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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION AT ITS SEVENTH SESSION

Prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat

Executive summary

The note on "Improving the Functioning and the Structure of the Intergovernmental Machinery of UNCTAD" (TD/B/EX(24)/L.1), re-endorsed by the Trade and Development Board at its twenty-sixth executive session on 10 April 2001, stated *inter alia:* "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". Accordingly, the secretariat has prepared the present report, which contains information on the implementation of decisions and agreed conclusions adopted at the seventh session of the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development and addressed to UNCTAD. The report covers three main areas: competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), transport and trade facilitation, and electronic commerce. Moreover, it covers the work done by UNCTAD to mainstream gender into these areas.

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The report of the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development on its seventh session (TD/B/COM.3/55) contained a number of recommendations for action by UNCTAD. These recommendations and agreed conclusions are set out below, together with relevant actions taken so far.

I.   IN THE FIELD OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

Recommendation

1.   To improve coherence between macroeconomic and microeconomic policies, the Commission requests UNCTAD to disseminate as widely as possible its findings regarding the main components of proactive competitiveness policies as contained in the issues paper "Improving the Competitiveness of SMEs through Enhancing Productive Capacity" (TD/B/COM.3/51/Add.1) and the panel discussion, through its websites, its publications, its advisory services and its technical assistance programme Empretec.

Action

2.   To disseminate its research findings, UNCTAD has posted on its website background documents on policies and programmes for financing SMEs, for inter-firm cooperation (including business linkages) and for technology. Currently, a new publication on technology policies and programmes to enhance enterprise development is being prepared. Furthermore, the findings of UNCTAD's work on competitiveness policies have been disseminated in two issues of the *Empretec Newsletter* launched earlier this year.

3.   To further disseminate its findings on competitiveness policies, UNCTAD assisted the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in preparing a strategy for private-sector development in Africa. This included a concept paper for expert and high-level meetings on TICAD Support Policies for Private Sector Development in Africa that were held in Morocco in April 2003, and the organization of a follow-up meeting in Geneva in July 2003. These papers were largely based on the findings of the issues paper "Improving the Competitiveness of SMEs through Enhancing Productive Capacity" (TD/B/COM.3/51/Add.1).

4.   UNCTAD negotiated with Unilever to improve its capacity to raise awareness of the benefits of business linkages and to actively promote them. The former chairman of Unilever Turkey and Viet Nam was seconded to UNCTAD's Enterprise Development Branch to strengthen the Branch's capacities in advisory services to Governments, transnational corporations (TNCs) and SMEs.

Recommendation

5.   UNCTAD should assess, particularly in the areas of technology acquisition and mastery, the competitiveness policies used by developing countries that have greatly improved their performance.

Action

6.   UNCTAD undertook research on technology and competitiveness policies and produced an issues note (TD/B/COM.3/EM.18/2) and a detailed background document (TD/B/COM.3/EM.18/CRP.1) containing six case studies (Ghana, Malaysia, Senegal, Singapore, Taiwan Province of China and Uganda) on policies and programmes for technology development and mastery. Based on these studies, intergovernmental discussions were conducted during the Expert Meeting on 16–18 July 2003 on "Policies and Programmes for Technology Development and Mastery, Including the Role of FDI". The Expert Meeting closely examined policies for technology development in African, Asian and Latin American developing countries. After the intergovernmental discussions, the experts made the recommendations contained in the following three paragraphs:

7.   Integrated technology and industrial policies for competitiveness play an important role in enabling countries to move up the technology ladder; implementation of such policies requires sustained support and public-private partnerships, with the government as the facilitator and the private sector as the driver.

8.   Governments could consider targeting a new kind of foreign investor who is willing to bring knowledge-intensive investment and transfer technology while not forgetting the need to provide assistance to local enterprises. Further, incentive policies should be geared towards enabling enterprises (local and foreign) to build technical capabilities, as these policies are the foundation for competitiveness.

9.   Developing countries could consider initiating proposals to clarify World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, particularly the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (ASCM), to ensure their ability to implement policies for technology development and competitiveness.

Recommendation

10.   UNCTAD should assess the linkage between investment, trade and technology transfer and should explore measures that promote access to technology by developing countries and build domestic capacities.

