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Report of the Expert Meeting on Mainstreaming Gender in Trade Policy

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 10 to 11 March 2009

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I. Summary of discussions

A. Understanding the relation between trade and gender

1. Experts shared the view that gender equality was not only a fundamental human right,¹ but a crucial factor in generating poverty reduction, economic growth and development. The importance of gender equality for social and economic development was highlighted in Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3. Women played an important role in contributing to countries' economic development and better governance, and the well-being of their communities and households. The provision of enhanced opportunities for women led to improvements in poverty reduction and accelerated economic growth.

2. It was noted that trade policies were not "gender-neutral", but had strong redistributive effects between economic sectors, favouring some economic activities while disfavoured others. Evidence suggested that, in some cases, trade liberalization had been associated with rising employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for women. In other cases, trade integration had exacerbated existing gender inequalities and worsened women's economic and social status. While recognizing that trade had not served as a catalyst for gender equality, some experts raised the problems faced by negotiators to identify gender-sensitive sectors or specific industries.

3. The expansion of international trade had led to economic growth; however, economic growth had not always translated into better distribution of wealth, wider employment opportunities and better life conditions for all segments of the population, including women. That was most evident in the so-called "South Asia paradox", characterized by high economic growth, but also by chronic poverty, food and nutrition insecurity, and social polarization. It was reported that in some countries poverty and hunger were worsening for the most vulnerable segments of the population, including women, children, the elderly, urban migrants, socially excluded communities, people in drought- and conflict-stricken areas, and those employed in the informal sector. There was a growing realization that reducing poverty and inequality required complementary policies to tackle not only competitiveness, business environment and infrastructural challenges, but also social inequalities that could be perpetuated or exacerbated by "blind" trade reforms.

4. It was also stressed that a gender analysis of trade required an understanding of the pre-existing gender dimensions of market dynamics and the broader social, cultural and political environment of specific countries. It also required an understanding of the nature, pace and scale of changes due to trade liberalization, as opposed to changes that occurred as a result of other policies, independently from trade liberalization.

5. The impact of trade liberalization on poverty and vulnerability could be conducted through three pathways: (a) changes in employment structures and wages; (b) changes in prices and their impact on consumption patterns; and (c) changes in financing for social expenditures. Those could be positive or negative for women and men, depending on their individual (e.g. education, skills and family size) and social group characteristics (e.g. net producers or net consumers, urban/rural location, economic and social status).

¹ Non-discrimination is a cross-cutting principle in international human rights law. The principle is present in all the major human rights treaties and provides the central theme of some international human rights conventions, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

6. To reap the full benefit from trade liberalization, it was felt that economies and workers had to adapt, switching resources from declining to expanding sectors and developing skills sought by international markets. Some experts noted that this created particular challenges for women, because of their relative disadvantages in terms of education and in gaining access to credit, new technologies, training and marketing networks. Socio-cultural mores within a country could also constrain women's entry into certain sectors or dictate what types of jobs were considered appropriate for women as well as the terms and conditions of work.

7. It was felt that women's reproductive role – and the unequal burden that women bore in providing child care, health care for the elderly and ill members of the family, cooking and household chores – left women with less time to improve their skills or seek new opportunities: "time poverty" led to women remaining unskilled or working in the informal sector where household tasks and paid work could be more easily combined. Because society placed a low value on unpaid work and caring for others, such work remained at the core of gender discrimination. Given women's asymmetrical responsibilities for unpaid activities, complementary social and labour policies were needed to facilitate a balance between their paid and unpaid work. Such policies should include (a) more affordable and accessible childcare services; (b) improved transportation to access services and market opportunities; and (c) social protection programmes to provide short-to-medium-term assistance, as women and men coped with economic restructuring. While discussing the problem of measuring the contribution of women through paid and unpaid work, some experts underlined that such difficulty was hampering a correct assessment of the impact of women in the national gross domestic product.

