

**UNECE Statement, ESCAP webinar on e-Resilience for Pandemic Recovery: Intercountry Consultations in Preparations to CICTSTI, 3 July 2020**

[https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/CN\\_REC%20webinar%20English.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/CN_REC%20webinar%20English.pdf)

Mr. Christopher Athey thanked ESCAP on behalf of the UNECE Innovative Policies Development Section for their invitation to participate in this event, the excellent organization and highly relevant programme. UNECE Member States are facing similar challenges in terms of building back stronger and with greater resilience from the Covid-19 crisis, with a growing digital divide appearing to be a rapidly emerging and key policy challenge in both UNECE and ESCAP Member States.

Mr. Athey highlighted the long standing and valuable cooperation between UNECE and ESCAP under the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), and encouraged participants to register also for the [12th session of the SPECA Working Group on Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development on 30 July](#).

At the session, participants will discuss related topics including eResilience and the role of AP-IS, as well as a SPECA Innovation Strategy for Sustainable Development ([ENG](#), [RUS](#)), adopted at the [14th session of the SPECA Governing Council in Ashgabat](#) in November 2019. UNECE and ESCAP are jointly providing early stage support to implementation efforts on this Strategy, with a first step being an STI Gap Analysis in the SPECA countries that will also integrate the impact of Covid 19.

Given the unprecedented nature of Covid 19 impact on the economy and societies as a whole and with a view to **shed light on the current situation and prospects of innovation policy and its contribution to overcoming the pandemic**, UNECE has also carried out interviews with the six Eastern Europe and South Caucasus countries, EESC (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). The results of the interviews along with the survey of a wider UNECE network will inform the policy debate on the Covid 19 impact and policy response in terms of innovation and contribute to developing recommendations at the national, sub-regional and UNECE level.

Ms. Lyudmyla Tautiyeva briefed participants on early stage findings from discussions with EESC countries on the immediate innovation policy responses as well as the medium and longer terms prospects for recovery, which have identified a few key issues:

- Need for **longer term vision** and corresponding mechanisms to address the impact of Covid on innovation and economy as a whole.
- The pandemic has incentivised governments to accelerate efforts in digitalisation (incl. investments in digital infrastructure and e-government services) to address the broadened **digital divide** caused by the pandemic.
- In the context of the growing public spending, there is a clear need to ensure that the allocated **resources** are used **effectively** and contribute to building the conditions for the longer-term sustainable recovery. Governments could, for example, leverage the potential of the public procurement of innovation to support the innovation activity and help find new solutions for covid-induced challenges.
- Finally, the broad economic and social impact of the pandemic requires **concerted efforts and closer stakeholder collaboration** both nationally and internationally, including enhancing the public-private dialogue to ensure inclusive dialogue and effectiveness of policy responses.