPECA PWG-TBC (see Annex 6).
16. SPECA countries should undertake to accede to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network (developed within framework of UNESCAP) in 2005. As of January 2005 only Uzbekistan had ratified the Agreement.
17. SPECA countries should participate actively in the development of the UNESCAP Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian railway network, including signing of the Agreement in 2006.
18. The SPECA countries should actively participate (from 2005) in the new joint UNESCAP – OSJD project on operationalization of Euro-Asian rail routes with particular reference to landlocked countries in Asia and Caucasus.
19. In cooperation with IGC-TRACECA the PWG-TBC should consider the possibility of a study on Euro-Asian routes in the TRACECA corridor (see also Recommendation 3). Such a proposal was considered by the 2nd and 6th Sessions of PWG-TBC, but related discussions with TRACECA were not completed. Project profile (Annex 6, Protocol of the 2nd Session of PWG-TBC) should be reviewed and revised as a project constituting a part of the UNECE-UNESCAP project on the developments of Euro-Asian transport linkages.
20. The SPECA countries, which are also members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, should actively participate in the development of the intergovernmental SCO Agreement on facilitation of road transport. As currently envisaged other SPECA and non-SPECA countries could join the Agreement thereby creating a single harmonized legal instrument for road transport in Asia.
21. Resume the practice of joint SPECA-IRU seminars etc. on problems and issues of road transport in the SPECA subregion, as well as between the subregion and countries in Europe and other countries in Asia. Amongst others these could include implementation of the TIR convention.

## **B. PERIODICAL EVALUATION OF PWG-TBC**

**VI. To date no analysis on the effectiveness of the PWG-TBC has been carried. The recommendations suggested here are the result of the first such analysis**

### ***Recommendations:***

22. Periodical analysis of the PWG-TBC effectiveness should be introduced and carried out at the end of every biennium, and the results taken into consideration when designing the next programme of work.

## **C. SUBSTANTIVE WORK OF THE PWG-TBC**

### ***Recommendations:***

23. The SPECA Programme of Action on Transit Transport Cooperation, adopted by the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of PWG-TBC (27-29 March 2003, Baku) is an important initiative relating to the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action (2003). However the SPECA Programme has a large number of components. It therefore appears reasonable to identify priority elements of the Programme and implement the Programme in phases or steps according to their assigned priorities. The following areas of work are suggested for ongoing consideration by the PWG-TBC.
24. Formulation of the agreed SPECA road and rail networks of international and subregional importance based on the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway, AGR, AGC and AGTC with the publication of maps: (a) SPECA road network, (b) SPECA railway network.

25. Establishment of database of the two networks, including intermodal connections, break-of-gauge and border crossings with periodic update of data.
26. Identify the main transport routes between the SPECA countries and their major trade partners in Europe and Asia, as well as to nearest seaports to conduct an analysis of their characteristics to establish technical, commercial, operational and other indicators of interest to shippers, freight forwarders and other users. In this exercise particular attention should be given to formulation of alternative competing routes (to reduce transport costs and improve level of services).
27. Introduce regular bilateral consultations (during sessions of PWG-TBC) on border crossing issues between the SPECA countries with the participation of UNECE and UNESCAP.
28. Complete the establishment of national interagency trade and transport facilitation committees as soon as possible. In order to facilitate this process SPECA countries should be encouraged to exchange their experiences (transport) within the framework of PWG-TBC.
29. Resume to improve the earlier practice of identifying transport projects of common and priority interest to the SPECA countries for their possible inclusion in programmes of work of transport related international organizations and possible funding by banks etc.
30. Organize demonstration runs of container block trains in the international transport corridor North-South, and from and to the SPECA subregion to seaports (taking into account such a demonstration run on the route Lianyungang, China – Almaty, Kazakhstan in 2004). Specific routes may include the following routes in cooperation with other international organizations involved:
  - a. Central Asia (CA): (Tashkent – Almaty) – port of Nakhodka, Russia;
  - b. CA (Almaty-Tashkent) – port of Bandar Abbas, Islamic Republic of Iran;
  - c. CA (Almaty-port of Aktau) – Islamic Republic of Iran (port of Baudar Abbas);
  - d. CA (Almaty-port of Aktau) – Iran – Turkey (Istanbul);
  - e. Along the TRACECA corridor; and
  - f. CA – port(s) on the Baltic Sea (including Estonia).
31. SPECA countries should undertake active and coordinated actions (Kazakhstan, UNECE, UNESCAP, CIS, ECO, SCO, IGC TRACECA, EURASEC) to implement the UNESCAP Resolution 48/11 “Road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures”, as well as to the other UNECE International Agreements and Conventions in the field of transport, as indicated in the protocol of the second session of the SPECA PWG-TBC (Annex 6). SPECA countries should try to complete the accession of the SPECA countries to all the international conventions reflected in UNESCAP Resolution 48/11 in 2005. This should be followed by effective implementation of the Conventions.

