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**WORKSHOP ON ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS AND MARKET ACCESS
FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: HOW TO TURN CHALLENGES INTO
OPPORTUNITIES?**

Geneva, 3–4 July 2006

Report of the Workshop

Wrap-up workshop of the UK-DFID-funded UNCTAD project "Building Capacity for Improved Policy Making and Negotiation on Key Trade and Environment Issues" and the 2006 annual session of UNCTAD's Consultative Task Force on Environmental Requirements and Market Access for Developing Countries

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 2006 annual session of the Consultative Task Force (CTF) on Environmental Requirements and Market Access for Developing Countries was held in Geneva on 3 and 4 July 2006. Some 55 participants (from Governments, the private sector, donors, NGOs, academic institutions and intergovernmental organizations, among others) reviewed progress made since the first substantive meeting of the CTF (Geneva, 5 and 6 November 2004) and discussed future activities. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Miguel R. Bautista, First Secretary (Economic and Environmental Affairs) at the mission of the Philippines to the United Nations in Geneva.

The Consultative Task Force

The CTF was launched, as a project-based activity, at a pre-UNCTAD XI Workshop on Environmental Requirements and Market Access for Developing Countries, organized jointly by the UNCTAD secretariat and the National Institute of Metrology, Standardization and Industrial Quality (Inmetro) of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro on 7 and 8 June 2004.

The CTF is an open-ended multi-stakeholder forum of government, private sector and NGO representatives that assists developing countries in analysing key trends of environmental and related health requirements in export markets and in exchanging national experience on proactive approaches to meeting such requirements with a view to maintaining market access, harnessing developmental gains and safeguarding social welfare. CTF activities are not intended to “second-guess” the legitimacy and objectives of environmental requirements, nor to develop guidelines for good regulatory practice. Rather, they will involve analysing and discussing ways of overcoming specific developing country challenges regarding the development and implementation of, as well as adjustment to, such measures. CTF activities and discussions should lead to specific conclusions and practical initiatives, based on appropriate country- and sector-focused examples.

The added value of the CTF is that it:

- Links policy and capacity-constraints issues aimed at developing a more holistic and development-oriented approach to environmental requirements and market access;
- Interfaces discussions in the WTO, notably on paragraph 32(i) of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, with other debates at the international and the national level;
- Includes in the analysis and discussion voluntary standards of the private sector and NGOs, and thus provides a formal mechanism for exchanges between those stakeholders and Governments;
- Draws into the discussion stakeholders normally not involved in WTO debates; and
- Allows a regular exchange of information among agencies and initiatives that provide technical and capacity-building assistance in fields relevant to CTF discussions.

The CTF will provide a forum for well-structured and focused dialogue and networking on relevant issues at the interface between environmental requirements and market access for developing countries (including analysis, policy dialogue, information exchange and supportive activities). Under its umbrella, it initiates specific, well-defined and time-limited project activities, whose results will aid the substantive debate in the CTF.

2. Following up on the discussions and the recommendations made at the meeting in November 2004, CTF activities carried out in 2005 and the first half of 2006 have focused on two sectors: (a) electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) and (b) horticulture, in particular fresh fruit and vegetables. Key issues in these sectors and priorities for future CTF activities

were discussed in two breakout groups (see below).¹ The sector-focused and the general discussions also benefited from the findings of work on three sectors (electronics, horticulture and leather/footwear) carried out under the UK-DFID-funded UNCTAD project "Building Capacity for Improved Policy Making and Negotiation on Key Trade and Environment Issues". The UNCTAD secretariat briefed the meeting on ongoing CTF activities related to an Internet gateway to facilitate access to, and guide users on, existing databases on environmental, health and food-safety requirements and other relevant issues.

