



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

SPECA/WG-Trade/2024/EN/1

Nineteenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade

Hybrid session (Samarkand, Uzbekistan & on MS Teams), 3 April 2024

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 nineteenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade on 3 April 2024, back-to-back with the eleventh session of the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum: Leveraging Digitalization for Sustainable Supply Chains (1-5 April 2024). The Working Group supports cross-border and regional cooperation for the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in Central Asia, in sustainable trade (notably SDG targets 17.10 and 17.11). The session will focus on advancing digital trade and trade digitalization in SPECA participating States, and review progress of the implementation of the work plan of the SPECA Working Group on Trade.

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

Target audience: trade policymakers from the SPECA participating States.

H.E. Mr. Nuriddinzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan and Chairperson of the SPECA Working Group on Trade, will lead the nineteenth session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade. Its overall objectives are to foster exchange of experiences and mutual assistance among the SPECA participating States, to implement trade facilitation and achieve the trade-related SDGs; review a regional trade facilitation strategy 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://unescap.org/events/2024/nineteenth-session-speca-working-group-trade>

Time²

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

- [Rep of the host country, tbc]
- H.E. Mr. Nuriddinzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan and Chairperson of the SPECA Working Group on Trade
- Ms. Rupa Chanda, Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division (TIID), ESCAP
- Ms. 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 – 13:45 **Session 2: Advancing digital trade and digitalization**

Presentations:

- Unleashing digital trade and investment for sustainable development in the SPECA region (Ms. Witada Anukoonwattaka)³
- Addressing trade data discrepancies through digital trade facilitation: evidence from data and new tool⁴ (Mr. Alexey Kravchenko, Economic Affairs Officer, TPFS, TIID, ESCAP)
- Update on the state of implementation of digital and sustainable trade facilitation and the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asian and the Pacific in SPECA region (Mr. Yann Duval, Chief, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section (TPFS), TIID, ESCAP)
- Update on activities in trade facilitation (Trade Facilitation Roadmap of Uzbekistan), the SPECA Principles of Sustainable Trade (Seminar on Sustainable Trade in Tajikistan, 17 January 2024 and possibilities for the other countries) and the SPECA Roadmap on the Digitalization of Multimodal Data and Document Exchange using UN legal instruments and standards (Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE)
- Statements from development partners in the region, t.b.c.

Moderator: tbc

² Tashkent time (GMT+5)

³ Based on the Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2023/2024: Unleashing digital trade and investment for sustainable development, available from <https://www.unescap.org/kp/APTIR2023>

⁴ Trade Intelligence and Negotiation Advisor: TINA - <https://tina.trade>

13:45 – 15:15 **Session 3: Updates from the SPECA participating States on their progress in advancing trade towards sustainable development and regional cooperation (10 min each):**

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

Moderator: tbc

15:15 – 15:45 **Session 4: Report on recent activities, 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: Mr. Yann Duval
- UNECE: Mr. Mario Apostolov

Guided discussion led by chair, tbc

- Ideas and plans to enhance policy cooperation, trade facilitation and sustainable trade under SPECA: Guidance from SPECA participating States to the ESCAP and UNECE secretariats; the UN Resident Coordinators in the SPECA countries

Moderator: tbc

15:45 – 16:00 **Q&A and wrap up**

Chair and brief statements from ESCAP and UNECE