## **Enclosure 1**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE OF ORGANIZATION/UNIT TO SUPPORT THE SPECA PROJECT WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT AND BORDER CROSSING (PWG-TBC)**

The Terms of Reference include:

1. Participation in the formulation and implementation of national plan of action of Kazakhstan in line with the Almaty Programme of Action.
2. Participation in the formulation and periodic analysis of the SPECA transport network, (road, railway, intermodal) of international importance.
3. Establishing a database of the networks, including border crossings and periodical updating of data.
4. Establishing a database on projects in the field of international land transport completed and being implemented in the SPECA countries from 2000.
5. International transport routes analysis (on routes within SPECA region) using the UNESCAP methodology and establishing a related database.
6. Technical support to cooperation of the National Interagency Commissions on Transport and Border Crossing among the SPECA countries.
7. Studies in the field of land transport in the SPECA region.
8. Participation in sessions of PWG-TBC.
9. Other tasks as requested by the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan (lead country in transport, SPECA).

**Capacity building  
in developing transit transport cooperation  
of landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia**

**Project Title:** Capacity building in developing transit transport cooperation of landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus (Economic Commission for Europe; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific)

**Objective:** The objective of the project is to assist landlocked developing countries and their transit developing neighbours in the Central Asia and Caucasus, in strengthening their national capacities and fostering cooperation to develop efficient, safe, sustainable and secure transit transport systems in the region.

**Background:**

Countries in the Central Asian and Caucasus region (Armenia and Azerbaijan) are landlocked developing countries and at the same time countries in transition, which rely on relatively few commodities for their export earnings. Lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets creates substantial obstacles in their development efforts. In most cases, their transit neighbours are themselves developing countries, often of broadly similar economic structure and problems. Long delays at borders, punitive and arbitrary transit tariffs, transport restrictions, cumbersome procedures, corruption and lack of security for transport users are additional obstacles to the existing inadequate transport infrastructures. As a result, transport among these countries and between these countries and their international trade partners, is difficult, costly, time consuming and uncertain. This situation makes their exports uncompetitive in international markets, increases the prices of imported goods and prevents their effective participation in international trade.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration (New York 2000), as well as Declarations of other major United Nations conferences, such as the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (Brussels 2001), the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monteray 2002) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002), recognized the special needs and problems of landlocked developing countries and called for appropriate action. Furthermore, the International Ministerial Conference on Transit Transport Cooperation, held in August 2003 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, adopted a Programme of Action aimed at developing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked developing countries and their transit neighbours.

The UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (SPECA PWG-TBC), created in 1998 with the support of UNECE and ESCAP, has addressed the priority issues of border crossing and transport facilitation of the countries concerned. Much progress has been made in identifying issues pertaining to transit transport and measures to address them at various levels. While there is widespread awareness of the need to take actions on these issues, the scarcity of resources has hampered the systematic implementation and follow-up of plans, including those developed under the frameworks of SPECA PWC-TBC. The

implementation of these plans would enhance cooperation among the countries concerned and bring tangible results.

### **Relationship to the approved strategic framework for the next Biennium**

The proposal is within the scope and priorities of the biennial programme plan under sub-programme 15.6 (Transport, communication, tourism and infrastructure development) of programme 15 (Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific) and sub-programme 16.2 (Transport) of programme 16 (Economic Development of Europe).