II. GENERAL ISSUES

3. In her introductory statement, Mrs. Lakshmi Puri, Director of the International Trade Division of UNCTAD, said that the ongoing Mid-term Review of the work programme mandated by UNCTAD XI in 2004 had underlined the importance of the symbiosis between the three pillars of UNCTAD's work, namely analysis, policy dialogue and technical cooperation. The Review had also emphasized the key role of UNCTAD as a knowledge-based institution, in which objective and ahead-of-the-curve analytical work was pivotal for the other two pillars. The CTF was a good example of the close interaction between the three pillars, and the key role of analysis. It was also an interesting example for activities that are likely to play an important role in the Aid for Trade initiative. Furthermore, Mrs. Puri underscored the value added of CTF activities in the context of the WTO discussions and negotiations on paragraph 32 (i) of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, and the contributions that the CTF could make to the work of the TBT and SPS Committees.

4. In 2005–2006, the CTF, in cooperation with partner institutions, organized three regional and one national sector-specific dialogues, which brought together a large number of stakeholders from both developing and developed countries (see annex I). Participants in the 2006 annual session emphasized that the participation of all key developed countries (including their major private standard organizations) was essential for a constructive and balanced CTF discussion of new environmental, health and food-safety requirements.

5. As a result of sector-specific activities carried out so far under the umbrella of the CTF and the UK-DFID-funded project, as well as discussions at the workshop, in particular in the two breakout groups on EEE and horticulture, a number of common elements have been highlighted for the two sectors, for example:

- The importance of requirements transmitted through the supply chain, which may be more stringent than is necessary for complying with regulations, because companies/importers/retailers want to "play safe", and which require increasing levels of competence on the part of producers;
- The risk of small economies and small producers being marginalized, and the related tendency of large companies to seek to work with relatively small numbers of preferred suppliers;
- There is a need for a better understanding of the interrelationship between mandatory and voluntary requirements, in particular the role that the latter play in enforcing and helping to comply with the former. In addition, further information is needed about

¹ The discussions were aided by the following two issues notes: "Food safety and environmental requirements and export competitiveness" and "Turning challenges into opportunities: The horticulture sector and electrical and electronic equipment and energy-using products", Geneva, June 2006, accessible at www.unctad.org/trade_env/test1/meetings/ctf3.htm.

the conditions under which public support and assistance are being provided to meet standards set by the private sector;

- The multitude of conformity assessment methods and tests, and the uncertainty relating thereto;
- The need in developing countries to go beyond a mere cost- and compliance-centred adjustment approach by also looking at opportunities and catalytic effects;
- The important role of stakeholder consultations in understanding the possible implications of environmental requirements in export markets for developing countries, and the need for both standard setters and exporting countries to be proactive in this regard.

III. SECTOR-SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

6. This section lists completed and ongoing sector-specific activities and summarizes discussions in two breakout groups formed during the meeting, covering respectively (a) electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) and energy-using products (EuP), and (b) horticultural products, that is fruit and vegetables. The summaries reflect subsequent discussions in the workshop's plenary session as well as further comments received by workshop participants. With regard to possible future CTF activities, the summaries seek to reflect as far as possible the broad range of suggestions made by participants. On the basis of these suggestions, and taking into account resource constraints and other considerations, plans for specific future CTF activities are presented elsewhere in this report (see section entitled "Conclusions and plans for future CTF activities").

A. Electrical and electronic equipment

Recent CTF activities

7. CTF activities have built on work carried out in the framework of the above-mentioned UK-DFID-funded project. This work (consisting of studies as well as national and regional stakeholder consultations) has focused on the experiences of China, the Philippines and Thailand in adjusting to new environmental requirements. A country-case study on Malaysia's experience was also prepared. The DFID-funded project and subsequent CTF activities have emphasized the importance of proactive adjustment strategies to strengthen the capacities of developing countries to compete successfully in international markets and achieve national environmental objectives in the light of growing volumes of domestic EEE waste.

