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Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development
Ad Hoc Expert Meeting on Building Skills in Developing Countries:
Training, Networking and ICTs
Geneva, 27–28 November 2006

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS*

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Building skills in developing countries: Training, networking and ICTs
4. Adoption of the report of the Meeting

* This document was submitted on the above-mentioned date as a result of processing delays.

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Item 1: Election of officers

1. It is recommended that the Ad Hoc 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 Ad Hoc Expert Meeting is reproduced in section I above. The experts will have two days, from 27 to 28 November 2006, to complete their work. A detailed programme of the two days will be made available one week before the meeting.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/AHM.1/1 Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3: Building skills in developing countries: Training, networking and ICTs

(a) *Consideration of the recommendations by previous UNCTAD meetings on training and capacity building: Establishing continuity*

3. This meeting draws on the deliberations of previous UNCTAD meetings on training and capacity building that have been organized over the past six years, namely: the Expert Meeting on Human Resources Development and Training in Trade-Supporting Services (December 2000); and the various sessions of UNCTAD's Advisory Group on the Strengthening of Training Capacities and Human Resources Development, devoted to UNCTAD training programmes in 2002, networking and distance learning in 2004 and 2005, and human resources development in the field of international trade and investment for the least developed countries (LDCs) and regional organizations in Africa in 2006.

(b) *Building knowledge and skills for trade in the context of the current trade and development challenges faced by developing countries*

4. In order to make trade an effective engine of economic and social development, it is imperative to address supply-side constraints in developing countries, including by building knowledge and skills for international trade. Recognition of this logic has increased both nationally and internationally and is reflected in the recommendations of the Aid for Trade task force published in July 2006. Of particular importance, especially in LDCs where the need is the most acute, is the development of a sustainable local capacity to deal with trade, investment and development issues (hereafter referred to simply as trade).

5. Approaches to learning, including skills and knowledge acquisition, have evolved as a consequence of the fast pace of change in the international economic environment and the production of ever-increasing amounts of information. We have also witnessed unprecedented advances in information and communication technologies, which have allowed communication and access to information to be extended over time and space and produced new opportunities for learning and for professional synergies.

6. In this context, the meeting will attempt to address the following questions:
- What does trade-related capacity building mean today with regard to training and the building of knowledge and skills for trade? How is it viewed by developing countries? What is the current approach of donors?
 - What are the target groups that need trade-related knowledge and skills (Governments, parliament, the business sector, journalists, academia, etc.) and what types of skills and capacities do they need to acquire?
 - In what forms are the necessary knowledge and skills acquired (such as formal training, other forms of learning)?

(c) *Strengthening training/teaching capacity on trade, investment and development*

7. There is a wide range of knowledge and skills that can be useful for trade. Some relate to an understanding of the place of trade in a country's development strategy, its links with the building of productive capacities and the reduction of poverty, while others are more specifically related to the technical requirements of a particular job. Many jobs require a multidisciplinary mixture of knowledge and skills of different width and depth.

8. One of the ways of acquiring trade knowledge and skills is through formal training. This can vary from broadly oriented longer-term foundation education to shorter-term training interventions (ranging from awareness raising to specialized training to build specific technical skills). To provide education/training that is anchored in a country's reality and adapted to the local context, it is crucial for developing countries to build a sustainable teaching and training capacity on trade issues. Sustainability has (a) human resource and institutional aspects (individual/institutional capacity to conceive and deliver locally relevant education/training) and (b) financial aspects (capacity to sustain programmes financially).

9. Based on the experiences of existing academic and training programmes, the Meeting will examine the following questions:

- What is the content of these programmes and interventions and what was the kind of needs analysis that determined that content? How does one measure the impact and effectiveness of these programmes in building the required knowledge and skills relevant for the country? What are the lessons learnt, gaps and challenges?
- What are the different organizational models for the establishment and delivery of trade-related academic/training programmes (ranging from direct training by expatriate lecturers to local conception and delivery of programmes supported by training of trainers/teachers and long-term support individuals/institutions)? How do they contribute to the building of a sustainable local teaching/training capacity?
- What are the financial models behind the existing programmes (ranging from locally funded to donor funded) and the possible ways of making them sustainable?
- How can ICT (and distance learning) support the different organizational or financial models above? What role can networking play in the development of these models?

- What is the role of national stakeholders, regional (South-South) cooperation, international organizations and donors in helping make such programmes sustainable?

(d) *Strengthening analytical capacity on trade and linking research to policy making*

10. The ability to provide rigorous, empirical and accessible policy-oriented research is one of the essential elements in achieving the better integration of developing countries into the international economy, helping them achieve their development goals and reducing poverty.

11. The experts will look into the following questions:

- Where do Governments get analysis from to support policy-making and trade negotiations? What is the current capacity and role of local research providers?
- How can one build a sustainable research/analytical capacity? How can the local research capacity be coordinated at the national level?
- In building research capacity, what role could be played by Governments, international/regional organizations, donors, research networks, etc.?
- How could the relevance and use of local research be enhanced and the links between policy makers and researchers strengthened?

(e) *Ways forward*

12. The points raised and discussed during the Meeting, as well as any emerging proposals for solutions, will be brought together at the close of the Meeting. The experts will be invited to reflect on recommendations that they could make with regard to ways of enhancing trade-related knowledge and skills in developing countries.

13. The questions addressed will include the following:

- What are the long-term challenges facing developing countries in building trade-related knowledge and skills?
- How, and by whom, should strategies for the development of sustainable knowledge and skills be formulated and implemented?
- What are the roles of different national (government, civil society, private sector) and international stakeholders (donors, international organizations, in particular UNCTAD) in pooling together existing knowledge, identifying gaps and building the sustainable teaching/training and research capacity that is required to foster the developmental contribution of trade for developing countries?

14. To facilitate the discussions, the UNCTAD secretariat will circulate an issues note on building skills in developing countries (TD/B/COM.3/AHM.1/2). 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.3/AHM.1/2 Building skills in developing countries: Training, networking and ICTs

Item 4: Adoption of the report of the Meeting

15. The report of the Expert Meeting will be submitted to the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development at its eleventh session in 2007. The Expert Meeting may wish to authorize the Rapporteur to prepare the final report after the conclusion of the Meeting.

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