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UNITED NATIONS ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Subregional Office for North and Central Asia

Expert Group Meeting

Implementing the Vienna Programme of Action in North and Central Asia

19-20 April 2022 | Venue: Zoom

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

The Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the decade 2014-2024 (VPoA) is a holistic development plan centered on addressing the challenges faced by landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) through the implementation of specific actions related to six priority areas: (i) fundamental transit policy issues, (ii) infrastructure development and maintenance, (iii) international trade and trade facilitation, (iv) regional integration and cooperation, (v) structural economic transformation, (vi) means of implementation.

Further to this, the Midterm Review of the VPoA convened in December 2019 revealed that despite numerous efforts by the LLDCs, transit developing countries and development partners, the progress made is not enough to achieve the VPoA targets. This resulted in the formulation of a Roadmap that identified 24 action areas to accelerate progress towards the VPoA.

The key action areas and deliverables identified in the Roadmap will contribute to accelerated progress in the achievement of the VPoA objectives. Besides, the concrete activities of the UN System and other regional and international organizations along the Roadmap priority area swill support LLDCs and transit developing countries to realize their sustainable development ambitions.

The expert group meeting will discuss implementation of the VPOA Roadmap as well as the findings and recommendations of two working papers:

(i) Digitalization and the implementation of the VPoA Roadmap in North and Central Asia;

(ii) Mapping out national plans/strategies on the implementation of the VPoA Roadmap in North and Central Asia.

Objectives and expected outcomes

The expert group meeting gathers experts and relevant stakeholders on the discussion topic and is expected to:

- discuss how national development plans/strategies in North and Central Asian countries correspond to the priority and action areas of the VPoA Roadmap;
- identify national developmental needs and gaps in implementing the VPoA Roadmap in North and Central Asian LLDCs;

- analyze the level of digitalization, especially in each of the action areas of the VPoA Roadmap in North and Central Asian LLDCs;
- identify areas for potential digitalization that can support/ accelerate implementation of the action areas listed in the Roadmap;
- explore areas for cooperation among LLDCs as well as between LLDCs and transit countries, and identify support needed from development partners;
- discuss financing options to support implementations of the VPoA Roadmap.

Results of the expert group discussion is expected to feed into the working papers.

Participants

The expert group meeting will gather representatives from relevant government agencies and key experts from academia, private sector, think tanks and international organizations contributing to the implementation of the VPoA in North and Central Asia. Participation will be by invitation only.

Programme overview

Tuesday, 19 April 2022
Morning

- Opening Session
- Session 1: Mapping Vienna Programme of Action priority areas within national strategies of North and Central Asia
    - Presentation by *Ms. Savia Hasanova, Consultant, ESCAP*

Afternoon

- Session 2: Digital potential to advance the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in North and Central Asia
    - Presentation by *Mr. Torsten Thieme, Consultant, ESCAP*

Wednesday, 20 April 2022
Morning

- Policy Dialogue on "Financing a Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19 and Beyond"
    - Presentation by *Countries with Special Situations Section, ESCAP*

Further information

The expert group meeting will take place in virtual modality on 19 and 20 April 2022. It will be conducted in English and Russian with simultaneous interpretation. Detailed information can be found on the official event page HERE. All questions regarding the expert group meeting can be directed to artur.akhmetov@un.org with copy to patricia.wong@un.org and norbun@un.org.