

**Development Policy Analysis Division, DESA/Economic Cooperation and
Integration Division, UNECE
International Conference
2- 4 April 2008, Geneva
“Strengthening integration of the economies in transition into the world
economy through economic diversification”**

***Round table 6. Role of infrastructure, cross-border issues, energy, transport and
access to ICT***

Participants in the panel:

Ralph Heinrich (UNECE) - moderator

Rafkat Hasanov, Executive Director, Public Association “Investment Roundtable of Kyrgyzstan” (Kyrgyzstan)

Gulnur Rakhmatulina, Chief Researcher, Institute for Strategic Studies (Republic of Kazakhstan)

Andrei Savinykh, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the UN Office at Geneva

Khojamakhmad Umarov, Head of Macroeconomic Department, Institute of Economic Studies, (Tajikistan)

Erkinjon Yunusov, Head of Department of CIS Countries, Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations & Trade (Uzbekistan)

The *objective* of this round-table is to discuss the role of infrastructure, energy supply, development of transportation links, access to the information and communication technology, as well as cross-bored related issues in the level of economic development and diversification of output in the economies in transition. Since those factors play a very important role in the economic performance and external trade of the transition countries it is important to discuss their impact and the specific challenges those sectors face in their development.

The following *main questions/issues* will be the focus of the discussion:

- What are the most important bottlenecks in infrastructure, including transport, energy supply and communication which are constraining diversification and growth?
- Policies to lift those constraints and problems of implementation
- Specific activities undertaken by the UN agencies (for which countries and sectors)

The current state of infrastructure, including transport infrastructure, energy supply and communication networks in particular countries of South-eastern Europe and the CIS. The participants may wish to discuss which sectors of infrastructure are the most serious bottlenecks for their economies, or improvement in which ones may push their economies forward.

The panelists are expected to address country specific policies to develop or to improve infrastructure in those countries and major obstacles. Related aspects, for example, are the issue of ownership of those sectors, form of ownership of the production

and maintenance (public, private, or mixed), and finding the most optimal mix of ownership and operating. It should be noted that different sectors (for example roads, railroads and telecommunications) may need different approaches.

The participants are expected to exchange specific examples of the effectiveness of the government and regulatory burden (for example, of power utilities), as well as policies to avoid monopolies, which can impede development.

The following *additional issues* could also be addressed in this panel while discussing the main questions (depending on the country's experience and policy challenges):

- Public investment programs and private-public partnership;
- Policies to keep up with the technology, especially in telecommunications as one of the most advanced and rapidly developing sector and to improve energy efficiency;
- Specific activities conducted by the UN agencies.

Structure of the panel discussion:

- the moderator introduces the topic and objectives of the roundtable; the panelist and asks the main questions (5 minutes)
- each panelist provides country experience and policy discussion on the three questions (10 minutes per participant)
- the moderator takes questions from the audience (5 minutes)
- the panelists answer to those questions (10 minutes)
- the moderator summarizes the discussion and may ask the following wrap up question:

Given the policy and institutional reforms (agreed upon here) that are viewed as important for promoting diversification, especially those that require regional or global participation, are these initiatives already in the Monterrey Consensus Financing for Development document, or if not what you consider as necessary to be added to the Doha Review document so that the issues raised here would be properly addressed?

Expected outcome of the discussion: to make suggestions on the activities of the UN agencies in assisting the development of infrastructure, energy resources and communication systems in transition economies.