

## Energy conservation dushanbe

Representatives of Central Asian countries today acknowledged the urgent need for regional cooperation in green development and committed to strengthen collaboration across critical sectors, including energy, trade digitalization, trade integration, trade facilitation, investment promotion, SME development, water cooperation and innovation ecosystems.

The Dushanbe Declaration was adopted at the end of the 2024 SPECA Economic Forum and Governing Council meeting, convened this week in Tajikistan with the support of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

“SPECA must work towards becoming an attractive destination for green investment and driving sustainable growth,” underscored United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana in her opening remarks.

This year’s Forum focused on key priorities such as climate action, technology and innovation, and sustainable transport and energy. In several interventions, delegates highlighted how climate change is impacting the economies and ecosystems of the SPECA region with issues such as glacier melt, water scarcity and pollution intensifying.

“The risks of not dealing properly with this crisis are high for Central Asia – a region with rich potential but also fragile ecosystems, complex interdependencies when it comes to water and energy, and high degree of vulnerability to effects of climate change,” said Tatiana Molcean, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UNECE. She further reminded of the critical need for intensified action and innovative approaches to advance the Sustainable Development Goals in the SPECA region.

High-level participants from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan discussed operationalization of the SPECA Multi-Partner Trust Fund. The Trust Fund offers an excellent opportunity to launch climate, innovation, and green projects tailored to the region’s unique needs.

Several other proposals were also tabled this week to expand the programme of activities and reframe SPECA as an impactful full-fledged regional international association. These include new initiatives such as the SPECA Climate and Innovation Dialogue, SPECA Forum of Climate Smart Cities and SPECA Concept of Development until 2030.

“These proposals reflect our commitment to leveraging green development as a driver of regional integration and sustainable growth. By aligning our efforts, SPECA member States can achieve tangible

progress toward economic diversification, energy security, and environmental sustainability,” shared H.E. Ahliddin Nuriddinzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan.

SPECA stands for the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, which aims to support landlocked developing countries with their integration into the world economy and provides a platform for cross-border cooperation on a wide range of issues, including achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

In Tajikistan, there are no favourable conditions for the widespread use of solar energy or for attracting investment in this sector. This is happening amid constant energy shortages and a crisis in the country's electric power system.

Tajikistan is one of the most vulnerable to climate change countries. Rising temperatures led to glacial melting and changes in precipitation patterns. This is becoming an acute problem for the country's hydropower system, which produces more than 95% of the country's electric power.

In 2023, more than 21.8 billion kWh of electric power was produced in Tajikistan. However, during many years in winter, rural residents of the country have access to electric power only 8-10 hours per day.

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