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

Bangkok, 15-19 May 2017

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  
eleventh session***Summary*

At its eleventh session, the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia noted with satisfaction the outcomes of the 2016 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum, held in Ganja, Azerbaijan on 22 and 23 November 2016. The Council adopted the Ganja Declaration on Strengthening Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Enhanced Cooperation, which demonstrated a common vision for the subregion centred on a firm commitment to strengthen collaboration and policy coherence for the implementation of the Goals. The Declaration also strategically repositioned the Special Programme as a platform for promoting policy coordination and coherence among its member countries.

The Council noted with appreciation the progress reports on the work carried out by the working groups of the Special Programme since the Council's previous session.

In welcoming the progress made to strengthen cooperation between the Special Programme and other programmes, the Council invited the secretariats of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe and partner organizations to continue to develop their close cooperation, including through joint project development and implementation.

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## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Decisions.....	2
II. Introduction.....	4
III. Participants.....	4
IV. Opening of the session .....	4
V. Adoption of the agenda.....	5
VI. Outcomes of the 2016 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum and adoption of the Ganja Declaration on Strengthening Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Enhanced Cooperation. ....	5
VII. Evaluation of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.....	6
VIII. Review of the activities of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia since the tenth session of the Governing Council.....	6
IX. Election of the next Chair (country), dates and venue for the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum and the twelfth session of the Governing Council of the Special Programme.....	6
X. Other matters.....	7
XI. Closing of the session .....	7

### I. Decisions

1. At its eleventh session, the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia took the following decisions:

#### **Decision 1 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/1)**

The Governing Council notes with satisfaction the outcomes of the 2016 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum on Enhanced Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Cooperation held in Ganja, Azerbaijan on 22 and 23 November 2016. The Council calls upon the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe, as well as other United Nations agencies and programmes, to provide active support to regional efforts by the participating countries of the Special Programme to implement the Goals through cooperation.

#### **Decision 2 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/2)**

The Governing Council adopts the Ganja Declaration on Strengthening Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Enhanced Cooperation.

#### **Decision 3 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/3)**

The Governing Council notes with satisfaction the work done by the participating countries of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and the Special Programme's thematic working groups on

implementing the provision of the declaration of the tenth session of the Council, which suggested making the Special Programme framework an important platform for supporting progress towards many of the Sustainable Development Goals through the exchange of best practices, capacity-building, joint development and implementation of regional projects, and sharing experiences on the use of new financial mechanisms and partnerships.

**Decision 4 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/4)**

The Governing Council welcomes the forward-looking Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia evaluation on strengthening its role as a mechanism for cooperation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in line with the Ganja Declaration on Strengthening Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Enhanced Cooperation.

**Decision 5 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/5)**

The Governing Council notes with appreciation the progress reports on the work carried out by the thematic working groups of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia since the Council's previous session. The Council expresses satisfaction with the scope of the activities and the stability of the extrabudgetary funding received by Special Programme projects.

**Decision 6 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/6)**

The Governing Council welcomes the strengthening cooperation among the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, the Regional United Nations Development Group Team for Europe and Central Asia, the United Nations country teams in the Special Programme countries and the United Nations and other international organizations, on supporting progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through enhanced subregional cooperation and enhanced economic cooperation in the Special Programme subregion. The Council underscores the importance of such partnerships for the success of assistance provided to Special Programme countries on the Goals. The Council invites the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe and their partner organizations to continue developing close cooperation, including further development and implementation of joint projects.

**Decision 7 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/7)**

The Governing Council expresses its sincere gratitude to the Government of Azerbaijan for its active work as the Chair country of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia between 2015 and 2016.

**Decision 8 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/8)**

The Governing Council notes that the Government of Turkmenistan is considering assuming the position of Chair of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia in 2017. The decision of the Government of Turkmenistan will be confirmed through diplomatic channels.

**Decision 9 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/9)**

The exact dates and venue for the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum and the twelfth session of the Governing Council of the Special Programme will be agreed upon and communicated through diplomatic channels.

**Decision 10 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/10)**

The Governing Council expresses its sincere gratitude to the Government of Azerbaijan for the excellent organization and generous hospitality offered to the participants of the 2016 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum and the eleventh session of the Council of the Special Programme.

**Decision 11 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/11)**

The Governing Council expresses its deep appreciation to the secretariats of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe and their Executive Secretaries for their efforts to organize these important annual events, and also expresses its special appreciation for their active work aimed at strengthening the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and their continued support for implementation of its programmes.