8. In May 2005, the secretariats of UNCTAD and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) jointly organized a Workshop on Exchanging National Experiences among the Principal Exporting Developing Countries: Environmental Requirements and Market Access for Electrical and Electronic Goods (Bangkok, 25–27 May 2005). Some 60 participants from four key Asian exporters of EEE (in addition to China, the Philippines and Thailand, representatives from Malaysia participated in the exchange of national experiences), the United Kingdom, Japan and Switzerland, representing government agencies, private sector associations and companies, academia and NGOs, and intergovernmental organizations (the Basel Convention, UNIDO and UNEP), gathered to discuss the results of the UK-DFID-funded project and recommend follow-up

activities as part of the CTF.² For a detailed analysis, see UNCTAD's *Trade and Environment Review 2006*.³

9. The CTF has been networking and exchanging information, for example with the United Nations University project on solving the e-waste problem (StEP), regional activities of the secretariat of the Basel Convention (i.e. the Partnership on the Environmentally Sound Management of Electrical and Electronic Wastes for the Asia-Pacific Region) and the Asia Eco-Design Electronics (AEDE) project (<http://www.cfsd.org.uk/aede/english/index.html>) implemented by the Centre for Sustainable Design (CfSD).⁴

10. The CTF had so far focused on adjustments to environmental requirements in the area of waste management and the need to phase out the use of hazardous substances that may have implications for the management of waste from EEE. One question addressed during the workshop discussions was the extent to which the CTF should also consider other environmental aspects and whether it should expand the product coverage of its activities to include other categories of "energy-using products".

Breakout group discussions

11. The breakout discussions were moderated by Ms. Ritu Kumar, Director of the Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI)-Europe. The group discussed lessons learned from national experiences in adjusting to new environmental requirements in the EEE sector, as well as issues related to the EC EuP Directive and possible future CTF activities.

12. With regard to the first issue, the Thai participants (from the Government and industry associations) highlighted some of the adjustment policies initiated by the Thai Government. These include draft Thai legislation on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), awaiting approval in early 2007; a committee set up by the Department of Industrial Works to handle environmental directives, including the WEEE Directive, the Restriction of Certain Hazardous Substances (RoHS), the EEE Directive and the EuP Directive of the European Union; eco-design training (e.g. the Green Camp project); and a demonstration project on the eco-design of air-conditioning units.

13. In India, national legislation for the EEE sector is still at an early stage. Legislation on electronic waste management is being drafted, but it will take a while to come into effect. The Indian EEE industry is not as big as that of the other countries in the region, but it is set to grow very rapidly. This provides a good opportunity for the industry to seize the opportunities inherent in environmental legislation as well as to plan for meeting the challenges.

² At the meeting of the WTO Trade and Environment Committee (CTE Regular) on 6 July 2005, the representative of Thailand made a statement on the outcome of the workshop, which was followed by a discussion.

³ Chapter 2 (by René Vossenaar, Lorenzo Santucci and Nudjarin Ramungul (National Metal and Materials Technology Centre, Thailand)), "Environmental requirements and market access for developing countries: The case of electrical and electronic equipment", and commentaries by a series of experts, accessible at www.unctad.org/trade_env/test1/publications.htm

⁴ UNCTAD staff have also participated in a training workshop organized by the European Commission's Trade Directorate under the Trans-Regional EU-ASEAN Trade Initiative (TREATI).

14. The group discussed some issues related to the EuP Directive. It was emphasized that the outcomes of relevant discussions were still uncertain, but that there was a need to move quickly to gear up to meet the EuP requirements in a balanced manner. In particular, it is important to analyse the lessons learned from the ongoing adjustment to the RoHS in the EU and the Home Appliances Recycling Law in (HARL) in Japan.

15. Several participants emphasized that CTF could become a useful platform for rallying stakeholders at both national and global levels, as well as along global supply chains.

