United Nations
Conference
on Trade and
Development

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development
Expert Meeting on Free and Open-Source Software: Policy
 and Development Implications
Geneva, 22–24 September 2004
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

I. Provisional agenda

1.   Election of officers

2.   Adoption of the agenda

3.   Free and open-source software: policy and development implications

4.   Adoption of the report of the meeting

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

Item 1:   Election of officers

1.   It is recommended that the Expert Meeting elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2:   Adoption of the agenda

2.   The provisional agenda for the Expert Meeting is reproduced in section I above. A detailed programme will be available one week before the meeting.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/EM.21/1   Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3:   Free and open-source software: policy and development implications

3.   The Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development decided to convene an Intergovernmental Expert Group Meeting on "Free and open-source software: policy and development implications".

4.   This Expert Meeting will address the subject of free and open-source software (FOSS) usage in government and enterprises and will discuss its development and policy implications. It will bring together representatives from both developed and developing countries and international and regional bodies involved in the FOSS debate from both the "free and open" and the "proprietary" establishments. The main objective of the meeting is to provide a framework for introducing a development and policy perspective into the existing debates and initiatives on the role of FOSS in the digital economy and the information society. This will include the effect of FOSS on the promotion of competition in the ICT sector and its impact on education and human resources development and the economics of FOSS and related commercial applications.

5.   Experts will discuss the results of ongoing work at the international level, analyse national and regional experiences, and propose best practices and guidelines in the area of FOSS from a developing-country perspective.

6.   A key element of the discussion will focus on identifying a set of core policy issues concerning trade, e-business and the development opportunities arising from the use of FOSS. Without prejudice to other software development and distribution models, including proprietary and public-domain software, the experts will also look into policy that can promote national and international cooperation and exchange of experience on use and development of FOSS and assess technical cooperation needs of countries or regions wishing to deepen their experience in free and open information technologies.

7.   To facilitate the discussions, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared a background paper titled "Free and Open-Source Software: Policy and Development Implications" (TD/B/COM.3/EM.21/2). The paper gives basic definitions, discusses the FOSS phenomenon from a policy perspective, develops a brief discussion of possible opportunities for deployment in public and commercial

activities, clarifies the intellectual property context of FOSS and provides an overview of development issues where FOSS has had a conceptual impact, in addition to practical use and deployment. Experts are encouraged to prepare brief papers describing national policy and experience with deployment of FOSS. These papers will be made available at the meeting in the form and language in which they are received.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/EM.21/2   "Free and Open-Source Software: Policy and Development Implications"
Background paper by the UNCTAD secretariat

Item 4:   **Adoption of the report of the meeting**

8.   The report of the Expert Meeting will be submitted to the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development at its ninth session. The Expert Meeting may wish to authorize the Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chairperson, to prepare the final report after the conclusion of the meeting.