8. The following example was provided to illustrate the difficulties that female workers faced when exposed to external shocks. After the closure of the 350-year-old sugar industry in Saint Kitts and Nevis in 2005, the Government was faced with the challenge of how to absorb 1,500 former employees into other productive sectors of the economy. A large percentage of those displaced workers were women who performed the lower-skilled tasks. Many of those women had performed those tasks for several decades and were reluctant or unable to adapt their skill set to take advantage of employment in other sectors. Government assumed a leadership role in providing counselling services and skills training in sectors such as handicraft, agro-processing, tiling and even the tourism industry.

9. Some experts emphasized that women were also disadvantaged by de jure and/or de facto laws that often limited women's access to and control over resources such as land, credit and information. An expert reported that, despite national legal reforms, Latin American women still lacked equal access to land title and credit. This had a major effect on their bargaining power in the household and community, as well as on their productivity as agricultural producers in rural areas and business owners in urban areas. To make trade an engine for gender equality and women's empowerment, constraints on women's access and control to resources needed then to be lifted.

10. The meeting recognized that women's disadvantaged position had contributed to the "feminization" of poverty. It was estimated that 70 per cent of the world's poor were women, 80 per cent of world's refugees were women, 64 per cent of the world's illiterate adults were women and 60 per cent of children not in primary schools were girls. The further impoverishment of women had direct negative impacts on the household, including on the quantity and quality of nutrition available, on children's ability to go to school, on children being forced to work, and ultimately on the family's assets. These negative consequences were often irreversible.

B. The main links between trade and gender

1. Labour markets

11. One of the most important links between trade and gender was the labour market. International trade tended to increase the availability of formal and informal jobs in developing countries. Women workers were particularly sought by the export-oriented industry because they were generally more readily available, less unionized and less expensive. However, women's employment in developing countries was often temporary and underpaid – their wages were some 30 per cent lower than those of men. That made the development of specific skills more difficult and resulted in women (and youth) remaining low wage earners in the pool of unskilled workers. The meeting recognized that it was crucial to assure that women met the skills sought by the market and enjoyed the same wage and other work conditions of their male partners in order to benefit from the employment opportunities arising from trade integration.

12. Labour markets were often differentiated by workers' age. Women in different age groups might look for different kinds of employment opportunities in order to best accommodate the different responsibilities they held within the household. Expanding export sectors often sought to employ young women. That may have repercussions on educational attainments and in the extreme case on child labour and exploitation. It was essential for gender equality to make sure that women could improve their skills in their jobs. Indeed, one of the main problems that female workers faced was that they were overrepresented in unskilled and low-paid positions, hardly benefiting from in-job training.

13. Discussion in the meeting pointed to the importance of social and human development programmes to improve and sustain employment for women. Skill acquisition, reduction of discriminatory practices and unemployment benefits were seen as essential for women's effective participation in the labour force. In particular, women needed special benefits – such as maternity leave, job security and safer working conditions – which were generally not available to them in many developing countries. Lack of benefits and relatively higher reliance on temporary employment limited the effect of trade on the gender wage gap.

14. The meeting pointed out to the fact that, in most developing countries, the informal sector remained a major source of employment and entrepreneurial activity, particularly for women. The informal economy was outside legal and regulatory frameworks, with little social security and a high degree of vulnerability. Informal activities tended to expand during periods of economic adjustment, as was the case during periods of economic crisis in Latin America in the 1980s and in Asia following the financial crisis, when private firms or public enterprises were downsized or closed and retrenched workers turned to the informal economy.

15. Several experts felt that labour regulations should cover all forms of employment, as better working conditions and improved benefits might not produce the intended benefits for women in presence of a large informal economy. It was often the case that improvements in working conditions resulted in a “defeminization” of labour in formal sectors, with women moving to unregulated informal sectors. However, the example of India was raised, where the Government was envisaging passing legislation that would extend social security to workers in the informal sector.

16. An expert presented the results of a study carried out by UNCTAD's India Project to estimate the extent to which an increase in exports during the period April 2003–July 2007 had generated gender employment in 46 sectors of India, including agriculture, manufacturing and services. The results showed that the rise in exports generated 9.38

million jobs for women and 16.6 million for men – i.e. only 36 per cent of additional jobs created were for women. However, the share of females in additional employment generated due to exports exceeded the share of females in total employment by nearly 5 per cent. Moreover, exports had led to a reduction in gender employment gap.

