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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Commission on Enterprise, Business
Facilitation and Development
Third session,
Geneva, 23 November 1998
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

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2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. The implications of the post-Uruguay Round economic environment for enterprise development, including policy issues relevant to inter-firm cooperation and clustering
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7. Adoption of the report of the Commission to the Trade and Development Board.

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Item 1 - Election of officers

1. Rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the Main Committees of the Trade and Development Board states that: "At the commencement of the first meeting of each regular session, the Committee shall elect a Chairman, five Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur from among the representatives of its members. These officers shall constitute the Bureau of the Committee. In electing the officers, due account shall be taken of the need to ensure an equitable geographical distribution". Moreover, rule 19 indicates that "the Bureau of the Committee shall consist of seven members, including four members from Groups A and C combined, two members from Group B and one member from Group D, referred to in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX) as amended". According to the cycle of rotation, the Chairman of the Commission at its third session shall be a representative of a State member from List B and the Rapporteur from a State member of List D. The five Vice-Chairmen shall therefore be distributed as follows: 4 from List A and C combined and 1 from List B.

Item 2 - Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. The provisional agenda in section I above was approved by the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development at its second session (TD/B/45/3-TD/B/COM.3/11, annex IV).

Organization of work

3. The Commission will have five working days, from 23 to 27 November 1998, to complete its work. It is suggested that Monday, 23 November, and the morning of Tuesday, 24 November, be devoted to formal and informal discussions on item 3 of the provisional agenda.

4. The remaining substantive item of the provisional agenda (item 4) will be taken up on the afternoon of Tuesday, 24 November, and on Wednesday, 25 November. Thursday and Friday will be devoted entirely to discussing the outcome of the Commission.

5. The reports of expert meetings will be considered under the appropriate agenda items.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/18

Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3 - The implications of the post-Uruquay Round economic environment for enterprise development, including policy issues relevant to inter-firm cooperation and clustering

6. With a view to expediting substantive discussions at the Commission's session, the secretariat has prepared an issues paper entitled, "Policy issues relevant to inter-firm cooperation, networking and clustering" (TD/B/COM.3/19).

7. The paper is based on the main findings of the expert meetings organized during the year, reports submitted by various experts at those meetings and the research currently undertaken by the UNCTAD secretariat. The paper briefly describes the new competitive environment of the post-Uruguay Round period. That environment is a given and as such is not currently an object of investigation by the secretariat. The paper emphasizes the fact that small and medium-size enterprises are under pressure to innovate and change but do not have the resources to do so. Inter-firm cooperation, networking and clustering can help fill this "resource gap". SMEs can interface internationally via formal partnering arrangements, and domestic firms can interface locally through clustering and networking. The paper explores the main findings of the expert meetings in terms of appropriate policies and support mechanisms for promoting partnering, clustering and networking.

8. Following the decision made at the second session of the Commission, the Expert Meeting on Inter-firm Cooperation was held from 20 to 22 April 1998. The report of the Expert Meeting is contained in document TD/B/COM.3/12-TD/B/COM.3/EM.4/3. The Expert Meeting on Clustering and Networking for SME Development was held 2-4 September 1998. The report of the Expert Meeting is contained in document TD/B/COM.3/14. In taking note of the reports of the Expert Meetings, the Commission may wish to endorse the recommendations contained therein.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/19	Policy issues relevant to inter-firm cooperation, clustering and networking
TD/B/COM.3/12- TD/B/COM.3/EM.4/3	Report of the Expert Meeting on Inter-firm Cooperation
TD/B/COM.3/14- TD/B/COM.3/EM.5/3	Report of the Expert Meeting on Clustering and Networking for SME Development

Item 4 - The impact and relevance of electronic commerce on trade growth and development

9. Responding to the request made by the Commission at its second session to undertake analytical work on trade efficiency, the secretariat has prepared two reports in areas related to electronic commerce and development.

10. The report on " Implications for trade and development of recent proposals to set up a global framework for electronic commerce" (TD/B/COM.3/17) examines some of the financial issues (including fiscal aspects), the legal issues (including intellectual property, security and market access aspects) and issues of access for small and medium-sized enterprises presented by the European Union, Japan, the United States and the OECD secretariat in the context of a global framework for electronic commerce, as well as their potential consequences for trade and development.

11. The report "Policy issues relating to access to participation in electronic commerce" (TD/B/COM.3/16) has two main objectives: (1) to assess the current state of connectivity/accessibility of various countries and groups of countries to Internet-based electronic commerce; and (2) to identify main areas in which policy issues need to be addressed in order to enhance access to participation in electronic commerce.

12. Following the decision made at the second session of the Commission, the Expert Meeting on Capacity-building in the Area of Electronic Commerce: Human Resource Development was held from 29 June to 1 July 1998. The report of the Expert Meeting is contained in document TD/B/COM.3/13-TD/B/COM.3/EM.6/3. In taking note of the report of the Expert Meeting, the Commission may wish to endorse the recommendations contained therein.

13. Responding to the request made by the Commission at its second session to report on progress made to finalize the methodology for a trade efficiency assessment (TEAM), the secretariat has prepared an update (TD/B/COM.3/15).

Documents

TD/B/COM.3/17	Implications for trade and development of recent proposals to set up a global framework for electronic commerce.
TD/B/COM.3/16	Policy issues relating to access to participation in electronic commerce.
TD/B/COM.3/13- TD/B/COM.3/EM.6/3	Report of the Expert Meeting on Capacity-building in the Area of Electronic Commerce: Human Resource Development
TD/B/COM.3/15	Trade efficiency assessment methodology (TEAM) an update

Item 5 - Provisional agenda for the fourth session of the Commission

14. The secretariat will submit a draft provisional agenda for the fourth session of the Commission to the meeting for its approval.

Item 6 - Other business

Item 7 - Adoption of the report of the Commission to the Trade and Development Board.

15. The report of the Commission on its third session will be considered by the Trade and Development Board.