**II. Introduction**

2. The eleventh session of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia was held on 23 November 2016 in Ganja, Azerbaijan. The 2016 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum on Enhanced Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Cooperation was held on 22 and 23 November 2016 prior to the Council session.

**III. Participants**

3. Representatives of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan as well as the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) participated in the session. Representatives of other United Nations agencies and programmes and international and regional organizations, as well as of the academic community, the private sector and civil society, participated as observers.

**IV. Opening of the session**

4. Mr. Sahil Babayev, Deputy Minister of Economy of Azerbaijan, the Chair country of the Special Programme in 2016, served as Chair.

5. The Chair stressed that in the context of globalization, multilateral economic cooperation and integration processes had become increasingly important. Regional and interregional cooperation was one of the key components of modern international economic relations, as well as an important factor in achieving prosperity, sustainable development and economic growth.

6. The opening statement of the Executive Secretary of ESCAP was delivered by the Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP. In her opening statement, the Executive Secretary emphasized that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had presented a window of opportunity for the Special Programme countries to shift their development trajectory. In 2016, events held under the auspices of the Special Programme enabled the countries to take stock of progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda and of areas where strengthened regional cooperation and integration in North and Central Asia could deliver major gains, including on trade, connectivity, development of statistical capacities, and enhancing resilience to natural disasters.

7. In his opening statement, the Executive Secretary of ECE stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda that responded to today's urgent social, economic and environmental challenges, a response which was based on peaceful co-existence and the rule of law and which left no one behind.

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

8. The Governing Council adopted the following agenda:
1. Opening of the session.
  2. Adoption of the agenda.
  3. Outcomes of the 2016 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum and adoption of the Ganja Declaration on Strengthening Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Enhanced Cooperation.
  4. Evaluation of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.
  5. Review of the activities of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia since the tenth session of the Governing Council.
  6. Election of the next Chair (country), dates and venue for the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum and the twelfth session of the Governing Council of the Special Programme.
  7. Adoption of decisions.
  8. Other business.
  9. Closing of the session.

## **VI. Outcomes of the 2016 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum and adoption of the Ganja Declaration on Strengthening Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Enhanced Cooperation**

9. The 2016 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum aimed to take stock of how the subregion was positioning

itself for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, to assess national Goal strategies and institutional frameworks, and to examine practical approaches and modalities. In particular, participants of the 2016 Economic Forum reviewed and discussed the following topics:

- (a) Reviving and rebalancing economic growth: review of economic performance and priority policy reforms;
- (b) Implementation of the Goals at the national level;
- (c) Statistical assessment and statistical capacity-building needs;
- (d) Environmental sustainability and resource-use efficiencies;
- (e) Rebalancing development for equality, inclusion and social justice;
- (f) Evaluation of the Special Programme.

10. The Chair presented the draft declaration on strengthening implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through enhanced cooperation. After the ensuing discussion, the Governing Council adopted decision 1 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/1) and decision 2 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/2), under agenda item 3.

## **VII. Evaluation of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia**

11. The plan for the evaluation of the Special Programme was presented by the secretariats of ESCAP and ECE. After the ensuing discussion, the Governing Council adopted decision 3 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/3) and decision 4 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/4), under agenda item 4.

## **VIII. Review of the activities of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia since the tenth session of the Governing Council**

12. The progress reports on the work carried out by the thematic working groups of the Special Programme since the Governing Council's previous session were presented by the secretariats of ESCAP and ECE. After the ensuing discussion, the Council adopted decision 5 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/5) and decision 6 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/6), under agenda item 5.

## **IX. Election of the next Chair (country), dates and venue for the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum and the twelfth session of the Governing Council of the Special Programme**

13. Several representatives of the Special Programme countries expressed gratitude to the Government of Azerbaijan for its excellent work as Chair of the Special Programme in 2016. Following a proposal from the Chair, the Governing Council adopted decision 7 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/7), under agenda item 6.

14. With regard to the position of Chair of the Special Programme in 2017 and the exact dates and venue for the 2017 Special Programme meetings, the Governing Council adopted decision 8 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/8) and decision 9 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/9), under agenda item 6.

**X. Other matters**

15. The heads of delegation thanked the Government of Azerbaijan for its hospitality and for the excellent organization of the Special Programme events. They also expressed their gratitude to the two regional commissions for their devoted support to the Special Programme as a whole. Following a proposal from the Chair, the Governing Council adopted decision 10 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/10) and decision 11 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2016/11), under agenda item 8.

**XI. Closing of the session**

16. In their closing statements, the Chair, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe and the Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP called upon the Special Programme countries, the United Nations and development partners to work together on the implementation of the decisions of the Governing Council.

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