17. Some experts argued that women employed in trade and trade-related sectors in Latin America were less educated, had lower-quality jobs and were often more discriminated against than women who worked in other sectors of the economy. More specifically, a great proportion of women employed in the export sector of South American countries lacked social security coverage. In Uruguay, the situation was similar in the industrial and agricultural sectors, due primarily to the women's condition as unpaid family workers. Brazil presented the same picture, where the high precariousness of female employment in the export sector resulted from the high incidence of the agricultural sector, of which 62 per cent of its women workers were unpaid. Also in Chile, the precariousness of both men and women employed in the agro-export sector was high, with a third of the workers lacking a work contract and working seasonally. In sum, the content of female employment in foreign trade in these countries was relatively small.

2. Enterprise development

18. Women's entrepreneurship had been recognized as an important source of economic growth. Women created new jobs for themselves and others, and they provided the society with different solutions to management, organization and business problems, as well as to the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. Studies indicated that up to 40–50 per cent of small enterprises and microenterprises in developing countries were owned and run by women.

19. While trade integration may offer opportunities for small enterprises and microenterprises to grow, it also exposed them to international competition. However, women often had limited access to marketing networks, credit and technical knowledge, all of which were essential to improve enterprises' competitiveness. They also often suffered from the absence of entrepreneurship education, lack of entrepreneurial infrastructure, high cost of finance, less access to credit, and high transaction costs. The meeting pointed to the importance of microfinance for those enterprises.

20. Several technical cooperation programmes were ongoing in a number of countries to strengthen women's ability to start their own business, including those of UNCTAD Empretec and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Empretec was a capacity-building programme initiated in 27 countries that supported promising entrepreneurs, including women, to build innovative and internationally competitive small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It also encouraged the formation of business links among SMEs and transnational corporations aimed at the development of a dynamic private sector. UNIDO's programme was designed not only to enable greater women's participation in SMEs, but also to assist them to enter non-traditional, more productive and more profitable businesses and sectors. Some experts expressed the view that the "one-size-fits-all approach" was not adequate for training women, since different ages and skills required different kinds of training. Women working in the informal sector also needed to be trained. Training opportunities in entrepreneurial skills, such as management and financing, needed to be specifically targeted to young women. It was felt that small enterprises and microenterprises could help provide employment opportunities for migrants who, because of the financial crisis, were forced to return home.

21. Many experts called for more focus to be given to women entrepreneurs in rural areas, and for more access for women to entrepreneurial services, which were often inferior to those granted to men. As some 48 per cent of households were headed by women, finding ways to employ and keep women employed was capital. Specific

programmes targeting youth existed, which attempted to combine suitable education with decent work prospective, or that attempted to regulate female work through women's self-employment associations.

3. Migration

22. Experts noted that half of international migrants were women. Low-skilled or unskilled migrant women tended to find jobs in a limited number of occupations in the services sector and in the textile and garments industry. Experts noticed that the marginality of unskilled migrant women was often reflected in low-status jobs, low earnings and insecure contracts. It was noted that migration provided upward mobility to women in their countries of origin, but downward mobility in their countries of destination. Some experts highlighted that a phenomenon linked to migration was "brain waste". That was the significant degree of deskilling and disqualification that many migrants – especially women – with full high school and even graduate-level education experienced when finding employment abroad.

23. The value of remittances sent home by migrants was similar between genders. However, migrant women tended to send a larger share of their incomes, and sent them on a more regular basis. Moreover, women's remittances were often subjected to higher transaction costs, first because women's access to finance services was more limited and more costly, and second because women remitted in smaller amount but on a more frequent basis, thus incurring relatively higher fees per dollar sent. Women tended also to be the largest recipients of remittances, which were an important capital source for developing countries. Women's financial autonomy regarding the use of their savings and the sending of remittances was a precondition for achieving economic efficiency and equal social status.

