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UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION  
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## **SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL ASIA (SPECA)**

### **Third (Ad Hoc) Meeting of the SPECA Project Working Group on Gender and Economy**

12 November 2007  
Berlin, Germany

#### **REPORT**

1. The Project Working Group on Gender and Economy (PWG) of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was established by the SPECA Governing Council (Baku, June 2006) with the objectives to raise awareness of policymakers that gender equality is an economic asset, exchange good practices in the gender and economy area, and develop pilot projects for which the SPECA PWG provides guidance on country priorities.
2. The first preparatory meeting (8-9 December 2005, Geneva) and the second meeting (9-10 July 2007, Geneva) identified two priority areas of action: promoting gender sensitive economic policies and capacity building activities to increase women's economic opportunities.
3. Ad hoc SPECA PWG meeting is a part of series of events organized by UNECE and the German Government on Central Asia in Berlin on 12-14 November 2007, which include a High-level Conference "Central Asia and Europe: a New Economic Partnership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century".
4. The third (Ad Hoc) meeting was attended by two co-chairs of the group as well as representatives from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Representatives of Germany as well as of UNECE, UNESCAP and UNDP also participated in the meeting. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Economy and Technology of Germany and was organized in cooperation with InWent.
5. Its main objective was to discuss good practice and concrete steps to establish gender-sensitive economic policies and build partnership with the private sector in the context of the work plan. The discussion had a format of the Round Table (programme of the Round Table is attached).
6. After welcoming remarks from a host institution the meeting was opened by UNECE Executive Secretary and a representative of UNESCAP. Managing director of InWent also pointed out the importance of partnership for mobilizing women's economic potential.
7. The meeting further clarified Work Plan of the SPECA PWG on Gender and Economy for 2008-2009. The participants concluded that despite considerable progress made by SPECA member countries, more work is needed in the area of labour market, including self-employment, women's access to economic resources, and rural and urban disparities in development of women entrepreneurship.
8. The conclusions of the meeting as well as the Programme of Work for 2008-2009 were presented at the SPECA Governing Council session 14 November 2007 by the two co-chairs of the PWG.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Participants of the meeting identified issues of priority for further work of the SPECA PWG on Gender and Economy. These issues were also included into the PWG Programme of Work for 2008-2009.
2. The necessity of focusing PWG activities on pilot counties was emphasized to further ensure effective implementation of the project proposals discussed during the meeting.
3. The meeting agreed on necessity for assessment of business environment for women entrepreneurs in the SPECA region. Particular emphasis was done on the assessment of differences in business environment between rural and urban areas. Participants agreed that assessment will be implemented in two pilot countries: Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Cooperation in this area was established with UNDP Kazakhstan and National Commission of Family and Gender Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
4. During the meeting participants agreed that process of evaluation of gender budgets and preparation of a Manual on gender responsive budgets should become the initiative of all SPECA member countries. In this context, collection of good practices as well as the possibility of organization of a regional workshop is seen as an important step in evaluation of progress in gender budgets.
5. Participants of the meeting came to conclusion that despite considerable progress made by SPECA member countries, more work is needed in gathering information and collecting gender disaggregated data in the following areas: (i) labour market, including self-employment, (ii) women's access to economic resources, and (iii) rural and urban disparities in development of women entrepreneurship.
6. The meeting also agreed that creation and development of the regional knowledge hub focusing on economic aspects of gender will be a platform for exchanging of good practices in the areas of women's employment and entrepreneurship, promoting gender sensitive economic policies and capacity building among SPECA member countries.
7. It was agreed to further explore the possibility to involve private sector in the effective mobilizing of women's economic potential.

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*Welcome by:*

**Ms. Margitta Wülker-Mirbach, Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, Head of Division, Development Policy, UN and UNCTAD**

*Key note addresses:*

**Dr. Marek Belka, Executive Secretary, UNECE**

**Dr. Gudrun Kochendörfer-Lucius, Managing Director, InWent**

**Mr. Raj Kumar, Principal Officer, UNESCAP**

**Moderator: Dr. Ewa Ruminska-Zimny, Head of Gender and Economy Programme, Office of the Executive Secretary, UNECE**

- **Ms. Aitkul Samakova**, Member of Parliament; Chair of National Commission of Family and Gender Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Co-chair of the project Working Group on Gender and Economy
- **Ms. Hijran Huseynova**, Member of the Government; Chair of State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan; Co-chair of the project Working Group on Gender and Economy
- **Mr. Rafkat Hasanov**, Director of Investment Round Table PA, Kyrgyzstan
- Presentations by the participants of **Invent trainings for Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan**
- **Ms. Zulfiya Tukhtakhodjaeva**, President, Board of Directors of Women's Business Association, Uzbekistan
- **Ms. Gulnara Myrzabaeva**, Director Gender programme, UNDP, Kazakhstan