Action

11.   Reviewing the evidence on successful technology transfer contained in numerous case studies, intergovernmental discussions, and the *World Investment Reports* of 2001 and 2002 revealed TNC-SME linkages were a very efficient way to transfer technology. Thus, UNCTAD initiated the project "Promoting Business Linkages for Sustainable Development".

The project includes: (1) *identification of demand,* using Empretec to conduct diagnostic studies and identify strategic sectors and lead companies so as to match their needs with the supply capacity of local providers; (2) *local capacity building*, with business services provided through Empretec in order to make local SMEs partnership ready; and (3) *matchmaking*, with activities including the preparation of investment linkage profiles for partnership-ready SMEs and installation of a matchmaking database. So far, pilot projects have been carried out in Ethiopia and Uganda and advisory services provided to Angola, Brazil and Morocco.

Recommendation

12.   UNCTAD should further investigate the coherence between competitiveness policies for micro-stimulation and multilateral commitments and requirements, taking into account national development strategies and objectives.

Action

13.   Research and discussions in this area are ongoing. The issue has been examined in an issues note (TD/B/COM.3/EM.18/2) and in a policy paper prepared by UNCTAD for a UNDESA/UNDP expert and high-level meeting on the TICAD process held in Morocco in April 2003. The issue is also examined in the issues note prepared by UNCTAD for the Commission's eighth session. Furthermore, UNCTAD organized a session on the implications of WTO commitments for developing countries' national development policies and programmes during the Expert Meeting on "Policies and Programmes for Technology Development and Mastery, Including the Role of FDI" (16–18 July 2003). The issue will also be discussed by a panel during the eighth session of the Commission under item 3.

Recommendation

14.   Given the need for action also at the practical level, the Commission requests UNCTAD to enhance its efforts to help developing countries and countries with economies in transition promote dynamic and competitive enterprises through the Empretec programme, including through implementation of the recommendations arising from its evaluation. This programme should be strengthened and expanded, within available resources.

Action

15.   During 2003 UNCTAD continued to strengthen existing Empretec National Programmes and initiated new ones. Empretec directors were assisted in networking to improve the sustainability of their programmes and their ability to promote dynamic and competitive enterprises. They were introduced to new products and services such as business linkages. In addition UNCTAD started a pilot programme in two Empretec countries to improve the programmes' ability to assist women entrepreneurs. Lessons learned from this project are being transmitted to other directors.

16.   During 2003, the UNCTAD Empretec programme was established in two new countries, Guyana and Paraguay, bringing the total number of Empretec countries to 26.

Negotiations to establish the programme in Angola, Bolivia, Honduras and Mexico are underway.

17.   Currently preparations are underway for the annual International Empretec Meeting to be held in parallel with UNCTAD XI in June 2004 in Brazil. The meeting is expected to bring together some 3,000 entrepreneurs. The annual meeting serves as an important opportunity to network and seize new business opportunities, particularly for those entrepreneurs aiming to expand their markets abroad.

II. IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT AND TRADE FACILITATION

Recommendation

18.   UNCTAD should review and monitor developments relating to efficient transport and trade facilitation, including multimodal transport and logistic services, and should analyse their implications for developing countries, taking into account countries' diverse levels of development.

Action

19.   The secretariat continued to monitor and analyse developments relating to efficient transport and trade facilitation, including multimodal transport and logistic services. Information was disseminated to member countries through recurrent publications such as the *Review of Maritime Transport* and the *Transport Newsletter.* The publications are made available on the UNCTAD website, which has further increased their accessibility to interested parties around the globe. For example, there were more than 58,000 downloads of the *Review of Maritime Transport 2002* between January and July 2003. Furthermore, secretariat staff members disseminated information about recent developments through presentations and lectures at a number of national, regional and international seminars and workshops. Parliamentary documentation prepared by the secretariat for the Expert Meeting and the eighth session of the Commission provides further analyses of the developments affecting multimodal transport and logistic services (TD/B/COM.3/EM.20/2, TD/B/COM.3/60).

Recommendation

20.   UNCTAD should continue providing guidance and assistance to developing countries in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for international transport services and trade facilitation, in particular through the ACIS and ASYCUDA programmes.

