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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION

International Conference on
Knowledge-based Development

Minsk, Republic of Belarus, 10-12 June 2009

INFORMATION NOTICE

Note by the Secretariat

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In late spring 2008, the Government of the Republic of Belarus proposed to the UNECE to organize in Belarus an international event on matters related to economic competitiveness and innovative development covered by the UNECE Subprogramme on Economic Cooperation and Integration.
2. At its third session held on 3-5 December 2008, the UNECE Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration (CECI) “welcomed a stronger emphasis on capacity-building activities and policy advisory services in the Programme of Work for 2009-2010”¹.
3. In follow-up to the above proposal, the CECI decided to include in its Programme of Work for 2009 an event combining a policy seminar and modular training on promoting knowledge-based development for policymakers and practitioners from CIS countries to be held in the Republic of Belarus.

¹ ECE/CECI/2008/2, paragraph 32 (k).

4. This Information notice provides some details regarding the organization and participation in the International Conference on Knowledge-based Development which will take place in Minsk, Republic of Belarus, from 10 to 12 June 2009.

II. OBJECTIVES AND FORMAT

5. The main objective of the International Conference on Knowledge-based Development is to provide a platform for a broad exchange of practical experiences and lessons learned among policymakers, representatives of businesses and academia, and other experts and practitioners on good practices and policies of promoting knowledge-driven economic development.

6. The International Conference will address issues of practical relevance to the countries in the CIS region, in line with the “Strategy for Economic Development of the Commonwealth of Independent States until 2020”, which puts a strong emphasis on the role of innovation and knowledge as future engines of growth of the CIS economies.

7. The Conference will involve both learning components and elements of knowledge sharing and discussion of good practices among participants. The programme will be structured into several thematic sessions, each of which would cover different areas of the policy agenda for promoting knowledge-based development.

8. Each session of the Conference will be broken down in two main parts. The first part will consist of presentations by leading international experts in the corresponding thematic area. The second part will include presentations of national experiences in the corresponding thematic area by the participants in the Conference, which would be followed by a general discussion of these experiences with the participation of the international experts.

9. The Conference will consider, in a series of consecutive sessions, several sets of issues related to the promotion of knowledge-based development, including:

- (a) “Creating a supportive environment for innovative development”, which would include topics such as effective national innovation systems, policies targeting innovation-based competitiveness, policy options and practical instruments for enhancing the innovative performance of firms, innovation support institutions;
- (b) “Financing innovation”, which would include topics such as the specificities of financing innovative enterprises, early-stage equity financing (business angels and venture capital), the role of public financing, good practices in public programmes promoting the financing of innovation;
- (c) “Commercialization and protection of intellectual property (IP)”, which would include topics such as the transfer of technology from research institutions to the business sector, IP commercialization strategies and management of IP in small and medium enterprises, coordination of policymaking on IP rights protection and enforcement; and

- (d) “Public-private partnerships (PPPs) and innovative development”, which would include topics such as developing a market for PPPs, creating the right legal and PPP regulatory framework, principles of good governance in PPPs, regional and municipal governance; strengthening the organizational capacity for successful PPPs.

10. As part of the process of sharing of practical experiences, the participants would be offered an opportunity to join a study tour to a technopark or a centre of high technologies in the Republic of Belarus.

III. ORGANIZATION

11. The International Conference will be organized in cooperation with the State Committee for Science and Technology of the Republic of Belarus and will take place from 10 to 12 June 2009 in Minsk, Republic of Belarus. The Secretariat of the Commonwealth of Independent States is invited as a partner in the organization of the Conference.

IV. PARTICIPATION

12. Participation is open to interested parties from UNECE member countries and other member States of the United Nations, representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and international organizations participating in the activities of UNECE. Broad participation of government officials and experts, representatives of the business and academic communities as well as the civil society is welcome.

13. Governments are invited to inform national entities and institutions, business and industry associations, academic institutions and other relevant organizations about the upcoming International Conference on Knowledge-based Development and encourage participation of experts with relevant expertise dealing with the promotion of knowledge-based development and the thematic issues to be addressed at the Conference.

V. CONFERENCE FEE

14. No conference fee is charged for participation in the International Conference. Travel and accommodation expenses are borne by the participants.

VI. PASSPORTS AND VISAS

15. All participants should be in possession of a valid passport, with an entry visa (if required) which can be obtained from the diplomatic representation of the Republic of Belarus in their country of residence. It is advisable to make such visa applications well in advance of the date required.

VII. PRELIMINARY REGISTRATION

16. Interested parties are invited to fill in the attached Registration Form (Annex) and return it by **3 June 2009** at the latest to:

Mr. José Palacín
ECID/UNECE
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Fax: (+4122) 917 01 78
E-mail: jose.palacin@unece.org

VIII. DOCUMENTATION

17. Participants are invited to prepare papers and briefing notes relating to topics to be addressed at the Conference as indicated in item 8 of the Information Notice.

18. Papers and other documents to be presented at the Conference should be submitted to the UNECE Secretariat (addressed to Mr. José Palacín) by **3 June 2009** in one of the UNECE working languages (English, French or Russian) in electronic format (Word for Windows), preferably by e-mail. A limited number of copies of papers in the language of submission will be available in the meeting room during the Conference.

19. When submitting the documents, participants are requested to indicate, in which of the Conference sessions specified in item 8 of the Information Notice they would like to present the paper or briefing note.

20. The Secretariat will prepare a detailed Provisional Programme which will be circulated to the participants one week before the Conference.

IX. INTERPRETATION AND VISUAL AIDS

21. Simultaneous interpretation in English and Russian, facilities for projecting slides, as well as computer facilities for computer-aided presentations (e.g. Power Point) will be provided.

X. TRAVEL AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS

22. Participants are requested to make their own hotel and travel arrangements to and from Minsk.

XI. FURTHER INFORMATION

23. Further information on the International Conference can be obtained from:

Mr. José Palacín
ECID/UNECE
Palais des Nations, Room 449
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Tel.: (+4122) 917 1643
Fax: (+4122) 917 0178
E-mail: jose.palacin@unece.org

Annex

REGISTRATION FORM

This form should be filled in and returned as soon as possible and **not later than 3 June 2009** to:

Mr. José Palacín
ECID/UNECE
Palais des Nations, Room 449
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Fax: (+41 22) 917 0178
E-mail: jose.palacin@unece.org

(Please type or write in block capitals in **English**)

Family name (Mr., Ms.):

First name:

Nationality:

Professional position:

Affiliation and professional address:

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Telephone (please include country and city codes):

.....

Telefax (please include country and city codes):

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E-mail

address:.....