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Trade and Development Board
Trade and Development Commission
Multi-year Expert Meeting on Services, Development and Trade:
the Regulatory and Institutional Dimension
Second session
Geneva, 17–19 March 2010
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. Services, development and trade: the regulatory and institutional dimension
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 Chair and a Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

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

Documentation

TD/B/C.I/MEM.3/4 Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3. Services, development and trade: the regulatory and institutional dimension

3. This second session of the multi-year expert meeting is being held further to the decision taken at the forty-fourth executive session of the Trade and Development Board on 10 July 2008. The objective of the multi-year expert meeting is to assist developing countries, especially those in Africa, least developed countries and countries with special

needs in accordance with the Accra Accord, as well as countries with economies in transition, in establishing regulatory and institutional frameworks and cooperative mechanisms to support strengthening of their domestic services capacity and its efficiency, competitiveness and export capacity (para. 94(b)).

4. According to the decision of the board, this session of the multi-year expert meeting is to address: (a) trends and salient features of regulatory and institutional frameworks for infrastructure services, development and trade; (b) the efficiency and effectiveness of these regulatory and institutional frameworks and their interaction with supply capacities, non-trade-related objectives, including universal access policies and trade liberalization; (c) exchange of experiences and best practices for building human capital, and institutional and regulatory frameworks based on sectoral and modal (including Mode 4) case studies and policy reviews; (d) cooperative mechanisms for institutional and regulatory frameworks, including private and public sectors and South–South and North–South levels; and (e) trade agreements, regulatory and institutional frameworks and regulatory barriers to exports.

5. Enhanced infrastructure services sectors can catalyze economic diversification and enhance domestic supply capacity and competitiveness, while providing opportunities for employment, investment and trade. They are also essential for human development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly poverty reduction. The first session of the multi-year expert meeting highlighted that although in recent years the services economy had undergone a paradigm shift towards increased private participation and competition in infrastructure services markets, governments continued to play an essential role as service providers and regulators. In this context the meeting highlighted the role of the government in providing effective regulatory and institutional frameworks for correcting market failures and achieving key domestic social and developmental objectives. It was noted that developing countries faced challenges when striving to build capacity to regulate effectively, given the increasingly complex nature of regulations and these countries' limited financial and human resources and other constraints. Adopting a gradual approach in developing regulatory and institutional frameworks and hybrid regulatory models was considered important for ensuring the sustainability of the regulatory system. In addition, in discussing the causes of – and responses to – the ongoing financial crisis, many experts stressed the need for improved regulation to curtail excessive risk-taking in financial markets.

6. Building on earlier discussions and recommendations, the second session of the multi-year expert meeting will seek to enhance participants' understanding and knowledge of regulations and institutions in the area of infrastructure services by exploring the manner in which countries meet the numerous requirements needed to advance development of their infrastructure services sectors. This will be achieved through analysis of national and international regulatory and institutional policies, sharing of national experiences, best practices and distilling regulatory options for harnessing the services sector and services trade for development. Particular attention will be devoted to the financial and energy services sectors in view of specific challenges relating to the continuing financial and economic crisis and climate change and related regulatory reforms.

7. Based on national experiences, the meeting will discuss key cross-cutting issues in regulatory reform, lessons learned in cases of regulatory failure, especially in the context of the current financial crisis, the use of cooperative mechanisms by private and public sectors in institutional and regulatory frameworks as well as best practices in building human capital including in the Mode 4 context. The meeting will aim to identify means to support policymakers and regulators in improving regulatory and institutional outcomes and reducing risks of regulatory failures, while meeting domestic policy priorities. Finally, the meeting will help identify areas for deeper research and analysis, consensus-building on

and facilitation of international regulatory cooperation and the creation of networks of experts and research institutions working on the development and trade implications of infrastructure services and attendant regulatory, policy and institutional frameworks.

8. To facilitate 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/C.I/MEM.3/5 Services, Development and Trade: the Regulatory and
Institutional Dimension