24. Some experts noticed that the precise boundaries between the movement of services providers under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) mode 4 and migration were not clear. Mode 4 issues in most countries were dealt with in the same manner as migration issues, blurring the boundaries between temporary and permanent movement which, conversely, may deserve different policies and measures. It was also noticed that movement under mode 4 was benefiting in particular highly qualified services providers, while no sufficient attention had been paid within the multilateral negotiations on trade in services liberalization on enhancing the temporary movement of lower-skilled workers, including women. Improvements in women's mobility could be more forthcoming within regional or bilateral trade agreements. Furthermore, some experts highlighted the need to solve the existing inconsistencies between GATS mode 4 and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers. In South-east Asia, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was collaborating with labour-sending and labour-receiving Governments on tools and good practices to protect women migrant workers.

25. Migration often took place irregularly, posing further risks for women, as it was often related to human trafficking. In those cases, women were most vulnerable, as irregular immigration often involved exploitation, coercion and abuse of power.

4. Agriculture

26. The impact of trade policies on subsistence agriculture was an important issue from a gender perspective, as women's participation in subsistence agriculture was generally high, especially in least developed countries. In developing countries, 60 per cent of agricultural food was produced by women; 80 per cent of women were responsible for processing and storing food for households, yet did not have control over the resources. It was argued that, as Governments started to put more emphasis on active

industrial policies, subsistence agriculture ranked low in their priorities, at the expense of women.

27. According to experts, international trade provided opportunities for growing more profitable crops, thus facilitating the switch from staple agriculture to cash crops. In practice, trade liberalization had been shown to be beneficial to farmers who were able to adapt to new farming products and techniques. As women working in agriculture were largely small-scale farmers with limited access to credit, knowledge and agricultural inputs, they were the most disadvantaged by the liberalization of the agricultural markets.

28. The influx of cheaper agricultural imports had potentially adverse affects on small-scale farmers. According to an expert, this was seen after Mexico joined the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and cheap imported maize flooded the Mexican market, leading to substantial agricultural job losses.

29. Cheaper imports adversely affected the competing import industries as processing factories linked to liberalized export cash crops might no longer stand the external competition. Furthermore, the agricultural subsistence-oriented smallholders, many of which were run by women, were unlikely to gain much from a reduction in import prices of wage goods and producer goods, as the import content of their expenditures was rather low. Finally, small farmers, who were likely to engage more women, were likely to see the benefits from the price increases following from the trade liberalization captured by middlemen.

30. Some experts reported national experiences where the switch to cash crops had negative repercussions on food security. This was, for example, the case of the United Republic of Tanzania, where production of staple crops declined in favour of cash crops, and men, who were by and large running the cash crop sector, did not inject a sufficient amount of income deriving from cash crops into the households. Liberalizing trade in Ghana benefited medium and large farmers in the cocoa sector, where few women were employed. In Uganda, a large proportion of women were engaged in the production of agricultural products for export, but since they did not market their products, they were unable to reap the full benefits of their work.

31. Data presented by an expert on employment in Latin America in the non-traditional agricultural export sector showed that women accounted for up to 90 per cent of workers within the horticulture sector (e.g. the fruit industry in Chile, the flower industry in Colombia, the artichoke industry in Peru and the vegetable industries in Costa Rica, Guatemala and Mexico). While that sector offered more employment opportunities to women than to men, women were concentrated in low-skilled processing jobs, with low wages and minimal job security.

32. Some experts expressed the view that the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture did not adequately address issues related to food security and food sovereignty. The recent food crisis had brought renewed emphasis on traditional staple food crops as ways to cope with food insecurity.

C. Gender-related issues in the health sector

33. An expert recalled that occupations in the health care sector, in particular nursing, were among those associated with gender roles. The temporary move of personnel to provide services abroad was significant as a mode of trade in health services, due to the labour-intensive nature of these services, the fact that shortages of personnel existed in many countries and the fact that health services were largely based on universal scientific knowledge. The movement of health personnel from developing to developed countries, but also from low-income developing countries to middle-income developing countries – as migrants or as temporary services suppliers under GATS mode 4 – had two main

gender-related implications. On the one hand, it had the potential to undermine the health systems in some developing countries, especially the poorest among them, further diminishing women's access to health care. On the other, it offered migrants the ability to earn a higher income in the host country, which translated to higher productivity and higher remittances.