### **Expected Accomplishments:**

The implementation of the project will result in:

- (a) Strengthening cooperation among Central Asian and Caucasus landlocked developing countries and between them and their immediate transit developing neighbours;
- (b) Strengthening of the capacities of national officials dealing with international transit transport, including border crossing formalities and procedures in Central Asian and Caucasus landlocked developing countries and their immediate transit developing neighbours.
- (c) Improving and updating existing knowledge on the nature and magnitude of the problems along the major international routes of Central Asian and Caucasus landlocked developing countries and their immediate transit developing neighbors;
- (d) Improving transport performance along main international transport routes of Central Asian landlocked developing countries and their transit developing neighbours through a reduction of border crossing delays and transport costs and increased reliability of international transport operations along these routes;
- (e) Further harmonizing and implementing national transport legislation in these countries in line with the international conventions and agreements on transit transport.

### **Indicators of Achievement**

The projected indicators for this project are:

- (a) The number of international transport routes that demonstrate improved transport operations, as measured by a decrease in transit transport costs and reduction of waiting times at the major border crossing points;
- (b) The number of countries acceding to and implementing the respective international agreements and conventions;
- (c) The level of satisfaction of the concerned countries and major stakeholders.

### **Duration**

This project will be carried over a period of four years from 2006-2009.



## **Proposed Activities**

The proposed main activities include:

- (a) Consolidation of data pertaining to the main non-physical obstacles impeding the development of international transport in the countries concerned and development of an information system for tracking and monitoring performance along international transport routes:
  - i. Collection of information on existing studies and ongoing initiatives addressing the transit transport operation in the Central Asian sub-region;
  - ii. Elaboration of further studies to update information on the existing situation on the road, rail and combined transport operations in the Central Asian and Caucasus sub-region;
  
- (b) Setting up the necessary mechanisms for ensuring ownership and active involvement and cooperation of the countries and other bodies concerned:
  - i. Establishment of national coordinators in the concerned countries to enhance ownership of the project by stakeholders, and their assistance in implementing the project;
  - ii. Identification of the main national and sub-regional stakeholders, including from the private sector, in close cooperation with the national coordinators;
  - iii. Convening of an inception meeting, with the participation of the national coordinators and regional stakeholders, for raising awareness, ensuring necessary cooperation and discussing modalities and managements;
  - iv. Establishment of appropriate national and sub-regional bodies concerned with coordinating and monitoring implementation of policies supporting transit transport cooperation and ensuring that issues related to improvement of transit transport cooperation and removal of transport barriers are continuously addressed at high intergovernmental level and meetings.
  
- (c) Promoting harmonization of transport legislation and administrative procedures for the development of international transport operation in the region:
  - i. Promotion of harmonized national strategies, legislation and integrated policies for transit transport cooperation on the basis of the international conventions and agreements in the field of transport, including those developed by UNECE, with priority to those listed in UNESCAP resolution 48/11;
  - ii. Introduction of simplified and accelerated customs and border crossing procedures for trustworthy transport operators and trading companies;
  - iii. Introduction of model legislation in the various languages of the concerned countries facilitating better adoption of international legal instruments in the concerned countries;
  - iv. Promotion of harmonized charging policies for international road transport of goods, based on cost-relatedness, non-discrimination and transparency.

- (d) Strengthening the capacities of national officials dealing with border crossing formalities and procedures:
- i. Organization of national and regional workshops and training courses to enhance the competence and efficiency of relevant stakeholders who sit at the borders, focusing on major international conventions and agreements in the field of transport in the concerned countries;
  - ii. Promotion of best practices and transfer of know-how among the countries concerned and between them and other sub-regions;
  - iii. Provision of advisory services to the concerned countries.
- (e) Improving the performance of border crossing operations:
- i. Facilitation and simplification of customs procedures through the promotion of joint border posts and best practices, automated customs systems, and implementation of “Safe TIR system”;
  - ii. Introduction of reporting mechanisms for transit transport indicators in cooperation with customs and transport operators;
  - iii. Elaboration and introduction of national and sub regional systems for regular assessment of the status and monitoring of progress in the major border crossing of the concerned countries in cooperation with customs and stakeholders.
- (f) Preparing recommendations for further actions based on lessons learned
- (g) Disseminating widely relevant information:
- i. Establishment of a special open access website for dissemination of relevant information;
  - ii. Organization of a final regional workshop with the participation of the appropriate officials in the countries concerned and other stakeholders for presenting results and recommendations;