Suggestions for CTF activities

16. The following are recommendations for future CTF activities:

(a) CTF could support the implementation of activities at national levels. These may include:

- Advising countries on a conceptual approach to the design and implementation of adjustment strategies to help the EEE sector in meeting requirements, such as those in the WEEE Directive, RoHS, HARL and the EC EuP Directive;
- Advising companies and/or countries on how to create capacity to seize business opportunities inherent in the repair, reconditioning and recycling of e-waste. This should include gathering together best practice examples in e-waste management;
- Undertaking assessments of possible adverse (as well as positive) impacts of requirements, in particular on developing countries, and studies on the costs and benefits of alternative adjustment strategies, including the cost of inaction.

(b) The CTF should continue to facilitate the exchange of experience among developing countries. One possibility could be to organize a regional workshop on conformity assessment and testing, with persons from standardization bodies (i.e. the International Electrotechnical Commission, Technical Committee 111, Working Group 3) also being invited to participate.

(c) The CTF should communicate the lessons learned from the WEEE Directive, RoHS and HARL adjustments that are relevant to the adjustment to the EuP Directive. This may help trigger timely actions by exporters sooner rather than later.

(d) The CTF can be a very important platform for brokering a more receptive approach by the standard setters. This may include tapping funds for technical assistance to developing countries.

(e) The CTF can also play a useful role in creating in-country networks around eco-design and the EuP implications.

(f) The CTF may wish to consider working with large TNCs (e.g. Philips) to document best practice in managing supply chains and implementing environmental requirements in the EEE sector. Furthermore, in cooperation with other partners, the CTF could play a role in holding capacity-building seminars on environmental (and social) issues important for local suppliers in the supply chain, drawing on in-house expertise in TNCs' environmental management.

(g) The CTF may assist in analysing the implications of the forthcoming REACH Directive, including its likely impact on the EEE sector in developing countries.

(h) The CTF would be in a very good position to work with other initiatives and projects that are being launched to assist developing country suppliers in meeting EEE-related requirements. It could be a good platform for coordination and exchange of experiences.

B. Horticulture

CTF activities carried out so far

17. CTF activities in the area of horticulture have been carried out mainly as part of the CTF project entitled “Reflecting National Circumstances and Development Priorities in National Codes on Good Agricultural Practices that can be benchmarked to EurepGAP”, which is being implemented in close cooperation with FoodPlus GmbH, the not-for-profit secretariat of EurepGAP. Ten developing countries in three regions have been participating in this project, as follows:

Africa:	Ghana, Kenya and Uganda
Latin America:	Argentina, Brazil and Costa Rica
South-East Asia:	Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Viet Nam

18. National research teams in each country have carried out initial studies on the pros and cons of different options for achieving EurepGAP certification, including through benchmarking of national GAP programmes that reflect national circumstances and development priorities. Nine of these studies have been completed (see annex I). The results of the studies on South-East Asian and Latin American countries have been discussed at subregional workshops in Manila (28 and 29 November 2005) and Rio de Janeiro (8 and 9 December 2005) respectively. The results of the studies on African countries will be discussed at a subregional workshop in the second half of 2006.

Breakout group discussions

19. In the breakout group discussions, inputs were provided from different perspectives (government, industry, NGOs and others). General discussions then focused on issues such as public versus private standards, technical cooperation, general strategies to promote food safety and access to markets, different options for GAP certification, and experiences at national and subregional levels.

Public and private-sector standards and regulations

20. It was noted by several participants that Governments could not be made responsible for private-sector standard-setting activities, particularly in the context of the WTO SPS and TBT Agreements. However, Governments could engage in discussions with private-sector standards organizations. For example, the European Commission had made private standard-setting bodies aware of the concerns raised by some developing countries in the SPS Committee and had asked them to take these concerns into account. The Commission had also organized an informal seminar on private food quality standards and their implications for developing countries (7 December 2005) and had been inviting private-sector bodies to participate in certain technical cooperation workshops for developing countries. Also, several

developing country representatives pointed to the adverse financial impact resulting from some of these private-standard requirements, including costs for training and certification procedures.

