



High-Level Seminar on Regional Cooperation in Trade in Central Asia

Geneva, Palais des Nations, Room XII, 3 July 2015¹

(draft agenda)²

The UNECE supports regional cooperation in the area of trade in the region which includes Central Asia, Afghanistan and Azerbaijan, through a regional working group on trade. In order to further develop support for trade in this region, UNECE would like to invite the countries of the region, as well as ITC, UNCTAD, UNIDO, OECD, and other international agencies to deepen their collaboration in this endeavour.

UNECE organized preparatory consultations on this question with the countries' Permanent Missions in Geneva on 5 May 2015, which showed clear interest by the participating countries. The purpose of this high-level Seminar is for countries to outline their priorities for enhanced regional cooperation and to identify possible joint actions by international organizations in support of these priorities. Some possible areas of intervention could include:

- Developing national and regional trade facilitation strategies/road maps;
- Exchanging best practices and building regional cooperation;
- Supporting integration into the global rules-based trading system (WTO), including through:
 - exchanges of experience among the countries' WTO negotiators;
 - reinforcing national efforts to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement;
- A regional study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade;
- Examining the opportunities and challenges presented by trade with large neighbours to the region;
- Developing regional supply chains in priority sectors.

Participating countries and international organizations will be asked for further suggestions and ideas as well as guidance on the priority to be given to topics discussed at the Seminar.

Country delegates are asked to prepare and bring to the Seminar ideas on how their countries' national trade development programmes could best address upcoming key issues such as the: proposed Strategic Development Goals (SDGs), the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked, implementation of the WTO TF Agreement, etc.

On the basis of the outcome of the consultations and high-level Seminar on 3 July, UNECE and other interested international organizations will prepare concrete proposals for specific actions to address support for regional cooperation for trade in Central Asia.

Comments and recommendations for improving the organization and functioning of the Working Group in support of regional trade are also requested and welcomed.

The agenda:

9:30 – 10:00 registration

10:00 – 10:30 Opening session

10:00 – 10:10 Welcome statement, Christian Friis Bach, UNECE Executive Secretary

10:10 – 10:30 Opening statements (Vice Ministers of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan)

10:30 – 10:40 **Concept and objectives** of the high-level Seminar

Virginia Cram-Martos, Director, UNECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division

¹ Back-to-back with the 5th WTO Aid-for-Trade Review meeting (30 June – 2 July 2015)

10:40 – 11:15 Setting the scene

10:40 – 10:50 “Central Asia 2050” Study

Sylvie Naville, Director, Emerging Markets Forum

10:50 – 11:05 Regional Trade as a Factor in Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia

Petko Draganov, Head of the United Nations Regional Centre for Central Asia, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

11:05 – 11:15 Issues for acceding and post-accession countries in Central Asia

Chiedu Osakwe, Director, Accession Division, WTO

11:15 – 13:00 Regional Trade Cooperation and Development: The Countries’ Strategic Approach

11:15 – 11:30 Regional Trade Development and Facilitation: A strategic approach.

Saidrahmon Nazriev, Vice Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan and Co-Chair of the PWG on Trade

11:30 – 11:45 Regional Cooperation for Trade Development

Representative of Turkmenistan

11:45 – 12:00 Afghanistan’s priorities in trade liberalization and facilitation in a regional perspective

Representative of Afghanistan

12:00 – 12:15 Regional Cooperation and Trade Policy Issues

Representative of Azerbaijan

12:15 – 12:30 Regional Cooperation in Central Asia and Accession to WTO

Representative of Kazakhstan

12:30 – 12:45 Kyrgyzstan’s accession to the Eurasian Economic Union and cooperation in Central Asia

Representative of Kyrgyzstan

12:45 – 13:00 Approaches to Trade Development in Central Asia

Representative of Uzbekistan

13:00 – 15:00 *Lunch break*

15:00 – 17:30 International Support to Integration into the Global Trading System, Eliminating Barriers to Trade, and Regional Supply Chain Development

15:00 – 16:00 **Panel discussion:** International Support for Regional Trade Development and Cooperation in Central Asia-Georgi Stoev, chairman of Trade and Investment Committee

The panel discussion will begin with a joint presentation (20 min) on support given by international organizations and, in particular, those that are part of the UN system to countries of the region; *Further panel discussion with representatives of UNECE, UNCTAD, ITC, UNIDO, UNDP, ESCAP, OECD, WTO and other international organizations*

16:00 – 16:30 **Panel discussion:** Development partners: Support for Regional Trade in Central Asia

Representatives of the German Agency for International Development GIZ, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC – Member of the Islamic Development Bank Group), the World Bank, and other development partners

16:30 – 17:35 Feedback from the countries (round the table) and general discussion on the next steps

17:35 - 17:45 Conclusions and recommendations

Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, UNECE Trade Division

17:45 – 18:00 Closing remarks

Virginia Cram-Martos, Director, UNECE Trade Division
