

United Nations
Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia
(SPECA)

Protocol of the 6-th session
of the PWG-Transport and Border Crossing Facilitation

Almaty, 9-11 April 2001

General observations

1. The Project Working Group (PWG) held its 6-th session in Almaty on 9-11 April, 2001.

Attendance

2. The session was attended by the delegations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan and the representatives of the UN ECE and UN ESCAP as well as the delegation of Azerbaijan Republic and representatives of international organisations, such as UNDP, European Commission, OSCE, Executive Committee of the CAEC, Integration Committee of Customs Union, ECO Secretariat, IRU, World Bank, EBRD, and IDB. The list of participants is placed at Annex - 1.

Agenda of the session

3. The proposed agenda of the session was adopted unanimously. The approved Agenda is placed at Annex - 2.

General provisions

4. The 6th session was inaugurated by Mr. V.Zverkov, Vice-Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Chairman of the PWG. Mr. V.Zverkov in his speech noted with satisfaction the participation in the session of the delegation of Azerbaijan Republic and the Secretariat of the Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO). The extension of the participants on the SPECA discussions due to the participation of the concerned neighbouring countries and regional organisations, worked in the similar subjects, will allow to find more effective solutions, particularly, the issues of transport and border crossing facilitation.
5. Mr. E.Kazykhanov, Director of the Multilateral Co-operation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on behalf of the MFA's authorities welcomed the participants of the 6-th session of the PWG Transport and Border Crossing Facilitation and briefed the meeting on the outcomes of the 1-st Session of the SPECA

Regional Advisory Committee(RAC), held in February 2001 in Almaty. In particular, the session emphasised that organisational period of the SPECA has been completed, and its participants are ready to solve the existing problems which are significant for the nations of SPECA Member-States.

6. The representatives of the UN ECE and ESCAP drew attention of the participants to the regional aspects of decisions, adopted by the 1-st session of RAC, and proposed to the PWG to take into consideration of them in future activity.

Discussions and recommendations

7. The Head of Kazakhstan delegation informed the meeting on the interaction with national delegations on the preparations for this session. It was noted that the Protocol of the 5-th session of the PWG and the requests of required information, in accordance with its decisions, were circulated among the SPECA participating countries and international organisations. The matters pertaining to the SPECA work program were completed and supplemented on the basis of received information. (Annexes 3-7). Meanwhile, the appeals to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan authorities have no answered.
8. The Heads of delegations of the Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Tajikistan supported the proposal of the Chairman of the PWG session on the necessity to take extra measures in respect of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on the SPECA line as well as through diplomatic channels on the bilateral basis. The UN ECE and ESCAP will consider this subject on their lines to inform Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan authorities.
9. The Chairman presented the updated list of investment projects proposed by the SPECA participating countries. The participants agreed that it is necessary to indicate some projects for finalisation of them with international financial institutions. The acquired experience can be used in future to consider the remaining investment projects. It was noted especially that SPECA investment projects should have regional nature viz to attract at least two or three countries of the region.
10. The participants drew attention of the international financial organisations to the fact that SPECA countries are interesting at first the grants and preferential loans for implementation of the priority investment projects in infrastructure development.
11. The international organisations (UN ECE, UN ESCAP, EC, ECO) confirmed their readiness to assist to the Member-States in ensuring their proposed investment projects to meet with regional SPECA objectives.
12. The representatives of the EBRD, WB and IDB expressed their readiness to consider properly the investment proposals of the PWG, at the first, the projects having common regional nature. At the same time, they noted that presented investment proposals should be included in the national investment programs on the obligatory basis. Thus, the economic efficiency and necessity of the proposed projects would be confirmed. It was also noted that a number of national projects presented to the PWG are under consideration of the international financial institutions. In some cases, co-financing of investment projects is possible.
13. It was noted expediency to active involve the ADB to fund the SPECA investment

