

UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2025 (#RFSD2025)**Side event organized by the International Trade Centre**

3 April 2025, 1:15-2:45, Room V, Palais de Nations

Unlocking Sustainable Intra-Regional Economic Development through Trade Facilitation

Trade facilitation plays a critical role in fostering economic growth, strengthening regional cooperation, and enhancing trade connectivity. By streamlining processes, improving regulatory frameworks, and investing in both physical and institutional infrastructure, countries can unlock new trade opportunities, boost competitiveness, and support sustainable development.

As global trade dynamics evolve, the importance of collaboration—both at the regional and multilateral levels—becomes ever more apparent. This session will bring together key stakeholders from international organizations and government representatives from Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and beyond to explore how trade facilitation can drive economic transformation. Discussions will highlight:

- **The role of regional cooperation** in enabling more resilient and diversified trade flows.
- **The balance between hard and soft infrastructure** in facilitating trade and improving connectivity.
- **The importance of common standards and regulatory alignment** for ensuring interoperability and efficiency in global trade.
- **Insights from recent trade facilitation assessments and indicators**, shedding light on progress and areas for improvement.
- **Lessons learned from successful trade facilitation reforms** and their impact on sustainable economic growth.

Through an interactive dialogue, this session aims to identify challenges, share best practices, and lay the groundwork for stronger partnerships to enhance trade facilitation and connectivity across regions.

WELCOME REMARKS

- Dmitry Mariyasyn, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECE (TBC)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

- Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, International Trade Centre (ITC)

SPEAKERS:

- H.E. Mr. Galib Israfilov, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva
- H.E. Mr. Sharaf Sheralizoda, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva (TBC)
- *TBC, Representative of the European Union Delegation to WTO*
- Gregory Lecomte, Head of Central Asia Unit, OECD
- Nurbek Maksutov, Vice-Chair of the UN/CEFACT
- Birgit Viohl, Head of the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility, WTO
- *TBC, Vice Minister of Economy and Commerce, Kyrgyz Republic*

Moderator: Pierre Bonthonneau, Head of Trade Facilitation Unit, ITC