**Resource Requirements** (in United States Dollars)

Expert services related to collection of information and elaboration of studies. (In support of activity (a)).	60,000
Expert services related assistance in setting up the necessary mechanisms for ensuring cooperation of stakeholders other bodies concerned. (In support of activity (b)).	60,000
Organization of expert group meetings, national and sub-regional seminars and workshops, including the inception meeting and the final workshop. (In support of activities ((b), (d), (e) and (g)).	240,000
Expert services related assistance in capacity building, model legislation, and policy actions. (In support of activities (b), (c), and (d)).	150,000
Expert services related assistance in sharing best practices, introduction and setting	100,000

border crossing reporting and monitoring mechanisms, and preparing recommendations. (In support of activities (e), and (f)).	
Expert services related assistance in preparing software programs for collecting, processing and disseminating information. (In support of activities (e) and (g)).	30,000
Travel of staff to attend meetings, conduct capacity-building workshops, evaluate studies and share experiences. (In support of all activities).	60,000
General operating expenses related to communications, supplies and other miscellaneous services. (In support of all activities).	35,000
Acquisition of computer equipment. (In support of activities (e) and (g)).	15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>750,000</b>

**SPECA Project Working Group  
on Transport and Border Crossing  
PROGRAMME OF WORK, 2005-2006**

**A. National level activities**

1. Establishment and strengthening of national transport facilitation committees as parts of national trade and transport interagency commissions (APTTC 1 and 2)
  - For those countries which have not yet done so, establishment of national trade and transport facilitation committees (NTTFCs)
  - Development of National Action Plans for the development of international transport by NTTFCs (by end of 2005)
2. Accession to and implementation of international conventions (APTTC 3)
  - Accession to and implementation of all UNECE International Agreements and Conventions in the field of transport, included in the protocol of the second session of SPECA PWG-TBC
  - Accession to all conventions under the UNESCAP resolution 48/11 by end of 2005
  - Identification of problems in the implementation of the conventions reflected in resolution 48/11 as well as the development of remedial measure to accelerate implementation
  - Active participation in the meetings of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and its Subsidiary Bodies
  - Active participation in the meetings of the UNESCAP Committee on Managing Globalization and Subcommittee on Transport Infrastructure, Facilitation and Tourism
  - Accession to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network (by the end of 2005)
  - Participation in the development of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Trans-Asian Railway Network (2005) and signing the Agreement in 2006
3. Road/rail transport infrastructure (APPTC 6)
  - Regular reporting on development of transport infrastructure, including those within the SPECA region and those linking to neighbouring countries
4. Application of ESCAP methodology to evaluate transit transport routes (APTTC 5)
  - Conduct time/cost assessments on selected routes
  - Bilateral consultations on border-crossing issues during sessions of the PWG-TBC (with participation of UNECE-UNESCAP) commencing at 11<sup>th</sup> session of the group.
5. Establishment of an inventory of border crossing problems and good practices
  - Update information on border crossing facilities and infrastructure
  - Identify problems and good practices