Action

21.   Work continued on the development and implementation of the Advance Cargo Information System (ACIS). The ACIS application is being technologically enhanced so that all modules function in a Windows/Web environment. ACIS PortTracker has been installed in the port of Bandar Abbas (Islamic Republic of Iran), and subsequently Iranian expertise

has successfully implemented this application in all other major Iranian ports. RailTracker has been installed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the latest version of the Border Pass Monitoring System between India and Nepal has been commissioned.

22.   RailTracker projects have been prepared for Egypt (a funding request has been submitted to the European Union), Djibouti/Ethiopia (the Government of France has agreed to provide funding to launch a first phase), Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (both with national funding) and Zimbabwe (with funding by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the European Union). A set of national projects has been submitted to the European Commission for installation of the new Windows/Web-based version of RailTracker with additional functionalities in Kenya, Mozambique, Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. PortTracker has been requested by Bulgaria, and a proposal for Phare funding from the European Union is being prepared.

23.   RoadTracker has been requested by Afghanistan, and a feasibility study for installation of this module in the Northern Corridor of Eastern Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda) has been completed under the auspices of the UN Economic Commission for Africa; a decision on implementation is pending. Terms of reference were written for a similar exercise within the UEMOA (Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa) and were submitted to the African Development Bank for funding. RoadTracker and the corresponding border pass monitoring modules have been proposed to Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran; in the latter case, these systems would connect with the operational PortTracker system.

24.   The Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA programme implemented a number of migration projects to benefit from the latest innovations in information technology (ASYCUDA++), mainly in Africa and the Caribbean. A migration effort is being pursued in the Caribbean region, where old implementations of ASYCUDA are still numerous. New ASYCUDA implementations are underway in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, East Timor, Gabon, New Caledonia, the Palestinian territory, Venezuela and Yemen.

25.   The programme restaffed the ASYCUDA sub-regional office in Fiji with regional experts, in coherence with its strategy of know-how transfer. The mission of ASYCUDA regional centres is to provide support to country users and facilitate regional and sub-regional integration. The objective is to make available at the regional level the expertise needed to support system implementation and maintenance. Discussions are continuing with regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), UEMOA, the Economic and Monetary Community of West Africa (CEMAC), COMESA and potential donors for the establishment of regional support centres in Africa.

26.   The ASYCUDA programme is also finalizing the development of a new system called ASYCUDAWorld that is compatible with ASYCUDA++. This new system provides ASYCUDA Customs administrations with a new generation of ICT tools targeting e-business and e-government processes and will allow Customs administrations and traders to handle most of their transactions via the Internet. The first implementations of ASYCUDAWorld

projects are foreseen for 2004. The ASYCUDA and ACIS technical cooperation programmes are further described in the "Review of Technical Cooperation Activities of UNCTAD" (TD/B/50/2, TD/WP/163) prepared for the forty-first session of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget.

27.   The secretariat is organizing a regional conference for Latin America and the Caribbean on "ICT Strategies for Competitiveness and Development: Promoting E-Business, Trade Facilitation and Logistics" in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in November 2003. The conference will consider policies and strategies that can enhance the contribution of ICT, trade facilitation and logistics to economic development and regional economic integration. The outcome of the conference will contribute to the preparatory process for UNCTAD XI, as well as to the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Geneva in December 2003.

Recommendation

28.   UNCTAD should study and analyse the impact of new security initiatives on the international trade and transport of developing countries and should disseminate this information.

Action

29.   The secretariat has been closely monitoring the various measures adopted at the national, regional and international levels with the aim of enhancing security along the international supply chain, particularly maritime, port and container security. The measures introduced in this context have significantly changed international trade practices. In view of the importance of the subject, the secretariat has reported on developments and their likely impact on developing countries in its recurrent and parliamentary publications. In particular the *Transport Newsletter 2003* and the forthcoming *Review of Maritime Transport 2003* provide specific analysis of the subject. Furthermore, the secretariat is preparing a separate report reviewing in particular potential implications of the measures adopted at the national and international levels.

Recommendation

30.   UNCTAD should study, analyse and, as appropriate, contribute substantively to the work of relevant intergovernmental organizations relating to the development of uniform international legal instruments affecting international transport, including multimodal transport, and should disseminate information on the implications of these instruments for developing countries.

