



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

**ASHGABAT COMMUNIQUÉ**

on the results of

**the Follow-up Meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum  
“Developing a Plan of Action to Strengthen Stability and Sustainable Development  
of Afghanistan through Regional Economic Cooperation  
in Central Asia”**

**(Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 7-8 June 2011)**

1. Participants appreciated the timely initiative by the Government of Turkmenistan, the country that presently chairs the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), to host in Ashgabat the Follow-up Meeting of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum “Developing a Plan of Action to Strengthen Stability and Sustainable Development of Afghanistan through Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia”. They reconfirmed that regional economic cooperation is an important pillar of regional stability, in line with the objectives outlined by the Kabul International Conference held on 20 July 2010.
2. Discussions at the meeting built on the outcomes of the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum held in Geneva on 18 and 19 October 2010, which addressed various aspects of regional economic cooperation in a comprehensive manner, as well as ways and means of closer involvement of Afghanistan in such cooperation. It responded to calls by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Fourth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan and the Afghanistan Task Force of the G8 for more active involvement of SPECA in strengthening economic cooperation between Afghanistan and other member countries of the Programme.
3. Participants agreed that SPECA can effectively contribute to building the capacity of its member countries to develop mutually advantageous cooperation in such areas as trade, transport, border crossing, information and communication technologies, investment, energy, public-private partnership and the joint management of shared resources, in particular water resources. The Programme should support ongoing policy dialogue among Central Asian countries by offering a neutral United Nations umbrella for the discussion of strategic issues of regional cooperation with the involvement of United Nations and international experts, the private sector and the academic community.
4. Participants welcomed the commitment by several SPECA member countries to contribute to the stabilization and sustainable development of Afghanistan by improving transport links and border crossing, increasing trade, investment, delivery of energy, water management as well as hosting regional level capacity-building activities.

5. The delegates thanked the UNECE and its partner organizations for presenting a broad range of project proposals in key areas of regional cooperation and confirmed their readiness to cooperate and coordinate with SPECA in these areas. They invited donor organizations to give serious consideration to the project proposals presented at the meeting with a view to operationalizing them at the earliest possible occasion.
  6. Delegates expressed their hope that interested UN agencies and other partner organizations take advantage of SPECA when implementing regional capacity- and institution-building programmes.
  7. Participants noted with satisfaction that the project proposals presented and discussed at the meeting form a broad basis for the development of a future Plan of Action. Its draft could be elaborated by SPECA member countries in consultations with the UNECE and ESCAP and with the involvement of partner organizations, interested donors and other parties. The Plan of Action could be submitted to the next session of the SPECA Governing Council which is due to take place later in 2011 in Turkmenistan with a view to being integrated into the SPECA Work Plan for 2012-2013. Delegates encouraged the Governments of SPECA member countries to view assistance to strengthening economic cooperation between Afghanistan and Central Asia as an important component of future activities within the framework the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. The Plan of Action could offer a flexible and efficient framework for developing, approving, implementing and evaluating projects that serve this important objective.
  8. Participants expressed their gratitude to the Government of Turkmenistan for providing high quality working conditions and generous hospitality, and the UNECE and UNRCCA for the excellent organization of the event.
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