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**UNITED NATIONS
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UNU to Host a Roundtable on “Economic Development and Environment in Central Asia”

Event: International Roundtable on “Economic Development and Environment in Central Asia”
Date/Time: 29 June 2007 (Friday), 1:30 – 4:30 PM
Venue: Elizabeth Rose Conference Hall, UN House, Tokyo
Organizers: United Nations University (UNU) and the Institute for International Studies and Training (IIST)

Background information

- Central Asia (the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) constitutes a major geopolitical hotspot at the crossroads of domestic policy and institutional reforms and international security interests.
- The collapse of the economies of the region following the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to a drastic increase in poverty, economic insecurity and migration in search of better livelihoods within and outside the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and religiously diverse region.
- Environmental degradation, driven by unsustainable resource management, and worsened by widespread poverty and limited capacities to cope with the legacy of the past system, is increasing the vulnerability of fragile mountain ecosystems and marginalized communities in the predominantly mountainous region.
- The complex interplay of political, economic and environmental factors in Central Asia presents a range of challenging issues which face both the governments of countries in the region as well as the international community.

About the event

- This roundtable seeks to contribute to an improved understanding of the geopolitical, socio-economic and environmental situation in Central Asia. Participants will discuss these in relation to issues of political instability, economic insecurity, migration, environmental vulnerability, and options for regional and international cooperation.
- The roundtable will begin with brief opening remarks from Takato Ojimi, Vice President and Managing Director of IIST Japan, and Hans van Ginkel, Rector of UNU, and welcoming remarks by a representative of the Government of Japan.
- There will be introductory lectures on “Issues and Policies” in Tajikistan (by Dr. Kokul Kasirov, Tajikistan State Directorate of Protected Areas) and on Kyrgyzstan (by Prof. Asylbek A. Aidaraliev, Special Adviser to the President, International University of Kyrgyzstan), followed by commentary lectures on “Governance and Democracy Issues” (by Prof. Shigeki Hakamada, Aoyama University), “Environmental Issues” (by Dr. Shinya Tsuru, Earthwatch-Japan) and “Economic Issues” (by Dr. Tetsuji Tanaka, Senior Adviser to the Rector of UNU, and Executive Director of the Central Asia and Caucasia Research Institute).
- Following the lectures, Dr. Tanaka will chair a roundtable discussion among the participants.
- Simultaneous English-Japanese interpretation will be provided.

Media representatives are cordially invited to attend this international roundtable. For more information, or to confirm your attendance, please contact Naoko Yano, UNU Office of Communications (tel: 03-5467-1311; e-mail: media@unu.edu).