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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific****Seventy-second session**

Bangkok, 15-19 May 2016

Item 3 (i) of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of  
the Commission, including the work of the regional  
institutions: subregional activities for development****Report of the Governing Council of the Special  
Programme for the Economies of Central Asia on  
its tenth session***Summary*

At its tenth session, the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) noted with satisfaction the outcomes of the 2015 SPECA Economic Forum, “Supporting the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SPECA region”, held in Dushanbe on 10 and 11 November 2015. The Governing Council adopted a declaration entitled “Paving the way for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SPECA region”, which calls upon the secretariats of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as well as other United Nations agencies and programmes, to provide active support to regional efforts by the Programme’s participating countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Governing Council noted with appreciation the progress reports on the work carried out by the Programme’s project working groups since its previous session. The Governing Council expressed satisfaction with the scope of activities and the stability of extrabudgetary funding received by the Programme’s projects.

In welcoming the progress made to strengthen cooperation between the Programme and other programmes, the Governing Council invited the secretariats of ECE and ESCAP and partner organizations to continue to develop close cooperation, including through joint project development and implementation.

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## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Decisions.....	2
II. Introduction.....	3
III. Participants.....	4
IV. Opening of the session.....	4
V. Adoption of the agenda.....	4
VI. Outcomes of the 2015 SPECA Economic Forum: “Supporting the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SPECA region”; adoption of a political document on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.....	5
VII. The Programme’s activities since the previous session of the Governing Council.....	5
VIII. Adoption of the Programme’s workplan for 2016-2017.....	6
IX. Cooperation between the Programme and regional organizations and institutions.....	6
X. Election of the next Chair country of the Programme.....	6
XI. Other business, including date and venue of the 2016 SPECA Economic Forum and eleventh session of the Governing Council.....	6
XII. Closing of the session.....	7

### **I. Decisions**

#### **Decision 1 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/1)**

The Governing Council notes with satisfaction the outcomes of the 2015 SPECA Economic Forum, “Supporting the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SPECA region”, held in Dushanbe on 10 and 11 November 2015. The Governing Council calls upon the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as well as other United Nations agencies and programmes, to provide active support to regional efforts by the Programme’s participating countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **Decision 2 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/2)**

The Governing Council adopts the declaration entitled “Paving the way for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SPECA region”.

#### **Decision 3 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/3)**

The Governing Council notes with appreciation the progress reports on the work carried out by the Programme’s project working groups since its last session. The Governing Council expresses satisfaction with the scope of activities and the stability of extrabudgetary funding received by the Programme’s projects.

**Decision 4 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/4)**

The Governing Council approves the SPECA workplan for 2016-2017 as presented during the session. It encourages participating countries, working groups, donors and partner organizations to actively support the implementation of projects contained in the workplan.

**Decision 5 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/5)**

The Governing Council welcomes the progress made in strengthening cooperation between the Programme and other programmes and organizations in providing support for economic cooperation in the Programme's region. The Governing Council invites ECE and ESCAP and their partner organizations to continue developing close cooperation, including further development and implementation of joint projects.

**Decision 6 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/6)**

The Governing Council expresses its sincere gratitude to Tajikistan for its active work as the Chair country of the Programme in 2015.

**Decision 7 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/7)**

The Governing Council welcomes the offer by the Government of Azerbaijan to assume the Chair of the Programme in 2016. The Governing Council elects Azerbaijan as the Chair country of the Programme for 2016.

**Decision 8 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/8)**

The Governing Council decides that its eleventh session and the 2016 SPECA Economic Forum will be held in Azerbaijan in 2016. The Governing Council also decides that the exact dates and venue of these events will be agreed upon and communicated through diplomatic channels.

**Decision 9 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/9)**

The Governing Council expresses its sincere gratitude to the Government of Tajikistan for the excellent organization of the 2015 SPECA Economic Forum and the tenth session of the SPECA Governing Council, and for the hospitality extended to the participants.

**Decision 10 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/10)**

The Governing Council expresses its deep appreciation to the secretariats of ECE and ESCAP for their efforts in organizing these important annual events. It also expresses its special appreciation for their active work aimed at strengthening the Programme and their continued support.

**II. Introduction**

1. The tenth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was held on 11 November 2015 in Dushanbe. The 2015 SPECA Economic Forum, entitled "Supporting the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SPECA region", was held on 10 and 11 November 2015, just prior to the session of the Governing Council.

### **III. Participants**

2. Representatives of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan as well as the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECE and the Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia and the Joint ESCAP/UNECE SPECA Office participated in the session. Representatives of other United Nations Member States, United Nations agencies and programmes and international and regional organizations, as well as members of the academic community, the private sector and civil society, participated as observers.

### **IV. Opening of the session**

3. Mr. Saidrahmon Nazrizoda, First Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan, the Chair country of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia in 2015, served as Chair of the session.