Action

31.   The lack of a uniform international legal framework governing multimodal transport has prompted a number of international and regional organizations to initiate work in order to identify a possible solution. One of the most important developments is the work of the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) for the preparation of a new draft

international instrument on transport law. The draft instrument is also intended to cover multimodal transport of goods. The secretariat is continuing to make substantive contributions to the work carried out under the auspices of UNCITRAL. In particular, it has provided a detailed analytical commentary on the draft, which was published by UNCITRAL as a working document of its Working Group (A/CN.9/WG.III/WP.21/Add.1, UNCTAD/SDTE/TLB/4). Furthermore, the UNCTAD document "Multimodal Transport: The Feasibility of an International Legal Instrument" (UNCTAD/SDTE/TLB/2003/1, A/CN.9/WG.III/WP.30) was presented to the UNCITRAL Working Group at its eleventh session in New York in March 2003.

32. In addition, UNCTAD has been participating in the meetings of the UNCITRAL Working Group and providing substantive contributions to its deliberations, bearing in mind the implications of the provisions of the draft instrument for developing countries.

33. A revised version of the draft instrument has just been published by the UNCITRAL secretariat (A/CN.9/WG.III/WP.32). In view of the importance of the subject for international trade and transport and its impact on developing countries, UNCTAD will continue to participate in the work and report on possible implications for developing countries. The secretariat also continues to disseminate information on the developments and their possible implications through presentation of papers at national, regional and international seminars and conferences.

Recommendation

34. UNCTAD, in its work on the follow-up to the Doha Declaration, should continue to analyse developments in the area of trade facilitation and to assist developing countries in establishing their needs and priorities for trade facilitation in accordance with paragraph 27 of the Doha Declaration.

Action

35. As part of its work in the area of trade facilitation, the secretariat prepared a note on "Strategies for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries to Plan and Implement Sustainable Trade and Transport Facilitation Measures" (UNCTAD/SDTE/TLB/2003/2) for the parallel event on Trade Facilitation Measures that it organized for the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation held in Almaty (Kazakhstan) in August 2003. Furthermore, the secretariat was involved in two events related to trade facilitation: a UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) expert meeting on trade facilitation in Bangkok that reviewed a methodology for identifying needs and priorities; and a WTO seminar on trade facilitation in the post-Doha context that was held in Costa Rica to analyse the latest developments at the regional and international levels.

36. In addition, assistance will be provided through the secretariat's technical cooperation work. Examples include: (i) The project "Integrating LDCs in Global Trade – Challenges and

Opportunities of the Doha Development Agenda" (US/RAF/02/124), funded by the Government of Austria and executed jointly with the UN Industrial Development Organization. The project aims, among other goals, to create a common understanding of market access and trade facilitation issues, enabling least developed countries (LDCs) to take informed decisions on issues identified in the Doha Ministerial Declaration; (ii) The project "Developing Practical Tools to Access Trade Facilitation Needs and Priorities" (INT/0T/2CS) funded by the Government of Norway. The project aims to provide stakeholders of LDCs with the required know-how to assess their needs and priorities in connection with foreign trade management; to identify the actions to be taken to satisfy these needs and priorities; and to develop guidelines for achieving this objective.

Recommendation

37.   UNCTAD should continue to provide negotiating assistance to developing countries in the area of transport services in the context of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

Action

38.   UNCTAD has continued to provide assistance to developing countries in the process of liberalizing maritime transport services in the context of GATS. The work of the secretariat deals with assessing the impact of possible requests and offers in the area of maritime transport services as well as the improvement of supply capacities in developing countries. In 2003 the secretariat contributed key speakers to the workshop on liberalization of maritime transport services for South Asian countries members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the National Workshop for India held in Mumbai in March 2003. These workshops were organized jointly with ESCAP. Furthermore, issues relating to GATS coverage of transport services figured prominently at the African Ministerial Conference on Integrated Transportation held in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in Abuja (Nigeria) in March 2003 and the Seminar on Ports and Shipping – Challenges of Globalization organized by the Gulf Cooperation Council in Doha (Qatar). In both cases, UNCTAD provided the lead on issues relating to GATS coverage of maritime transport services. The latest developments in sectoral negotiations on transport services are reflected in the *Review of Maritime Transport 2003* (UNCTAD/RMT/2003).