34. Shortage of health personnel had discrete implications for women, especially in developing countries. In general, women had less access to health care than men because of lower levels of education and income, inferior mobility and household responsibilities. Rural women were particularly penalized because the shortage of health personnel was more acute in rural areas. Moreover, the lack of local health care often added to the workload and responsibilities of women, as they often had the role of household healthcare provider. Experts also noticed the phenomenon of "migration" of health personnel from the public health sector to the private health sector, the related problems of the diminishing quality of services provided by the public health sector, and the cost and sometimes the inappropriateness of the services offered by private health institutions.

D. Gender and the global economic crisis

35. Most experts converged on the view that women were being disproportionately negatively affected by the global downturn, which was leading to declining trade, layoffs and returns home by migrant workers. However, female labour had been fuelling a large share of the increases in trade preceding the crisis and women's unpaid reproductive work had been an invisible yet significant contribution to economies and to the well-being of families and societies. The crisis-led slowdown in the formal exports sector (affecting all sectors, from textiles to electronics) had a knock-on effect on the informal sector and on migration. It was thought that declining public budgets would likely lead to more limited provisions of public services – such as child and elderly care, and health care – and then to additional burdens on women. The estimated fall in remittances was also likely to affect men and women differently. As the largest share of remittances was used to sustain household consumption and/or children's education, their decline was likely to put an extra burden on women.

36. The effects of the global crisis on international trade had just started manifesting themselves and were expected to be severe. Some data were recalled: UNCTAD estimated that merchandise exports from developing countries could potentially decline in 2009 by 15.5 per cent. The International Labour Organization (ILO) was predicting a global rise in unemployment this year of up to 51 million people – 22 million, it believed, would be women.

37. The sectors that were initially impacted the hardest by the crisis were sectors by and large dominated by male workers, such as finance, insurance and real estate, construction and manufacturing. However, the crisis was spreading to service-orientated sectors, which in many countries were dominated by females.

38. It was noticed that the global economic and financial crisis was penalizing poor households that had already greatly suffered as a result of the food and energy crises. In some countries in South Asia, for example, the situation in poor households was increasingly characterized by (a) growing malnutrition and food insecurity; (b) deepened poverty; (c) less income and livelihoods opportunities; (d) compromised wages and overall work conditions; (e) distress migration; (f) unemployment; (g) child labour; (h) asset depletion; (i) lower health and education expenditures; (j) increased "time poverty" for women; and (k) a more disadvantaged bargaining position for women in households and communities, in labour and asset markets. Governments were, however, responding to the situation with specific interventions aimed at food security – including cash transfer, school feeding and food ration – as well as with more general economic policy

interventions. India and Sri Lanka, for example, had put in place fiscal stimulus packages of \$4 billion and \$141 million, respectively. However, countries in South Asia were also resorting to trade restrictions and price controls. According to an expert, attention should be paid to the longer-term structural transformation needed for the excluded to be integrated into decent work; also, renewed interest should be put in the public sector as the engine to generate employment for the most vulnerable, including through “gendered trade policy”.

39. Taking the experience of Latin America, one expert highlighted the fact that, during the previous debt crisis, it took some 20 years to reach the same equality level achieved prior to the crisis. Economic recovery was faster than social recovery. The current economic programmes put forward by the Latin American Governments to deal with the negative consequences of the current crisis did not take into account the extra burden (in terms of transfer of responsibilities) that women had to face in the current context.

40. Several experts noticed that the crisis could lead to risks of intensified violence, exploitation and neglect, mainly against women.

41. The meeting discussed some possible measures that could be put in place to alleviate the impact of the global crisis on women. While several experts felt that gender considerations could usefully be included in the crafting of national stimulus packages, it was noticed that, regrettably, gender considerations were almost completely absent from such packages – i.e. not much attention had been paid to the discrete impact of the economic and financial crisis on women, and no special measures in favour of women had been included in the stimulus packages, such as capacity-building and training, that would facilitate the relocation of women who had lost their jobs. It was also noticed that, in order to confront the current crisis, States were playing an increasingly active role in a number of activities and sectors. However, the more pronounced presence of the State was not implying a higher degree of attention to the specific situation and needs of women. Other measures mentioned by the experts as possible responses to the crisis were (a) the expansion of microcredit, an essential element for the proper functioning of small enterprises and microenterprises, which in most developing countries were run by women; (b) a better enabling environment for trade, including through better trade financing; and (c) the possible use of government procurement for national development priorities, such as support for women-owned businesses.