- projects.
14. It was presented information from UNDP pertaining to inclusion of the representatives of the UN ECE, ESCAP and PWG into composition of the Co-ordination Group of “The Great Silk Road” project. This subject will be considered in May 2001 in Beijing at the meeting of the national co-ordinators on this project.
 15. With regard to the consultations with the EC on the project “Detailed study of the land transport routs of the TRACECA corridor”, the session authorised the PWG Chairman to appeal to the TRACECA Inter-Governmental Commission (May, 2001, Tashkent) to include the above study in the work programme of TRACECA.
 16. The session noted the information of the Director on Transport and Communications of the ECO Secretariat that the Task – Force for opening international passenger traffic on Almaty-Tashkent-Tehran-Istanbul rout of the Trans-Asian railway main line formulated MOU between railway administrations, participating in the project, for opening of the above passenger traffic and approved the composition of the train, cost of transportation within the national territories, and formats of transportation documents. At present some technical and organisation issues at the Serahs border station between Iranian and Turkmen railways as well as conciliation of train schedule with the Uzbekistan railway authorities are still awaiting. The preparatory work to launch the demonstration container train on the Trans-Asian railway rout from Almaty to Istanbul to be completed in May-June 2001.
 17. The session recommended to give priority to the following initiatives in order to reduce or eliminate the barriers in international road transport traffic:
 - i. to work out the common approaches for calculation of charges for over-loading trucks among the SPECA Member-States.
 - ii. to implement the TIR Convention in the SPECA region.
 - ii. to eliminate road charges and duties established by local authorities (provincial and district).
 18. The session noted with satisfaction the PWG Secretariat’s efforts for invitation of all neighbouring states to SPECA countries, and international organisations and financial institutions to attend the session. It was noted the expediency of invitation to next sessions the representatives of major trade and economic partners of SPECA countries.
 19. The participants confirmed the priority of the border crossing issues at the present stage of the PWG activity. During the discussions it was confirmed the necessity to continue actions to establish national committees on transport facilitation and border crossing simplification. It was emphasised the necessity of activation of their efforts at the national level and between each other.
 20. The contents of the draft MOU between the SPECA countries on the improvement of the international road transport of goods in the SPECA region was discussed (The copy of the draft MOU is placed at Annex – 8). It was agreed in principal the structure and guidance of the MOU. It was stipulated that participating countries and international organisations will furnish their comments and views on the MOU subject within two weeks. The Chairman of the PWG will determined the necessity of the experts meeting to finalise the MOU and submit the same for official signing at the ministerial level in the framework of

SPECA.

21. The session noted the information about the meeting of experts of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on the existing problem of transit of goods held on 12-13 March 2001. The copy of Protocol of the negotiations is placed at Annex – 9. The meeting was held successfully and the Parties agreed on all raised issues. Kyrgyzstan officially notified Kazakhstan side on its concern regarding the discussed issues. The formal notification from Kazakhstan side will be submitted to the concerned authorities of Kyrgyzstan by 20 April, 2001. The session noted the productivity of such work and recommended to continue it on the regular basis with involving all countries of the region and UN experts, if possible. It was recommended that such progress information should be submitted to the SPECA countries and international organisations participating in the PWG session on the regular basis. Moreover, it was noted to use inter-sectoral potentialities of the SPECA to solve transit transport and border crossing issues particularly at the SPECA RAC level.
22. The session was informed on the Member-States accession to the main international conventions and agreements in the field of transport. It was noted the necessity of the technical assistance of international organisations to all SPECA Member-States in the implementation of the above conventions and agreements. The Member-States are recommended to furnish their corresponding official requests on the above subject to the UN ECE, UN ESCAP, EC, IRU and ECO.
23. The Project Working Group considered the present status on the implementation of the work programme in 1999-2000 and identified main activities for 2001-2002. The work programme is placed at Annex – 10.
24. By the request of the OSShD Committee the participants noted the outcomes of the 5-th inter-sectoral meeting of the border security, customs and railway authorities and Ministries of Transport of the OSShD Member-States. The copy of the said Address is placed at Annex – 11.
25. The session recommended to the PWG Chairman to consider the subject of submission of an information regarding the SPECA PWG Transport and Border Facilitation activity to the 1-st International Euro-Asian Conference of the IRU to be held in Irkutsk on 12-15 September 2001.

Date and venue of the 7-th session of PWG.

26. It was decided to hold the 7-th session of PWG in Almaty in October 2001. The Chairman of PWG will notify the exact dates of the session within 2-3 weeks.

Provisional Agenda of the 7-th session of PWG

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Reports of the national SPECA co-ordinators on the transport and border crossing facilitation issues:

- i. follow up on the implementation of the 6-th session's decisions;
 - ii. accession of the SPECA countries to the main international conventions in the field of transport and implementation their provisions;
 - iii. progress in solving the problems of the international transit of goods and passengers throughout territories of the SPECA Member-States, including implementation of outcomes of the bilateral consultations on the transport sector issues.
 - iv. Progress on the establishment of national committees on simplification of the procedures in the field of transport and border crossings.
4. The present status of the SPECA data base on the border crossing issues.
 5. Promotion of the priority investment projects supported by the PWG Transport and Border Crossing Facilitation.
 6. Readiness to sign the MOU between SPECA Member-States on improvement of the international road transport of goods in the SPECA region.
 7. Present status of the implementation of the Programme activity of the PWG Transport and Border Crossing Facilitation in 2001-2002.
 8. Any other business.
 9. Adoption of the Protocol.

Chairman of the session

_____ **Mr. V.Zverkov,**
Vice Minister of Transport and
Communications, Republic of Kazakhstan

Almaty, 11 April, 2001.