21. There was some discussion on private-sector standards, in particular their scope, their relevance in the marketplace and the existence of many different private-sector standards. Although EurepGAP had been set up as a standard for supermarkets/retailers, in some cases the wholesale sector was also requesting EurepGAP certification.

22. It was mentioned that there are no precise data on what quantities of EurepGAP-certified produce are actually traded. Buyers may ask their suppliers to submit a certificate, but are then buying both certified and non-certified produce. EurepGAP should indicate not only the number of certified producers and certified areas for specific crops but also the quantities of certified produce for sale.

23. It was also mentioned that trading and retail bodies requesting EurepGAP certification are not as consistent as expected, in that they frequently request that producers obtain certification, but later lose interest in buying from certified suppliers. The producer therefore bears the extra cost of certification and receives little benefit. This reflects the basic problem, namely that retailers, who demand and benefit from certification, do not have to pay for investment in production-service systems.

Technical cooperation

24. In response to questions from developing country participants, information was provided about Governments' technical cooperation activities. For example, the European Commission has in place a very large technical cooperation programme for developing countries and LDCs, based largely on a strategic and long-term approach. It attempts to provide such assistance well in advance.

25. Technical cooperation (TC) is needed to assist developing countries in resolving specific problems in meeting government regulations. The major part of TC should extend beyond "fire-fighting" efforts (once problems have emerged) and be forward-looking, that is they should be aimed at strengthening the capacities of developing countries to address new standards and regulations before problems arise. Such TC should also enable developing countries to pursue adjustment approaches that look beyond costs at catalytic and beneficial effects of new standards in export markets. It was noted, however, that making TC more effective requires timely dissemination of relevant information by countries preparing new regulations, as well as proactive involvement by Governments and private-sector operators in developing countries.

26. Timely information-sharing on new regulations is therefore very important. It was mentioned that the recommended procedures for the implementation of the transparency provisions of the SPS Agreement request members to identify which countries might be particularly affected by measures being notified (G/SPS/7/Rev.2). While this was, in principle, an important step forward, some countries were including only limited information in their notifications, although often stating that "all countries" were affected. Reference was also made to the "Procedure to Enhance Transparency of Special and Differential Treatment in Favour of Developing Countries" (G/SPS/33), although no member had so far submitted

information on specific concerns raised by exporting developing countries and solutions regarding how to address them.

27. Although discussions largely focused on private-sector standards, there was also some discussion on the possible implications — for developing country exporters of horticultural products — of recent developments in regulations concerning MRLs for pesticides, such as the European Union’s Plant Protection Directive (91/414/EEC) and recent amendments to Japan’s Food Sanitation Law. In this connection, the European Commission has been providing funding for technical cooperation provided by COLEACP (the Pesticides Initiative Programme).

28. Several participants emphasized the need for the sustainability of technical assistance provided by Governments or by private-sector bodies, as well as of other activities to build quality management systems in developing countries and facilitate adjustment to new requirements. Some noted that developing country Governments had a key role to play in securing continuity of efforts, including by supporting training and developing in-house capacity. There was also a need for technical and financial assistance to build or strengthen the necessary infrastructure to meet food-safety, environmental and other requirements, as well as to support human resources development within relevant government departments and other institutions. In this context, there was a need to train auditors and certifiers. Special attention needed to be given to training small producers in sustainable food production and compliance with process requirements in food value chains.

29. There was a need to assess further the costs and benefits of quality management systems and their implications for smallholders.

30. It was noted that there was a need for a better understanding of the costs and benefits of private-sector standards and whether certain private-sector standards could, under certain circumstances, be considered a “public good”. The CTF should facilitate a better understanding of the interrelationship between mandatory requirements and private-sector-set requirements, in particular the role that the latter play in enforcing the former and helping compliance with them. Such analysis could also be useful to donors in assessing the extent to which they might wish to support development and/or certification against private-sector standards.