42. It was felt that if the gender-specific impacts of the crisis were ignored, there was a clear risk of exacerbating unequal relations between men and women at home, in the workplace and in public life, and of increasing current poverty and jeopardizing future development. The crisis could be an opportunity to reorient trade policies in favour of gender equity and development.

E. From theory to practice

43. Some experts suggested that a shift of emphasis on the debate on gender equality – from a “rights-based” approach to a more inclusive perspective that stressed the “benefits” of gender equality, not only for women, but also for men and for the society as a whole – would be beneficial.

44. Only a few countries were making a systematic attempt to build the capacities of both the public and private sectors to incorporate gender considerations in trade policy. An understanding needed to be built – not only within ministries for trade, but also in other ministries, whether they be agriculture, tourism or industry, as well as in national bureaus of statistics, private sector organizations and international institutions – of the gender implications of trade-related issues. Experts converged on the view, however, that

engendering trade policy was not an easy task, as it implied the ability to assess the impact of specific trade policies, strategies and trade instruments on women. Such an assessment would require, among other things, the availability of sex-disaggregated data. Indeed, sex disaggregated data was lacking even in some of the indicators used by many MDGs. However, paucity of data should not be an excuse for inaction. For example, data from MDG 1b (achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all) and from ILO could already provide a useful basis for action.

45. Most importantly, many developing countries needed assistance in developing the analytical capacity to distil and address the potential impacts of trade policies on women and men, and integrate gender analysis in trade-related negotiations, policy and implementation. An expert expressed the view that ownership of such approaches must rest with the ministries of trade, since effective gender mainstreaming would only take place if trade officials were ready and willing to understand the linkages and emphasize how important those linkages were within national trade policies and national export strategies that actually made a difference to poverty alleviation and equitable development.

46. Experts agreed that, in order to facilitate this, there was a lot of work to be done. Sound trade policies that sought to respond and make adjustments as a means of mitigating gender inequalities must be evidence-based, and the call for increased research in that area had never been more pressing. A rich and factual database of the differentiated impacts of trade on men and women must be developed – from the impacts of Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), GATS and the various bilateral and regional trade agreements that had been signed or were under negotiation.

47. While it was noticed that free trade agreements increasingly included commitments to gender equality and fair working conditions for women, the implementation of those commitments remained weak. It was suggested that something similar to the environmental impact assessments of trade agreements may be carried out in the case of gender. In other words, in parallel with or prior to the negotiation of a trade agreement, an assessment could be carried out concerning the potential gender-related implications that the trade agreement may have. Some experts pointed out, however, that the ability of many developing countries to undertake such assessments may be limited and that gender assessments may represent an additional burden on the limited human and financial resources available in many developing countries. Developing training material and impact assessment tools, sharing lessons coming from country studies, setting up a network of scholars and researchers specialized on trade and gender were mentioned by the experts as useful initiatives to enhance policymakers' capacity to assess the impacts of trade policies on women. It was suggested that institutions such as UNCTAD, the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), the Commonwealth Secretariat or Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation could develop such instruments, especially to support developing countries.

48. It was argued that in Latin America there was a strong interest in engendering trade at the legal level, but the implementation stage remained weak. One suggestion was made on how to solve that problem: as trade policies were designed in consultation with the private sector at the national level, empowering the private sector with the task of negotiating sensitive issues (including on the status of women), could be a way of engendering trade.

49. Another practical suggestion put forward was to use corporate social responsibility as an entry point to make trade and investments more responsive to the needs of women. Parliamentarians could also be given a role as advocates of gender mainstreaming in trade policy, but for that to happen they should be educated on gender dimensions of trade agreements.

50. Most experts felt that the move from political commitment to action on the ground was not happening. This was related, inter alia, to the lack of awareness of policymakers on gender issues, limited capacity to make a thorough assessment of the impact of trade policy on women, lack of women's voices in policy institutions, and lack of coordination between women affairs ministries and ministries of trade, finance and economic development. In other words, the frameworks in which gender and trade policies were negotiated were artificially separated. Some experts felt that the lack of women representatives at the parliamentary and cabinet level was also a problem in many countries and stressed that female ministers had been particularly absent from the WTO Doha Round of trade negotiations.