## **B. Subregional/regional level activities**

1. Organize and convene SPECA PWG-TBC 11th session
2. Implementation of the guidelines to improve efficiency of SPECA PWG-TBC
3. Support adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on International Road Transport of Goods in the framework of SPECA
4. Organize subregional/regional workshop of national trade and transport facilitation committees (APTTC 1 and 2)
5. Continue the implementation of the UNDA funded UNECE-UNESCAP Euro-Asian Transport Linkages Project and its follow-up actions
6. Solicit support for new UNECE-UNESCAP joint project proposal for Capacity Building in developing transit transport cooperation of landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia
7. Accession to and implementation of relevant international conventions (APTTC 3)
  - Technical support to the countries in the accession and implementation of international conventions (A.2 above)
  - Identification of additional (to those reflected in resolution 48/11 and in the protocol of the second session of SPECA PWG-TBC international conventions to be introduced, including conventions already recommended by SPECA PWG-TBC
  - Continue supporting the participation of SPECA member countries in relevant meetings of the UNECE ITC and selected Subsidiary Bodies (UNECE)
  - Organize national/subregional training workshops with the aim of strengthening implementation of conventions
8. Road/rail transport infrastructure (APTTC 6)
  - Formulation and adoption of SPECA road and rail networks
  - Initiate the establishment of the SPECA PWG-TBC database on road and rail transport routes of international importance, including projects completed or being implemented from 2000 by various international and other
  - Preparation and publication of maps of SPECA road and rail networks
  - Develop subregional project proposals for joint submission to potential donors
  - Analysis of major selected routes within SPECA region using UNESCAP time/cost methodology
9. Establish of an inventory of border crossing problems and good practices
  - Consolidate data from countries on problems and good practices; produce study report on ways to address problems
10. Promote container block-train services to/from/through SPECA
11. Enhance SPECA website

**Accession Status to International Agreements and Conventions,  
indicated in the Protocol of the second session  
of the PWG-Transport and Border Crossing**

№	International Agreements and Conventions	Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
1	Convention on Road Traffic (08/11/1968)*	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	Convention on Road Signs and Signals (08/11/1968)*		X	X	X	X	X
3	Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (19/05/1956)*	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles (18/05/1956)*	X		X			X
5	Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Carnets (14/11/1975)*	X	X	X	X	X	X
6	International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (21/10/1982)*	X	X	X			X
7	Customs Convention on Containers (02/12/1972)*	X	X				X
8	European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Traffic (01/05/1971)	X					
9	European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals (01/05/1971)						
10	European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Traffic (AETR) (01/07/1970)	X	X			X	X
11	Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (04/06/1954)						
12	European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) (30/09/1957)	X	X				
13	Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATR) (01/09/1970)	X	X				X
14	European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) (15/11/1975)	X	X				
15	European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) (31/05/1985)		C				
16	European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) (01/02/1991)		X				

**Comments:**

\* – Conventions, recommended by UNESCAP Resolution 48/11

X – Final signature, ratification, accession

C – At the stage of the Governmental procedures

**11<sup>th</sup> session  
of the SPECA Project Working Group On Transport  
and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)**

**DRAFT AGENDA**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Report on the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the PWG-TBC (Kazakhstan)
4. Review of transit transport issues of Central Asia and the Caucasus region, with reference to the SPECA PWG-TBC Programme of Work, 2005-2006, the Action Programme for Transit Transport Cooperation for SPECA Countries, and the Almaty Programme of Action
  - a. Formulation and adoption of the SPECA road and rail networks (Kazakhstan/ UNESCAP/ UNECE)
  - b. Status report on:
    - i. development of subregional joint project proposals for submission to potential donors (Kazakhstan/ UNESCAP / UNECE).
    - ii. establishment and functioning of national transport facilitation committees/commissions (PWG-TBC member countries)
    - iii. accession to and implementation of international conventions recommended by the Group (PWG-TBC member countries).
    - iv. establishment of the SPECA PWG-TBC databases on: (i) international routes; (ii) projects implemented or being implemented from 2000 by various international and other organizations; and (iii) border crossing problems (Kazakhstan).
  - c. Analysis of major selected routes within the SPECA region using the UNESCAP time/cost methodology (UNESCAP)
  - d. Bilateral consultations on border-crossing issues (routes to the Kyrgyz Republic) (Kyrgyzstan/ UNESCAP / UNECE).
  - e. Implementation of guidelines to improve the efficiency of the SPECA PWG-TBC (UNESCAP / UNECE)
5. Review of draft agenda for the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the SPECA PWG-TBC
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the Report