

**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 7. Key development policies, including the MDGs, and obstacles for
the low-income CIS to diversify their economies***

Participants in the panel:

Max Spoor, Associate Professor, Institute of Social Studies (Netherlands) – moderator
Rafkat Hasanov, Executive Director, Public Association “Investment Roundtable of
Kyrgyzstan” (Kyrgyzstan)

Hayk Mirzoyan, Head of Department, Department of Branch and Regional Economic
Development, Ministry of Trade and Economic Development (Armenia)

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

Zamira Xhepa, Expert, Trade Policy Department, Ministry of Economy, Trade and
Energy (Albania)

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

The *objective* of this round-table is to discuss specific problems facing low-income CIS economies, related to external debt, communications, financial sector, infrastructure, energy, outward migration and obsolete production base. In addition, the participants from selected countries should discuss in particular those MDGs for which their countries seem to be “off trade”, and policies being pursued by their countries to step up efforts towards MDG achievement.

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

- What are the most crucial challenges which the country faces in reaching the MDGs?
- What are the critical obstacles impeding the country’s ability to sustain growth and diversify the economy (within the group of the low-income CIS)?

The panelists are expected to address key development policy issues and in particular commitments of their countries to the MDG’s. Based on their country experience, they are expected to focus on specific MDG targets which their countries are pursuing. The participants should also make suggestions on the programmes they would like to be implemented in their countries by the UN agencies.

Given the country specific situation, the panelists are expected to present the main obstacles to economic growth, in particular to economic diversification, which their economies face, such as high external debt, difficulties in communication and with trading routes, low level of financial intermediation and financial sector development, inadequate infrastructure, energy shortages, large outward migration and skill mismatch, technological backwardness. The participants should also discuss the strategies implemented in their countries to improve the current situation.

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 two main 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 specific suggestions for the UN agencies on their activities in assisting those CIS economies which need to overcome obstacles to development and diversification.