III. IN THE FIELD OF ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

Recommendation

39.   UNCTAD should assist developing countries in identifying international best practices regarding policies promoting and facilitating the adoption of ICT and e-business practices. UNCTAD should do this in coordination with other relevant international organizations, taking into account their respective mandates. In this respect, UNCTAD should continue its work to promote the elaboration of national and regional e-commerce

strategies for development, including by organizing regional events. Possible issues to be taken into account may include reforms in sectors such as telecommunications and payment services; issues of infrastructure and access; e-business awareness raising and human resources development; trust and security; and legal and regulatory changes to accommodate e-business.

Action

40.   As part of its ongoing work to assist developing countries in formulating and implementing ICT and e-commerce strategies, UNCTAD organized a High-Level Regional Conference in Tunis (Tunisia) for African countries (19–21 June 2003), an Expert Group Meeting on "Measuring E-Commerce" and training activities on legal aspects of e-commerce. High-Level regional conferences are also planned for economies in transition (Geneva, 20–21 October 2003) and for Latin America and the Caribbean (Rio de Janeiro, 25–27 November 2003). These conferences focus on the development of ICT, e-business and e-commerce in the respective regions and consider policies and strategies to enhance the capacities of developing countries to adopt and produce ICT-related technologies, primarily in the area of e-business. Participants share local, regional and global experiences in policy formulation and implementation. The Tunis conference adopted a "Declaration on Electronic Commerce for Development" that expressed the political commitment of the Governments of the region to supporting ICT as a tool for development, taking into account cultural, social and economic disparities within the region. A similar declaration is expected to result from the Rio conference.

41.   UNCTAD continued to cooperate actively with other international and regional organizations dealing with ICT, many of which participated in the regional conferences. These organizations include the Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie, the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), COMESA, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), NEPAD, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), RITLA, the Southern African Development Community, UEMOA, UNDP, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Tourism Organization and the World Trade Organization.

42.   UNCTAD continued to participate in the work of the UN ICT Task Force. The secretariat was actively involved in the High Level Summit Organizing Committee of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) scheduled for Geneva (December 2003) and Tunis (2005).

43.   Governments as well as several international agencies and institutions requested advisory services on policy issues in the form of substantive participation in various seminars and workshops, giving UNCTAD the opportunity to share its views and knowledge about e-business.

44.   A training course on "Legal Aspects of E-Commerce" was developed by UNCTAD in accordance with the TrainForTrade methodology and was validated in Cambodia from 7 to 11 April 2003. The objective of the course is to prepare government officials to take advantage of e-business tools and flexibility in a clearly defined legal framework

Recommendation

45.   UNCTAD should carry out research and analysis on e-commerce-related issues relevant to the development dimension of developing countries, taking into account already existing information and studies. These issues should include major trends in technology (e.g. the use of open-source software); industries and sectors of development and commercial relevance to developing countries; Internet regulation; and the implications of various legislative approaches for e-commerce. The goal should be to enhance the capacity of developing countries to formulate adequate strategies to promote the adoption of ICT, e-business and e-commerce practices by their enterprises and to participate in relevant international discussions.

Action

46.   At the time this progress report was submitted, the third edition of the *E-Commerce and Development Report* was scheduled to be published in November 2003. In this edition, the report provides information about recent trends and developments in the area of ICT and e-commerce and identifies areas where the application of ICT can make an impact on the performance of developing countries' enterprises and economies. Taking into account the constraints that developing countries face in adopting e-commerce and ICT, the report focuses on policies and strategies for addressing those constraints, including legal and regulatory issues. The discussion of e-commerce and ICT in developing countries focuses on selected topics such as free and open-source software, outsourcing back-office services in developing countries, and the marketing of developing-country agricultural exports via the Internet.

Recommendation

47.   UNCTAD should analyse issues related to the measurement and benchmarking of e-commerce and of the use of ICT by enterprises. It should complement its analytical work in this area with assistance to developing countries in their efforts to develop indicators and data on e-commerce.

