



**United Nations
Conference
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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities
Expert Meeting on Distribution Services
Geneva, 16–18 November 2005
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

I. Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Distribution services
4. Adoption of the report of the meeting

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

Item 1: Election of officers

1. It is recommended that the Expert Meeting elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. The provisional agenda for the Expert Meeting is reproduced in section I above. A detailed programme will be available one week before the meeting.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/EM.29/1 Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3: Distribution services

3. At its ninth session, in March 2005, the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities decided to convene an UNCTAD Expert Meeting on Distribution Services. The Expert Meeting will explore the role that distribution services play in a development and trade context, including in the ongoing GATS negotiations. The Meeting will provide an insight into the competition issues in this area and also help in making progress in the debate on ensuring increasing market access for suppliers of goods and services from developing and least developed countries.

4. The discussions will serve to provide UNCTAD member States with a better understanding of the role of distribution services in economic growth, trade and domestic supply capacity building in developing countries. It will aim to discuss policy options and associated regulatory frameworks that enhance the contribution of these services to growth, trade and development. In that context, the Meeting will address current market and regulatory trends, as well as the new realities of international trade in distribution services, assessing their role in contributing to attainment of national development objectives in this area. Presentations by experts, representatives from the private and public sector, including trade associations, academics, regulators and trade negotiators will contribute to a better understanding of options available to developing countries in pursuing further development and trade, as well as improving market access for distribution services of developing countries and providing elements for implementation of GATS Article IV on improving access of developing countries to distribution channels.

5. To facilitate the discussion, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared an issues note. In addition, experts are encouraged to prepare brief papers on the subject under discussion. These papers will be made available at the meeting in the form and language in which they are received.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/EM.29/2 "Distribution Services"

Item 4: Adoption of the report of the meeting

6. The report of the Expert Meeting will be submitted to the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities at its next session. The Expert Meeting may wish to authorize the Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chairperson, to prepare the final report after the conclusion of the meeting.

Inputs from experts

Experts nominated by member States are expected to submit brief papers (approximately five pages) as contributions to the work of the Meeting. Papers should be submitted to the UNCTAD secretariat in advance of the meeting. These papers, which will draw on experts' experience, will be made available at the meeting in the form and language in which they are received. An expert paper may address one or more of the following issues:

- ✓ What is the role of distribution services (retail and wholesale) in promoting domestic efficiency and services supply capacity of developing countries? What are ways and means of building domestic supply capacity in this area?
- ✓ What is the role of public policies in the area of distribution services?
- ✓ What is the impact of new technologies, in particular e-commerce, in improving trading opportunities for distributors and promoting an overall competitive environment? What conditions need to be put in place in other sectors to maximize benefits from opportunities provided by the new technologies?
- ✓ What are successful experiences of developing countries in integrating their own products and inputs into global distribution channels and under what conditions? How are distribution services facilitating international trade, including export of domestically produced goods and services?
- ✓ What is necessary for developing countries to be able to develop capacities for supply of distribution services internationally?
- ✓ What are the main barriers to market access and national treatment that developing countries face when seeking to provide distribution services in foreign markets?
- ✓ What competition-related issues may be affecting trade in the area of distribution in developing countries?
- ✓ What issues do developing countries face in the area of licensing and administrative procedures pertaining to distribution services, especially in the export markets, which could be addressed in the context of GATS work on domestic regulation?
- ✓ What issues of concern to developing countries may have to be reflected in trade negotiations aimed at the implementation of GATS Article IV on increasing the participation and improving access of developing countries to distribution channels?

Experts are requested to submit papers by 21 October 2005 to Ms. Jolita Butkeviciene, Division on International Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, Fax: + 41 22 907 00 44, E-mail: jolita@unctad.org