51. Some experts suggested that, in order to facilitate mainstreaming gender in trade policy, "gender-sensitive" products and sectors needed to be identified, meaning sectors where female employment was particularly high and products mainly manufactured by female work force. Accordingly, analysis on how trade policies and trade liberalization agreements – such as the WTO agreements, and regional and bilateral trade agreements – affect these products and sectors should be conducted. Moreover, once the sensitive sectors were identified, women entrepreneurs could be encouraged in those sectors. It was also pointed out that sectors with low export potential could have a large development potential for women. Therefore, gender analysis should not be limited to main export products but should focus on products in the production of which women were more present. Granting more favourable trade conditions to gender-sensitive products/sectors should be supportive of other development goals, such as pro-rural policies or environmental preservation policies.

52. It was felt that including gender considerations in Aid for Trade and technical assistance programmes, such as the EIF, could be a way to move the issue from theory to practice. However, an expert reported that, in the case of the EIF, it had been found difficult first to include gender-related issues in the needs assessment that countries conducted, and even more to include such considerations in the plan of action. Nevertheless, things were changing and some countries were reassessing their technical cooperation needs by including gender considerations. One country, for example, was requesting support to strengthen export sectors that provided employment opportunities especially for women. Key to this change was the participation of women in the consultative and delivery process, especially with respect to those gender-sensitive sectors.

II. Draft recommendations by the experts on practical options and actionable outcomes

53. The following recommendations emerged from the presentations and the discussions at the meeting:

(a) Keeping in mind the importance of synergies and complementarity of cooperative work in accordance with paragraphs 96(d), 173, 177, 178 and 180 of the Accra Accord, we request UNCTAD to develop a joint gender and trade programme with other intergovernmental organizations that have a work programme on gender – such as UNIFEM, ILO, the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC), the United Nations Regional Commissions and other relevant organizations – to complement policy formulation with implementation on the ground.

(b) In order to mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women as a cross-cutting issue within all UNCTAD's work, in accordance with paragraph 173 of the Accra Accord, we request that UNCTAD establish an interdivisional task force on the integration of gender-related issues in UNCTAD's work and establish a group of Geneva-

based interested member States that could provide guidance to UNCTAD on its gender-related work. We recommend that UNCTAD establish a trade and gender unit with existing regular budget funding that reports directly to UNCTAD's Secretary-General, and that UNCTAD's Secretary-General Report on gender mainstreaming to the Trade and Development Board. Extrabudgetary funds would prove particularly useful to strengthen this emerging area of work within the secretariat.

(c) We request that UNCTAD establish a virtual network of gender experts, based on participants in this meeting and linking into existing gender networks as appropriate, and – in accordance with paragraph 185 of the Accra Accord – use that network for peer reviews of UNCTAD's gender and trade analyses and plans to mainstream gender into UNCTAD's work.

(d) In the context of the global financial crisis, and the strategic focus of its work mandated in paragraph 174 of the Accra Accord, we request that UNCTAD (i) analyze trade data to identify sectors which have been hardest hit by the global financial crisis; (ii) collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data pertaining to those hardest hit sectors, to determine the differential impacts for women and men; and (iii) provide data and analyses on a timely basis to member States so that they may develop gender-aware policy responses.

(e) Recognizing the importance of sex-disaggregated data for conducting analysis on gender and trade links, we encourage all member States to collect and harvest sex-disaggregated data, and encourage UNCTAD to promote the collection and use of sex-disaggregated trade data.

(f) We request UNCTAD to develop guidelines and best practices on how to mainstream gender in trade policy, and support countries that so request to make trade policy more gender-sensitive. We also request UNCTAD to help countries identify "gender-sensitive" products and sectors, so that policymakers may take informed trade decisions regarding such products and sectors.

(g) We request that, within one year, UNCTAD report to experts on its progress in mainstreaming gender and the empowerment of women in terms of its work and budget, and also provide that report to member States.

