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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Commission on Trade in Goods and Services,
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Geneva, 3–6 February 2003
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

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II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Introduction

1. At its nineteenth special session, held in April 2002 within the context of the UNCTAD Mid-term Review, the Trade and Development Board reviewed the functioning of its intergovernmental machinery and adopted guidelines to improve the machinery's efficiency (TD/B(S-XIX)/7). These guidelines state that the Commissions should conduct a policy discussion on the basis of secretariat research, reports of expert meetings and other relevant inputs, including from panellists and from other intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It should also place the outcome of the discussions within the appropriate policy context and framework. While considering the outcome of expert meetings, the Commissions should complement the issues dealt with by expert meetings, and avoid duplicating their debates as much as possible.

2. When deciding on the nature of the outcome, a main objective should be to maximize the time devoted to substantive dialogue among government representatives so as to build consensus on issues within UNCTAD's competence and reduce to the necessary minimum the time devoted to drafting exercises. The Bureau and the regional coordinators will indicate the nature of the outcome they seek from the Commissions. Whenever possible the outcome should be a Chairman's summary reflecting substantive dialogue and separate concise recommendations to the UNCTAD secretariat. Further options for the outcome may include: principles, guidelines, best practices, agreed conclusions, etc.

3. To this end, the Commission will have before it the reports of the expert meetings held during the previous months, as well as background documentation prepared by the secretariat identifying policy issues for discussion by the Commission.

Item 1: Election of officers

4. In accordance with rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the main Commissions of the Trade and Development Board, the Commission is to elect a Chairperson, five Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur from among the representatives of its members, taking into account the need to ensure equitable geographical distribution. Moreover, rule 19 of the rules of procedure states that the Bureau of the Commission is to consist of seven members (i.e. four members from Lists A and C combined, two members from List B and one member from List D, referred to in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX) as amended).

5. Accordingly, following the cycle of rotation established after UNCTAD IX, the bureau for the seventh session of the Commission will be as follows: Chairperson from List A (Asia); Rapporteur from List D; and five Vice-Chairpersons (3 from lists A and C combined and 2 from List B).

Item 2: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

6. The seventh session of the Commission is scheduled for 3-6 February 2003. At the closing plenary of its sixth session (4-8 February 2002), the Commission approved the provisional agenda for its seventh session and topics for the related expert meetings.

7. With regard to the organization of the work of the session, the Commission has four days available to it. It is suggested that the agenda items be taken up sequentially, with the first plenary meeting, on Monday, 3 February, being devoted to procedural matters and introductory statements.

8. During the seventh session, the UNCTAD secretariat will arrange, as appropriate, for the demonstration of data bases and modelling relevant to the work of the Commission, such as: Trade Analysis and Information System (TRAINS), containing comprehensive information on trade and market access conditions, including applied customs tariff rates for over 130 countries; UNCTAD/World Bank World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), facilitating access to and the integrated use of various trade-related databases including TRAINS; Market Information in the Commodities Area (INFOCOMM), containing qualitative information on commodity marketing chains, trade, production, use, quality standards, companies, prices, technology and economic policy factors; Measures Affecting Services Trade (MAST), providing an inventory of measures based on national laws and regulations which affect trade in services of developing countries; and the Agricultural Trade Policy Simulation Model (ATPSM), allowing for the examination of the impact of changing protectionist barriers that distort trade in agricultural commodities. Information will also be provided on the work and activities of the UNCTAD-UNEP Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (CBTFED).

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/51 Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3: Export diversification, market access and competitiveness

9. Under this agenda item, the Commission will examine the interrelationships among three concepts, namely, export diversification, market access and competitiveness, from the point of view of developing countries, particularly those depending on commodity exports. The discussion is expected to focus on issues such as: (i) the desirability of export diversification for development; (ii) the importance of market access conditions and rules of the international trading system; (iii) the challenge of improving competitiveness under market structures which are rapidly changing and becoming increasingly concentrated. Since progress on all three areas is interdependent, and none of them alone is sufficient to pave the way to development, it is expected that the Commission will focus on the linkages among

these issues rather than dealing with them individually. Such integrated treatment can lead to innovative policy recommendations, provide directions for UNCTAD's work and generate useful insights for multilateral trade negotiations and preferential regimes.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/54	“Export diversification, market access and competitiveness: Note by the UNCTAD secretariat”
TD/B/COM.1/50 TD/B/COM.1/EM.18/3	Report of the Expert Meeting on the Diversification of Production and Exports in Commodity-dependent Developing Countries, including Single-Commodity Exporters, for Industrialization and Development, taking into account the Special Needs of LDCs