31. In discussing the pros and cons of private-sector standards, some participants expressed the view that EurepGAP certification could assist developing country suppliers in complying with mandatory food-safety requirements of the European Union and its member States by setting out specific measures to ensure compliance (in addition to the already existing EC measures to ensure compliance with food safety requirements). There was some discussion on the extent to which, for example, EurepGAP certification would reduce the need for multiple auditing to demonstrate compliance with different private-sector schemes, as well as on whether multiple audits to different standards represented actually a cost-effective option.

32. There was also a discussion on the role of new environmental, health and food-safety requirements as supply-chain governance tools of retailers, which lead to a shifting of risk management functions and associated costs to suppliers. More empirical information was required in this regard. Likewise, it was suggested that there be more fact-finding studies on the EurepGAP impact on smallholders.

GAP programmes and EurepGAP certification

33. Several participants referred to development of national and regional GAP programmes and EurepGAP certification in their countries. Different regions had different approaches to GAP programmes, for example with regard to the weight being given to helping to secure compliance with national food safety legislation that may otherwise be poorly enforced, on the one hand, and to promoting access to external markets, on the other hand. The approach chosen would depend on factors such as destination of exports and producer profiles in specific categories of fruit and vegetables. In the case of Malaysia, for example, a two-tier approach, whereby in addition to a national GAP standard there is a benchmarked standard or one equivalent to, for example, EurepGAP, might have some advantages. This would enable smaller farms to implement the national GAP programme, while the larger farms or producer organizations could implement the benchmarked standard. Priorities may be different in Latin America and Africa since horticultural exports destined for European markets play a far more important role. National stakeholder dialogues could be a key element in identifying the pros and cons of different options. The studies and the exchanges of national experiences in regional meetings that the CTF has organized so far in Asia and Latin America have proved very useful in this context (similar activities are being implemented in Africa).

34. Some participants expressed the view that there was a need to consider holding or supporting annual subregional conferences in developing countries on the opportunities and constraints of the EurepGAP standard and its interrelationship with mandatory requirements in key export markets. Such conferences could be a useful forum in which to:

- Summarize relevant CTF multi-stakeholder dialogues held at country level;
- Discuss the most appropriate adjustment approaches and related policies;
- Discuss relevant issues of forthcoming revisions to EurepGAP standards;
- Advise on the correct interpretation of requirements;
- Identify specific difficulties in complying with EurepGAP;
- Encourage policy dialogue on supportive or flanking policies for national GAP programmes.

35. A question was asked about whether the present scope of CTF activities should be expanded to cover cash crops other than those in the fruit and vegetables sector. It was noted that in Malaysia, for example, many smallholders, in addition to growing fruit and vegetables, cultivate cash crops. Typically, a smallholder might grow oil palm together with cash crops, which may include fruit and vegetables, but also tea, coffee, pepper or similar items. All of these would ultimately enter the food supply chain. In this regard, it was noted that EurepGAP has a code for coffee and has recently issued a standard for tea.

Suggestions for CTF activities

36. The group made some suggestions for future CTF activities. All these activities should be underpinned by conceptual and empirical analysis, building on the country studies already completed or in progress. The CTF could play an important role in gathering information and promoting studies to take stock of initiatives already under way in various developing countries and regions, in designing and implementing proactive adjustment

strategies to facilitate adjustment to new requirements in international markets while at the same time promoting the sustainable production of safe food, and in conceptualizing various options for proactive strategies.

37. There is a need for developing countries to promote national food safety strategies. FAO and regional institutions have a key role to play in supporting such efforts. The CTF, working with interested Governments, FAO and other institutions, private-sector standards organizations and other stakeholders, has a key role to play in enhancing understanding of the trade and development dimension of proactive adjustment policies.