Action

48.   Considering the increasing number of countries that are developing national policies and strategies to promote the digital economy, and in view of the vital role that statistical data about ICT play in the formulation, monitoring and assessment of e-strategies, UNCTAD organized an Expert Group Meeting on "Measuring Electronic Commerce as an Instrument for the Development of the Digital Economy" (Geneva, 8–10 September 2003). The meeting gathered experts from national statistical offices responsible for the collection of information society statistics and from offices responsible for ICT policy making, from both developed

and developing countries, as well as international and regional bodies involved in ICT-related statistics. The discussions focused on the identification of a set of core indicators for e-business that could be collected by all countries and that would be comparable at the international level. The experts also assessed the technical assistance needs of countries with regard to developing statistical compilation programmes on e-business, and they discussed the possible creation of an international repository of e-commerce statistical information.

Recommendation

49.   UNCTAD, as the UN focal point for trade and development, should, within its mandate, continue to make a substantive contribution to the WSIS, as well as to the summit's outcome and its follow-up.

Action

50.   The UNCTAD secretariat participated fully in all preparatory meetings for the WSIS and formulated a number of substantive suggestions for the draft Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. These suggestions covered the role of ICT for enhancing development and growth and international trade, particularly in developing countries. Further to its contribution in the preparation of the WSIS and its recommendation on the summit's outcome, UNCTAD is co-organizing two WSIS-related events, "Monitoring the Information Society" and "National Strategies for the Information Society".

51.   The event "Monitoring the Information Society", which will be organized jointly with UNECE, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, OECD, Eurostat and ITU, addressed the urgent need for data reflecting the deployment of ICT at the national and global levels. Such data are essential for monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking of the information society. The objective of the workshop is to bring ICT data and indicators into the realm of official statistics so that current global data gaps can be identified and closed. UNCTAD is the lead agency in organizing two sessions on business usage of ICT, with the support of OECD. The outcome of the Expert Group Meeting on "Measuring Electronic Commerce as an Instrument for the Development of the Digital Economy" will be presented at this event.

52.   The event "National Strategies for the Information Society", led by UNECE, will be organized jointly by the UN regional commissions, UNCTAD, UNDP and the UN ICT Task Force. The objective of the event is to share experiences and discuss the formulation, planning and implementation of national strategies for the information society and the interaction and complementarities between the national, regional, sub-regional and global dimensions in building the information society. UNCTAD, jointly with UNDP, will organize a panel on "Challenges and Best Practice in the Preparation and Implementation of National Strategies for the Information Society" on 10 December. UNCTAD will also participate in the high-level roundtable with Heads of State and heads of organizations to be held on 11 December as part of the core summit roundtables.

Recommendation

53.   UNCTAD should continue to mainstream gender into its work. This mainstreaming should be carried out through divisional focal points on gender, under the overall coordination of the focal point on women designated by the Secretary-General. In this regard, UNCTAD should continue to include the gender dimension in its work, including the Special Programme for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries.

Action

54.   The United Nations decided in February 2003 to set up a Task Force on Gender and Trade to be led by UNCTAD and including all UN regional commissions, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labour Organization, ITC, ITU, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNDP, the UN Environment Programme, the UN Industrial Development Organization, the UN Development Fund for Women, the UN Research Institute for Social Development, WIPO, the World Bank and WTO. The Task Force was created in order to enhance synergies among agencies in the pursuit of gender equality through mainstreaming gender in trade and trade policy. From the start, the UNCTAD secretariat has been involved in this initiative through its gender focal points.

55.   The UNCTAD Empretec programme completed special projects for women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia and Uganda. As a result, a training methodology tailored to women entrepreneurs was developed.

56.   In the area of ICT and gender, UNCTAD continues to mainstream gender into its work programme. The *E-Commerce and Development Report 2003* incorporates the gender perspective into several of its chapters. Mainstreaming gender into national ICT policy making has been addressed in several of UNCTAD's meetings and conferences on e-strategies. UNCTAD is participating actively in the UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) Task Force on ICT and Gender and its contributions to the WSIS. UNCTAD has also, as part of its contributions to the WSIS preparatory process, made suggestions on how to integrate the gender dimension into the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action.