Item 4: Trade in services and development implications

10. Under this agenda item, the Commission will examine the main quantitative and qualitative features of development in their linkages with trade in services on a sector-specific basis and overall. The discussion is expected to focus on conditions necessary at the national level for developing countries to maximize their development possibilities from trade and on how their concerns could be taken into account in the multilateral process of progressive trade liberalization. Further, the Commission is expected to consider and identify the best ways to achieve effective implementation of the GATS Article IV and to increase participation of developing countries in trade in services. A number of cross-cutting issues play a particularly important role in promoting trade in services in developing countries, including transfer of technology, subsidies, emergency safeguard measures, etc. The Commission may wish to discuss where early progress in the GATS negotiations might contribute to enhancing the supply capacity in developing countries in the services sector and in increasing their participation in international trade in services. In this regard, the Commission will have before it the conclusions emerging from the sector-specific work of UNCTAD in areas of export interest and development concern to developing countries such as health, tourism, air transport, environment, construction, energy and audiovisual services. The problems identified by individual developing countries in their management of the request and offer process place strong emphasis on the importance of the technical assistance provided by UNCTAD at the country level.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/55	“Trade in services and development implications: Note by the UNCTAD secretariat”
TD/B/COM.1/56 TD/B/COM.1/EM.20/3	Report of the Expert Meeting on Audio-visual Services: Improving the Participation of Developing Countries

Item 5: Trade, environment and development

11. This item provides the Commission with an opportunity to address developments in the area of trade, environment and development, including the relationship between environmental requirements, market access, new trading opportunities and competitiveness. As environmental requirements become more frequent, stringent and complex, developing countries are confronted by several challenges. These include maintaining an awareness of a constantly changing and widening array of environmental regulations and standards, and developing the in-country capacity to meet them and thus gain market access and entry. At the same time, demand for environmentally preferable products (EPPs) may create new trading opportunities for developing countries. Issues that the Commission may wish to address relate to: (a) data collection for empirical research; (b) addressing developing countries' concerns in the design and implementation of new environmental standards; (c) improving information gathering and dissemination; (d) pros and cons of considering EPPs in the context of mandated negotiations on environmental goods (and services); (e) means to support mutual recognition of compliance assessment procedures and the establishment of technical equivalency agreements; (f) possible work on environmental and health standards in the context of the UNCTAD Science and Technology Diplomacy Initiative; and (g) possible UNCTAD contributions to the WTO post-Doha work programme, in particular on capacity building, and to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/52	“Trade, environment and development: Note by the UNCTAD secretariat”
TD/B/COM.1/53 TD/B/COM.1/EM.19/3	Report of the Expert Meeting on Environmental Requirements and International Trade

Item 6: Implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Commission, including the post-Doha follow-up

12. The guidelines adopted by the Trade and Development Board in carrying out the Mid-term Review at its nineteenth special session, held in Bangkok from 29 April to 2 May 2002 (TD/B(S-XIX)/7), state that “Commissions’ agendas will continue to include an item on

follow-up and implementation of past recommendations. The secretariat will report on its implementation of recommendations addressed to it, and member States will be invited to report on their own implementation in statements to the Commission”.

13. In this context, the UNCTAD secretariat will prepare a progress report on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations adopted at the sixth session of the Commission addressed to UNCTAD. Member States wishing to report on their own implementation of recommendations will have an opportunity to present their experiences in this regard to the Commission.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/57 Progress report on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations, including the post-Doha follow-up

Item 7: Provisional agenda for the eight session of the Commission

14. A draft provisional agenda for the eight session of the Commission will be submitted for consideration and approval.

Item 8: Other business

Item 9: Adoption of the report of the Commission to the Trade and Development Board

15. The report of the Commission on its seventh session will be submitted to the Trade and Development Board.