(h) The discussions carried out in this expert meeting proved particularly productive and may usefully be pursued in an additional expert meeting, or in an ad hoc expert meeting of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. Moreover, whenever appropriate, gender-related issues may be discussed within the context of already planned expert meetings.

III. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

54. At its opening plenary meeting, the expert meeting elected the following officers:

Chair: Mr. Fredrik Arthur (Norway)
Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur: Ms. Nandini Kotthapally (India)

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

55. At its opening plenary, the expert meeting adopted the provisional agenda for the session (contained in TD/B/C.I/EM.2/1). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Mainstreaming gender in trade policy
4. Adoption of the report of the meeting

C. Outcome of the session

56. At its closing plenary meeting, on Wednesday, 11 March 2009, the expert meeting agreed that the Chair should summarize the discussions (see chap. I).

D. Adoption of the report

57. Also at its closing plenary meeting, the expert meeting authorized the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chair, to finalize the report after the conclusion of the meeting.

Annex

Attendance*

1. Representatives of the following States members attended the session:

Albania	Morocco
Algeria	Myanmar
Argentina	Nigeria
Brazil	Norway
Bulgaria	Oman
Cameroon	Philippines
Canada	Poland
Chad	Romania
China	Russian Federation
Colombia	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Czech Republic	Saudi Arabia
Ecuador	Slovenia
Finland	South Africa
Germany	Spain
Haiti	Sri Lanka
Honduras	Syrian Arab Republic
India	Thailand
Indonesia	Turkey
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	United Arab Emirates
Iraq	United Republic of Tanzania
Israel	United States of America
Italy	Uruguay
Kazakhstan	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Kyrgyzstan	Zimbabwe
Mexico	

2. The following observer was represented at the session:

Palestine

3. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

African Union
African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation
European Community
 Presidency of the European Union
 European Commission
 General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union
International Organization for Migration
Organization of the Islamic Conference

*For the list of participants, see TD/B/C.I/EM.2/Inf.1.

4. The following United Nations organization attended the session:
- Economic Commission for Africa
 - Economic Commission for Europe
 - Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Habitat
 - United Nations Children's Fund
 - United Nations Development Fund for Women
 - United Nations Environment Programme
 - International Trade Center UNCTAD/WTO
5. The following specialized agencies or related organizations attended the session:
- International Labour Organization
 - International Telecommunication Union
 - United Nations Industrial Development Organization
 - World Health Organization
 - World Intellectual Property Organization
 - World Trade Organization
6. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the session:
- General Category*
- Association of World Council of Churches-related Development Organizations in Europe
 - BPW International
 - Ocaproce Internationale
 - OXFAM International
 - Village Suisse ONG
- Special category*
- 3D->Trade-Human Rights-Equitable Economy
 - Center of Concern
7. The following panellists were invited to the expert meeting:
- Ms. Rosalyn **Hazelle**, Permanent Secretary for International Trade, Industry, Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Saint Kitts and Nevis
 - Ms. Nicola **Jones**, Research Fellow, Overseas Development Institute – ODI, London, United Kingdom
 - Ms. Gabriele **Köhler**, Regional Advisor on Social Policy, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, Kathmandu, Nepal
 - Ms. Owanari B. **Duke**, Executive Director, Empretec, Nigeria
 - Ms. Soledad **Salvador**, Research Fellow, Interdisciplinary Center for Development Studies – CIEDUR, Montevideo, Uruguay
 - Ms. Peju **Olukoya**, Gender Mainstreaming Coordinator, Department of Gender and Women's Health, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland
 - Ms. Rashmi **Banga**, Senior Economist, UNCTAD Project on Strategies and Preparedness for Trade and Globalization in India, New Delhi
 - Ms. Dorothy **Tembo**, Executive Director, Executive Secretariat for the Enhanced Integrated Framework, Geneva, Switzerland
 - Ms. Heather **Gibb**, Senior Researcher, North-South Institute, Ottawa, Canada
 - Ms. Sonia **Montaño**, Chief, Women and Development Unit, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, Chile
 - Ms. Socorro L. **Reyes**, Chief, Asia-Pacific and Arab States, UNIFEM, New York