4. In their opening statements, the Chair, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECE and the Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia and the Joint ESCAP/UNECE SPECA Office recalled that during the seventieth session of the General Assembly in September 2015, world leaders had adopted an ambitious and comprehensive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Countries in the Programme's region shared a number of unique challenges in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, including landlocked geography with very large distances to the nearest seaports, dramatic environmental problems caused by the tragedy of the Aral Sea, increasing strain on shared water resources, continuing desertification, rapid melting of glaciers and unusual weather patterns caused by climate change. Many of those challenges could be effectively addressed only through strengthened regional cooperation. The Programme had strong potential in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the participating countries and offered a good intergovernmental subregional platform on which to exchange experiences and review progress.

5. In their opening statements, heads of delegation described progress achieved in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and ongoing efforts to promote the economic development of their countries.

### **V. Adoption of the agenda**

6. Representatives of the secretariats of ECE and ESCAP informed participants that the Executive Secretaries of ECE and ESCAP were unable to participate in the current session of the Governing Council, so the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECE and the Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia and the Joint ESCAP/UNECE SPECA Office would represent them.

7. The Governing Council adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Outcomes of the 2015 SPECA Economic Forum: "Supporting the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SPECA region"; adoption of a political document on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. The Programme's activities since the previous session of the Governing Council.
5. Adoption of the Programme's workplan for 2016-2017.
6. Cooperation between the Programme and regional organizations and institutions.
7. Election of the next Chair country of the Programme.
8. Other business, including date and venue of the 2016 SPECA Economic Forum and eleventh session of the Governing Council.
9. Adoption of decisions.
10. Closing of the session.

**VI. Outcomes of the 2015 SPECA Economic Forum: “Supporting the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SPECA region”; adoption of a political document on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

8. At the 2015 SPECA Economic Forum, discussions had been held about how strengthened regional cooperation in such key areas as trade, transport, water and environment could facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Central Asia. Participants had also emphasized the advantages of a regional approach in such cross-cutting areas as gender, innovation, statistics and disaster risk reduction.

9. The Chair presented the summary of the 2015 SPECA Economic Forum and the draft declaration, entitled “Paving the way for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SPECA region”, for adoption as a political document on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

10. In discussing paragraph 11 of the draft declaration, several delegations emphasized the role of regional organizations such as the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and its Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development and Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia.

11. After the ensuing discussion, the Governing Council adopted decision 1 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/1) and decision 2 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/2) under agenda item 3.

**VII. The Programme's activities since the previous session of the Governing Council**

12. The progress reports on the work carried out by the Programme's project working groups since the previous session of the Governing Council were presented by ESCAP and ECE. After the ensuing discussion, the Governing Council adopted decision 3 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/3) under agenda item 4.

## **VIII. Adoption of the Programme's workplan for 2016-2017**

13. The Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia and the Joint ESCAP/UNECE SPECA Office presented a report on the activities to be carried out within the SPECA framework in 2016-2017. After the ensuing discussion, the Governing Council adopted decision 4 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/4) under agenda item 5.

## **IX. Cooperation between the Programme and regional organizations and institutions**

14. The Programme's Deputy Coordinator at ECE presented an oral report on cooperation between the Programme and partner organizations. After the ensuing discussion, the Governing Council adopted decision 5 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/5) under agenda item 6.

## **X. Election of the next Chair country of the Programme**

15. Several representatives from the Programme's participating countries expressed sincere gratitude to the Government of Tajikistan for the excellent chairmanship of the Programme in 2015. Following a proposal from the Chair, the Governing Council adopted decision 6 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/6) under agenda item 7.

16. The Chair announced that in a note verbale received by the ECE secretariat, the Government of Azerbaijan had expressed its willingness to assume the chairmanship of the Programme in 2016. The head of the delegation of Azerbaijan reconfirmed his country's readiness to do so. Following a proposal from the Chair, the Governing Council adopted decision 7 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/7), also under agenda item 7.

## **XI. Other business, including date and venue of the 2016 SPECA Economic Forum and eleventh session of the Governing Council**

17. Following a proposal from the Chair, the Governing Council adopted decision 8 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/8) under agenda item 8.

18. The heads of delegation thanked the Government of Tajikistan for the excellent organization of the SPECA events and for its hospitality. They also expressed their gratitude to the two regional commissions for their devoted support to the Programme as a whole. Following a proposal from the Chair, the Governing Council adopted decision 9 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/9) and decision 10 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2015/10), also under agenda item 8.

19. The representative of the Government of Afghanistan briefed participants on the outcomes of the recent meeting of the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan on 3 and 4 September 2015 in Kabul. The Conference process was contributing to new partnerships for enhanced cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours. Such cooperation would facilitate the achievement of the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**XII. Closing of the session**

20. In their closing statements, the Chair of the session, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECE and the Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia and the Joint ESCAP/UNECE SPECA Office called on the Programme's participating countries, the United Nations system and development partners to work together on the implementation of the decisions of the Governing Council.

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