



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

Bangkok, 11–16 May 2018

Item 3 (j) 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
twelfth session***Summary*

At its twelfth session, the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia noted with satisfaction the outcomes of the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum, “Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals in the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia region”, held in Dushanbe on 5 and 6 December 2017. The Council adopted the Forum’s conclusions and recommendations on creating an innovation strategy, at the national and regional level, in support of the achievement of the Goals.

The Council noted with appreciation the progress made by the Special Programme’s thematic working groups since its previous session and approved the Programme’s workplan for 2018–2019.

The Council noted with satisfaction the summary report on the evaluation of the Special Programme and decided that the final evaluation report would be submitted to an expert group meeting in May or June 2018 so that the Council could consider how the recommendations would be operationalized at its thirteenth session, to be held in Kazakhstan in 2018.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 7 March 2018 and 20 April 2018.

** ESCAP/74/L.1.

I. Decisions

1. At its twelfth 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/2017/1)

The Governing Council notes with satisfaction the outcomes of the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum, “Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals in the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia region”, held in Dushanbe on 5 and 6 December 2017. The Council calls upon the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and other United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as its international development partners, to provide active support to the efforts of the Special Programme participating countries, undertaken on the national and regional levels, in promoting innovation for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Decision 2 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/2)

The Council adopts the conclusions and recommendations of the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum, “Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals in the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia region”. The Council underscores the importance of creating an innovation strategy for the region to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Decision 3 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/3)

The 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 its last session. The Council expresses satisfaction with the scope of activities covered by the Special Programme.

Decision 4 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/4)

The Council approves the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia workplan for 2018–2019. It encourages Special Programme participating countries, thematic working groups, donors and partner organizations to support the implementation of the activities contained in the workplan.

Decision 5 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/5)

The Council welcomes the progress made in strengthening cooperation between the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and regional organizations and institutions in providing support to the Special Programme participating countries for their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through enhanced regional economic cooperation in the region. The Council invites ECE, ESCAP and their partner organizations to continue developing close cooperation, including on joint projects and activities.

Decision 6 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/6)

The Council notes with satisfaction the ECE study on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia region.

Decision 7 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/7)

The Council notes with satisfaction the summary report on the evaluation of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and 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, adopted by the Council at its eleventh session, in 2016. The Council decides that the final evaluation report will be submitted to an expert group meeting, to be held in May or June 2018, in preparation for the twentieth anniversary of the Special Programme (decision 8). The Council decides to determine, at its thirteenth session, how the recommendations contained in the evaluation will be operationalized so that the Special Programme fully serves as the mechanism for cooperation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Decision 8 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/8)

The Council recalls that 2018 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, which provides an opportunity to review achievements and challenges the Special Programme has faced and to identify possible measures to further strengthen support to the participating countries, notably in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Decision 9 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/9)

The Council welcomes the offer by the Government of Kazakhstan to assume the chairpersonship of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia in 2018 and elects Kazakhstan as the Chair country of the Special Programme for 2018.

Decision 10 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/10)

The Council decides that its thirteenth session and the 2018 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum will be held in Kazakhstan in 2018. The exact dates and venue of these events will be agreed upon and communicated through diplomatic channels. The 2018 Forum and the thirteenth session of Council will also serve as a platform to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Special Programme, to review its achievements and challenges, and to propose measures to strengthen it. The topic of the 2018 Forum will be determined later.

Decision 11 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/11)

The Council expresses its sincere gratitude to the Government of Tajikistan for chairing the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia events as well as for the excellent organization and hospitality offered to the participants of the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum and the twelfth session of the Council.

Decision 12 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/12)

The Council expresses its special appreciation to the United Nations Development Programme in Tajikistan for its significant support provided for the organization of the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia events in Dushanbe.

Decision 13 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/13)

The Council expresses its appreciation to donors for supporting Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia projects and activities, as well as to the Government of the Russian Federation for supporting the work of the Special Programme, including its thematic working groups and economic forums, with a view to strengthening the contribution of the Special Programme to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Decision 14 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/14)

The Council expresses its deep appreciation to the ECE and ESCAP secretariats for their efforts to organize these important annual events, their active work aimed at strengthening the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and their continued support for the implementation of its activities.

II. Introduction

2. The twelfth session of the Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia was held in Dushanbe on 6 December 2017. The 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum, “Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals in the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia region”, was held on 5 and 6 December 2017 prior to the session of the Council. The 2017 Special Programme high-level events were organized by ECE and ESCAP at the invitation of the Government of Tajikistan in close cooperation with its Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and the United Nations Development Programme in Tajikistan.

III. Participants

3. Representatives of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as well as the Deputy Executive Secretaries of ECE and ESCAP participated in the session. Representatives from other States Members of the United Nations, United Nations agencies and programmes, and international and regional organizations, as well as the academic community, the private sector and civil society, participated as observers.

IV. Opening of the session

4. The session was chaired by Mr. Tojiddin Jurazoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan and head of delegation of Tajikistan.

