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Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation
and Development
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Geneva, 8–12 December 2003
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS*

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* The delay in the submission of this document was due to the need to secure additional information in connection with agenda item 8.

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Introduction

1. The Conference, at its tenth session, held in February 2000, in considering the issue of UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery, welcomed the document prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat entitled "Improving the functioning and the structure of the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD" (reissued in TD/B/EX(24)/L.1). The purpose behind the recommendations contained in that document was *inter alia* to enhance the status of the Commissions as policy-formulating organs and to strengthen the substantive linkages between expert meetings and Commissions.

2. In addition, 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)/4). 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.

3. 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.

4. 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 the policy questions for discussion by the Commission.

Item 1: Election of officers

5. In accordance with rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the main Commissions of the Trade and Development Board, the Commission shall 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 shall 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).

6. Accordingly, following the cycle of rotation established after UNCTAD IX, the bureau for the eighth session of the Commission will be as follows: Chairperson from List B; Rapporteur from List D; and five Vice-Chairpersons (4 from lists A and C combined, and 1 from List B).

Item 2: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

7. The eighth session of the Commission is scheduled for 8-11 December 2003. At the closing plenary of its seventh session, on 27 February 2003, the Commission approved the agenda items for the eighth session and the related expert meetings.

8. 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, 8 December, being devoted to procedural matters and introductory statements.

9. The secretariat will prepare a detailed programme, which will be available on the first day of the session.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/57 Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3: Improving the competitiveness of SMEs through enhancing productive capacity

10. With a view to facilitating the substantive discussions at the session, the secretariat has prepared an issues paper: "Policy options for strengthening SME competitiveness" (TD/B/COM.3/58). At its seventh session, the Commission discussed issues related to the concept of competitiveness, competitiveness strategies and the coherence between national competitiveness policies and international rules. The issues note builds on this analysis by identifying concrete policy options that developing countries could consider to improve enterprise competitiveness within the context of international commitments. In particular, policy options will be explored taking into account that entrepreneurs are driven either by necessity or opportunity. A panel will be organized to examine the options raised in the paper.

11. The Expert Meeting on Policies and Programmes for Technology Development and Mastery, including the Role of FDI, was held from 16 to 18 July 2003 in Geneva. Technology development is a critical determinant of developing country enterprises' ability to compete in integrated global markets. However, many developing countries have seen the technology gap vis-à-vis developed countries widen in recent years. The Expert Meeting considered policies and programmes that developing countries could adopt to move up the

technology ladder. The experts recommended various follow-up actions for consideration by the Commission, as contained in the report of the Expert Meeting (TD/B/COM.3/56).

12. At its seventh session, the Commission requested that a briefing on the EMPRETEC programme be included in the eighth session of the Commission. Besides a general overview, EMPRETEC Directors will be invited to review the current status of their programmes, including impacts on job creation, revenues, etc. Special projects on women entrepreneurs and business linkages will also be reviewed.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/56	Report of the Expert Meeting on Policies and Programmes
TD/B/COM.3/EM.18/3	for Technology Development and Mastery, including the Role of FDI, 16–18 July 2003
TD/B/COM.3/58	Policy options for strengthening SME competitiveness

Item 4: Efficient transport and trade facilitation to improve participation by developing countries in international trade

13. Efficient transport and trade facilitation can significantly increase trade, thereby boosting economic growth and creating new opportunities for development. The issues paper prepared by the secretariat (TD/B/COM.3/60) considers the importance of transport for promoting trade and economic development, highlighting the factors affecting transport costs. It reviews the impact of latest developments on international transport and trade facilitation, including the development of multimodal transport and logistic services; laws and regulations governing multimodal transport adopted at the regional and subregional level, as well as ongoing work at the international level; developments concerning port and maritime security, such as the ISPS Code adopted by IMO; and the impact of information and communication technology. The paper concludes that developing countries would need to establish appropriate policies and strategies in order to benefit from the potential advantages offered by these developments. The paper is to assist the Commission in its deliberation of the subject.

14. As agreed by the Commission at its seventh session, the secretariat convened an Expert Meeting on Development of Multimodal Transport and Logistic Services on 24-26 September 2003. The discussions and conclusions of the Expert Meeting are reflected in the Chairperson's summary (TD/B/COM.3/59), which is before the Commission for its consideration.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/59	Report of the Expert Meeting on Development of Multimodal Transport and Logistic Services, 24–26 September 2003
TD/B/COM.3/EM.20/3	
TD/B/COM.3/60	Efficient transport and trade facilitation to improve participation by developing countries in international trade

Item 5: Electronic commerce strategies for development

15. With a view to assisting the Commission in its consideration of the main thematic issue of electronic commerce strategies for development, the secretariat has prepared a background paper entitled “ICT and e-commerce for development: Selected issues” (TD/B/COM.3/62).

16. As agreed by the Commission at its seventh session, the secretariat convened an Expert Meeting on Measuring Electronic Commerce as an Instrument for the Development of the Digital Economy. The meeting was held on 8–10 September 2003 and addressed the issue of measuring electronic commerce, providing a framework for introducing developing countries’ views into the existing debates and initiatives on e-statistics; identifying key indicators on ICT usage; and exploring the need for future work to establish an international database on ICT usage and e-business. The report of the Expert Meeting is contained in document TD/B/COM.3/61.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/61	Report of the Expert Meeting on Measuring Electronic Commerce as an Instrument for the Development of the Digital Economy, 8–10 September 2003
TD/B/COM.3/EM.19/3	
TD/B/COM.3/62	E-commerce and ICT for development: Selected issues

Item 6: Implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Commission

17. The note on “Improving the functioning and the structure of the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD” (TD/EX(24)/L.1), re-endorsed by the Board at its twenty-sixth executive session on 10 April 2001, states: “Starting with the second session of each Commission, the fifth day of the session will be used for policy reviews of implementation by member States and the secretariat of the outcome of previous sessions, on the basis of documentation produced by the secretariat.”

18. Furthermore, the guidelines adopted by the Trade and Development Board at its nineteenth special session (TD/B(S-XIX)/4) state the 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.

19. In this context the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared a progress report, which contains information on the implementation of decisions and agreed conclusions adopted at the seventh session of the Commission and addressed to UNCTAD. Concerning implementation by member States, those member States wishing to do so will have an opportunity to present their experience to the Commission.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/63 Progress report on the implementation of the agreed recommendations of the Commission at its seventh session

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

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

21. According to the guidelines adopted by the Trade and Development Board at its nineteenth session (TD/B(S-XIX)/4), when selecting or approving topics for expert meetings, the Commission concerned should consider, on a case-by-case basis, continuing discussions on a particular theme over a series of expert meetings, in order to build a network of experts and allow for more in-depth discussions. Topics for expert meetings should be of immediate relevance. To this end, each Commission should establish clear terms of reference for its expert meetings.

Item 8: Other business

22. The Commission will be updated on recent General Assembly initiatives in the field of private sector development, particularly with regard to meeting Millennium Goals. The Commission may wish to consider possible cooperation with these initiatives.

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

23. The report of the Commission will be adopted at its final plenary meeting and submitted to the Trade and Development Board for consideration.