



UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL ASIA (SPECA)

SPECA/WG-Trade/2022/EN/1

Seventeenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade

Hybrid session (The Fairmont Hotel, Singapore & on MS Teams), 31 August 2022
Tentative Agenda¹

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) are organizing the seventeenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade on 31 August 2022, back-to-back with the tenth session of the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum: Next Generation Trade Facilitation for Sustainable Development (29-30 August 2022). The Working Group supports cross-border and regional cooperation for the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in Central Asia (notably SDG targets 17.10 and 17.11), in support of sustainable trade. The session will focus on the deliverables of the SPECA Working Group on Trade:

- (1) Collaboration among SPECA participating countries with a view to addressing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,
- (2) progress in the implementation of the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy and related roadmap,
- (3) further development and implementation of the Principles for Sustainable Trade in the subregion,
- (4) studies and recommendations on non-tariff barriers to trade in the subregion in the age of the pandemic, and
- (5) standards for the digitalization of data and document flows in multimodal transport and trade.

The event will review national and regional plans and strategies of the SPECA countries for sustainable trade facilitation and development and strengthen cooperation among trade diplomats of the SPECA countries. Participants in the session and SPECA participating countries are requested to contribute their good practices and identify priority actions on which the SPECA Working Group on Trade could work in the coming 2-3 years.

Target audience: trade policymakers from the SPECA countries.

H.E. Mr. Abdurahmon Abdurahmonzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan and Chairperson of the SPECA Working Group on Trade, will lead the seventeenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade. Its overall objectives are to foster exchange of experiences and mutual assistance among the SPECA countries, achieve the trade-related SDGs, review the implementation of the regional trade facilitation strategy, principles of sustainable trade, standards for digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange, elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade and encourage the development of a regional private sector network in support of these objectives.

¹ For information, please contact Mr. Alexey Kravchenko, Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Trade Policy and Facilitation Division (e-mail: kravchenkoa@un.org, tel. +66 2288 1628) and/or Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (e-mail: mario.apostolov@un.org; tel.: +41 22 917 11 34). Latest agenda and programme available at <https://www.unescap.org/events/2022/seventeenth-session-speca-working-group-trade>

Time²

13:00 – 13:15 **Welcoming remarks (3-5 min each):**

- H.E. Mr. Abdurahmon Abdurahmonzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan and Chairperson of the SPECA Working Group on Trade
- Rupa Chanda, Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP
- Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE

13:15 – 13:25 **Session 1: Report of the Chair of the SPECA WG on Trade**

13:25 – 13:55 **Session 2: Non-tariff measures, trade facilitation and sustainability in post COVID-19 recovery among SPECA countries**

Presentations:

- Yann Duval and Alexey Kravchenko, ESCAP – climate-smart trade and investment.
- Mario Apostolov, UNECE – Implementation of the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy and the Principles of Sustainable Trade; standards for the digitalization of multimodal transport and trade; report on the studies on non-tariff measures/barriers in the SPECA subregion; new guide on trade facilitation enquiry points.
- Larisa Kislyakova, UNECE consultant (virtual) - Harmonizing border crossing procedures and implementing SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy, tbc
- Nadezhda Sporysheva, UNECE (virtual) – Presentation on sustainable trade in SPECA.
- Statements from development partners in the region (tbc).

Moderator: H.E. Mr. Abdurahmon Abdurahmonzoda.

13:55 – 15:25 **Session 3: Perspectives of the SPECA participating countries, discuss the five directions of work of the SPECA WG on Trade (10 min each):**

- Azerbaijan
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan

Moderator: Alexey Kravchenko

² Singapore time (GMT+8)

15:25 – 15:55 **Session 4: Updated programme of work and adoption of decisions, discuss the five areas of work of the WG: cooperation in the WTO process; trade facilitation; principles of sustainable trade; NTBs; digitalization of multimodal transport and trade:**

Brief statements by ESCAP and UNECE

- ESCAP: Yann Duval
- UNECE: Mario Apostolov

Guided discussion led by ESCAP & ECE

- Ideas and plans to enhance policy cooperation, trade facilitation and sustainable trade under SPECA: Guidance from SPECA participating countries to the ESCAP and UNECE secretariats; Capacity building on trade negotiations; Roadmap for Implementation of the SPECA Trade Facilitation Strategy; Roadmap on Principles of Sustainable Trade; Digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange using UN standards.

Moderator: Mario Apostolov

15:55 – 16:00 **Wrap up**

Chair and brief statements from ESCAP and UNECE