



**United Nations  
Conference  
on Trade and  
Development**

Distr.  
GENERAL

TD/B/COM.3/65  
18 January 2005

Original: ENGLISH

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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development  
Ninth session  
Geneva, 22–25 February 2005  
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. Improving the competitiveness of SMEs through enhancing productive capacity
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5. Electronic commerce strategies for development
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7. Provisional agenda for the tenth session of the Commission
8. Other business
9. Adoption of the report of the Commission to the Trade and Development Board

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\* This document was submitted on the above-mentioned date because of the need to obtain information in connection with agenda item 8 and with the documentation for expert meetings held in November and December 2004.

## 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 titled "Improving the functioning and the structure of the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD" (reissued as TD/B/EX(24)/L.1). The purpose of 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. They 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 should, as much as possible, avoid duplicating their debates.

3. In 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, and the like.

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 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 will 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 will consist of seven members (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). Accordingly, following the cycle of rotation established after UNCTAD IX, the bureau for

the ninth session of the Commission will be as follows: Chairperson from List A; Rapporteur from List C; and five Vice-Chairpersons (2 members from Lists A and C combined, 2 members from List B and 1 member from List D).

## **Item 2: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

6. The ninth session of the Commission is scheduled for 22–25 February 2005. At the closing plenary of its eighth session, on 15 January 2004, the Commission approved the agenda items for the ninth session and the related expert meetings.

7. With regard to the organization of the work of the session, the Commission has four days available for its work. It is suggested that the agenda items be taken up sequentially, with the first plenary meeting, on Tuesday, 22 February, being devoted to procedural matters and introductory statements. In order to take advantage of the presence of experts, representatives of other international organizations and delegates during the Commission's session, it is suggested that a special meeting be held on the morning of day four (under agenda item 8) to address the contribution that the secretariat's work on enterprise, business facilitation and ICT for development can make to the Millennium Development Goals.

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

### *Documentation*

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Provisional agenda and annotations

## **Item 3: Promoting the competitiveness and internationalization of developing countries' firms**

9. As per the Commission's decision at its eighth session, the secretariat convened an Expert Meeting on Promoting the Export Competitiveness of SMEs. The meeting was held on 8–10 December 2004 and addressed the work of the Commission in the field of enterprise competitiveness, focusing on enhancing the export competitiveness of SMEs. During the Meeting, experts discussed different patterns of SMEs' internationalization that help increase export competitiveness. These include integrating clusters, global value chains, and linking up with transnational corporations (TNCs). The discussions of the Expert Meeting are reflected in the report of the Meeting (TD/B/COM.3/EM.23/3), which is before the Commission for consideration.

10. The issues note "Linkages, value chains and outward investment: Internationalization patterns of developing-country SMEs" (TD/B/COM.3/69) considers issues related to internationalization of developing countries' firms through linkages, value chains and outward FDI and suggests issues for further consideration. It (a) assesses the impact of globalization on the SME sector in developing countries (potential opportunities and threats); (b) suggests how developing-country firms can take advantage of the opportunities opened up by trade agreements and liberalization and become global players themselves; and (c)

explores possible forms of integrated production networks as one of the most effective ways for developing-country SMEs to compete in the global economy, with specific reference to TNC-SME linkages and global value chains.

*Documentation*

TD/B/COM.3/EM.23/3      Report of the Expert Meeting on Promoting the Export Competitiveness of SMEs

TD/B/COM.3/69              Linkages, value chains and outward investment: Internationalization patterns of developing countries' SMEs

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

11. Countries that depend on transit trade, in particular landlocked developing countries, face a number of practical and institutional constraints, as well as significantly increased international transport costs. As agreed by the Commission at its eighth session, the secretariat convened an Expert Meeting on Design and Implementation of Transit Transport Arrangements on 24–26 November 2004. The discussions and conclusions of the Expert Meeting are reflected in the Meeting's report (TD/B/COM.3/EM.22/3), which is before the Commission for its consideration.

12. The note by the secretariat (TD/B/COM.3/EM.22/2) discusses the design and implementation of transit arrangements in the light of new developments in the field of technology, trade facilitation, multimodal transport and transport security. It emphasizes the importance of corridor-specific approaches and of appropriate national and regional coordination mechanisms to facilitate cooperation between landlocked and transit countries and between public- and private-sector actors in these countries.

13. The issues paper (TD/B/COM.3/67) considers the importance of efficient transport and trade facilitation in improving the participation of developing countries in international trade.

*Documentation*

TD/B/COM.3/EM.22/3      Report of the Expert Meeting on Design and Implementation of Transit Transport Arrangements.

TD/B/COM.3/EM.22/2      Design and implementation of transit transport arrangements

TD/B/COM.3/67              Efficient transport and trade facilitation to improve participation by developing countries in international trade

### **Item 5: Electronic commerce strategies for development**

14. To assist the Commission in its consideration of the main thematic issue of electronic commerce strategies for development, the secretariat has prepared a background paper “E-commerce strategies for development: Selected trade and development aspects of information and communication technologies”.

15. As agreed by the Commission at its eighth session, the secretariat convened an Expert Meeting on Free and Open-Source Software: Policy and Development Implications. The meeting was held on 22–24 September 2004 and addressed the policy and development implications of free and open-source software (FOSS), its development benefits and the ways in which it could be considered by policy makers. The issue of FOSS was considered from the perspective of UNCTAD's work in trade and development in the framework of the UNCTAD XI Partnership on ICT for Development and in relation to the Millennium Development Goals and the WSIS process. Based on the outcome of the Expert Meeting, the Commission might wish to provide clear guidelines and recommendations for Governments, the UNCTAD secretariat and other international organizations in order to assist debate and follow-up on the subject. The report of the Expert Meeting is contained in document TD/B/COM.3/EM.21/3.

#### *Documentation*

TD/B/COM.3/EM.21/3	Report of the Expert Meeting on Free and Open-Source Software: Policy and Development Implications
TD/B/COM.3/68	E-Commerce strategies for development: Selected trade and development aspects of information and communication technologies

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

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

17. In this context, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared a progress report with information on the implementation of decisions and agreed conclusions adopted at the eighth 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*

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Progress report on the implementation of the agreed recommendations of the Commission at its eighth session

**Item 7: Provisional agenda for the tenth session of the Commission**

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

19. 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**

20. The Commission will be updated on the contribution that the secretariat's work on enterprise, business facilitation and ICT for development can make to the Millennium Development Goals.

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

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