5. The Chair of the annual session of the Council noted that all heads of delegation of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia countries, as well as the Deputy Executive Secretaries of ECE and ESCAP,

had delivered opening statements at the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum.

V. Adoption of the agenda

6. The Governing Council adopted the following agenda:
 1. Opening of the session.
 2. Adoption of the agenda.
 3. Outcomes of the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum, “Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals in the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia region”. Adoption of the outcome document.
 4. Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia activities since the last session of the Governing Council (Ganja, Azerbaijan, 23 November 2016).
 5. Adoption of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia workplan for 2018–2019.
 6. Cooperation between Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and regional organizations and institutions.
 7. ECE study on the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and the Sustainable Development Goals.
 8. Evaluation of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.
 9. Election of the next Chair (country) of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.
 10. Date of and venue for the 2018 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum and the thirteenth session of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Governing Council.
 11. Other business.
 12. Adoption of decisions.
 13. Closing of the session.

VI. Outcomes of the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum, “Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals in the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia region”. Adoption of the outcome document

(Agenda item 3)

7. The 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum focused on the role of innovation in economic diversification, environmental sustainability and green technology development, sustainable development of transport, trade and energy, and

gender with the aim of ensuring the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Special Programme region.

8. Participants of the 2017 Forum reviewed and discussed the following topics:

- New approaches to promoting innovation: from market fixing to market shaping;
- Priorities for innovation policy in the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia region: innovation for sustainable development;
- The contribution of the international community to innovation and sustainable development in the Special Programme region;
- Innovation and sustainable development: practical experiences in specific areas.

9. The Chair presented the conclusions and recommendations of the 2017 Forum as its outcome document. The Council adopted decisions 1 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/1) and 2 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/2).

VII. Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia activities since the last session of the Governing Council (Ganja, Azerbaijan, 23 November 2016) (Agenda item 4)

10. The Chair noted that 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 last session of the Council were sent well in advance to representatives of the Special Programme countries and were also distributed to participants before the session. The Council adopted decision 3 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/3).

VIII. Adoption of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia workplan for 2018–2019 (Agenda item 5)

11. The Chair noted that the draft Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia workplan for 2018–2019 was sent well in advance to representatives of the Special Programme countries and was also distributed to participants before the session. The Council adopted decision 4 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/4).

IX. Cooperation between Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and regional organizations and institutions (Agenda item 6)

12. The Deputy Coordinator at ECE for the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia reported on cooperation between the Special Programme and partner organizations. The Council adopted decision 5 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/5).

X. ECE study on the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and the Sustainable Development Goals

(Agenda item 7)

13. The Deputy Coordinator at ECE for the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia presented the main conclusions of the ECE study on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Special Programme region. The Council adopted decision 6 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/6).

XI. Evaluation of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia

(Agenda item 8)

14. Ms. Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, evaluation consultant, presented the key findings and recommendations of the summary report on the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia evaluation and on strengthening its role.

15. The Chair and the head of delegation of Tajikistan emphasized the role of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia in the development of economic cooperation in the region. The representatives of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan noted that option 4 in the summary evaluation report – the gradual closure of the Special Programme – was not an option for their countries. They needed the Special Programme as a platform for regional dialogue and cooperation and to discuss common solutions to shared problems. Since its effectiveness for the latter needed to be further strengthened, option 1 – status quo – would likewise be not desirable. Further consideration might be given to operationalizing option 2 – reforming the Special Programme to make it more country-led and country-driven – in support of developing processes of integration and cooperation in the region.

16. The participants requested that the final edit of the evaluation report be sent to the participating countries by the end of December 2017 for their final assessment.

17. The Council adopted decisions 7 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/7) and 8 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/8).

XII. Election of the next Chair (country) of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and date of and venue for the 2018 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum and the thirteenth session of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Governing Council

(Agenda items 9 and 10)

18. The head of delegation of Kazakhstan announced that the Government of Kazakhstan had expressed its willingness to assume the Chairpersonship of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia in 2018. The current Chair expressed his appreciation to the Government of Kazakhstan for that decision and its decision to host the next session of the Council and the 2018 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum.

19. The Council adopted decisions 9 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/9) and 10 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/10).

XIII. Other business

(Agenda item 11)

20. There were no issues raised.

XIV. Adoption of decisions

(Agenda item 12)

21. The representative from Turkmenistan thanked the Government of Tajikistan for chairing the 2017 Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia meetings in Dushanbe, their excellent organization and hospitality. He proposed the adoption of decision 11 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/11). The Council adopted the decision.

22. The Chair proposed the adoption of decisions 12 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/12), 13 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/13) and 14 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2017/14). The Council adopted the decisions.

XV. Closing of the session

(Agenda item 13)

23. In their closing statements, the Chair, the heads of delegation, and the Deputy Executive Secretaries of ECE and ESCAP called on Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia participating countries, the United Nations and development partners to work together on the implementation of the decisions of the Council.

24. The Chair thanked all participants for their intense and productive work and closed the twelfth session of the Council.