38. Discussions focused on the following clusters of activities:

(a) At the global/regional level: dialogues between Governments and private-sector standards bodies, producer/exporter organizations in developing countries and other stakeholders on the role of mandatory and voluntary requirements and conceptual issues of adjustment strategies, including potential benefits or catalytic effects.⁵

(b) At the country and subregional levels, the CTF could play a useful role in promoting further dialogues between Governments and private-sector standard bodies, producer/exporter organizations and other stakeholders in developing countries on conceptual and policy issues relating to the most appropriate ways of adjustment, including the further development of conventional/organic production and building the capacity of smallholders with a view to reducing the coordination costs of incorporating smallholders into value chains. This is an important analytical phase that should involve all relevant stakeholders and should precede the implementation of strategies that have clear ownership and can be sustained in the long run. Good communication and outreach were considered to be very important in this context.

(c) The CTF could provide useful inputs to (annual) regional conferences on EurepGAP and related issues, as suggested in the previous section.

(d) The CTF could play a key role in assisting interested Governments, farmers' organizations and other stakeholders in exploring different options for EurepGAP certification. Building on completed and ongoing work, such stakeholder consultations should further clarify the pros and cons of different options, such as direct certification, group certification or benchmarking, and use of interpretive guidelines, given the specific characteristics of each country.

(e) The CTF should also play a supportive role in creating more awareness of TBT and SPS requirements and disciplines, as well as in identifying steps that can be taken to build or strengthen appropriate institutional infrastructure for SMTQ (standards, metrology, testing and quality assurance) systems. The CTF should aim to strengthen the capacities of farmers and processing firms to comply with current and future requirements in international markets as well as to meet national food safety and environmental standards.

⁵ It was announced that a special event on EurepGAP would be organized by the WTO SPS Committee in October 2006. The suggestion was made that UNCTAD, as an observer in the SPS Committee, should inform Committee members about the relevant CTF activities and their findings.

IV. CTF ONLINE PORTAL ON ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

39. The UNCTAD secretariat provided a short update on progress towards the CTF's proposed Internet portal on environmental and related health requirements. The CTF working group⁶ on this subject decided to commission a feasibility study (currently in preparation) on the creation of an online portal which will facilitate access to existing online information sources. The meeting received clarification of the purpose and scope of the study, including the following:

(a) The study will outline various options for an online portal.

(b) The portal would not aim to function as an "information clearing house" that gathers information on requirements from the various sources available and delivers them to users; rather, it would function as a diagnostic and facilitation tool that helps users identify the information they require and directs them to appropriate online information sources.

(c) The study will focus on identifying the institutional, financial and technical resources necessary for setting up and maintaining a portal. Its findings will then serve to inform a future decision by the CTF as to whether to go ahead with the portal.

V. FUNDING

40. The CTF meeting held in November 2004 asked the UNCTAD secretariat to prepare a CTF funding proposal to raise sufficient extrabudgetary resources to support (a) the participation of developing country experts in future CTF meetings, (b) project activities and (c) the work on the above-mentioned portal. The UNCTAD secretariat prepared a fund-raising proposal and submitted it to various potential donors (European Commission, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). The UNCTAD secretariat has been following up with the donors concerned.

VI. INFORMATION EXCHANGE

41. Several institutions informed the meeting about those of their activities that are directly relevant for the work of the CTF. These are summarized below, in alphabetical order. Also included are summaries provided by institutions that could not attend the CTF meeting in July 2006 but have been collaborating in CTF activities and have expressed an interest in continuing their cooperation with the CTF.

A. GTZ

42. The GTZ is undertaking a number of activities in the area of standards, which can be considered complementary to the work of CTF. The three clusters of activities of key relevance are described below.

⁶ The working group was created following a recommendation made at the CTF meeting in November 2004. The Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI) in the Netherlands, FAO and the National Institute of Metrology, Standardization and Industrial Quality (Inmetro) in Brazil have been participating in the working group (through e-mail discussions).

Making SPS Enquiry Points operational

43. The GTZ is providing, upon request, practical on-the-job training for SPS Enquiry Points to tackle their most common problems originating from the complex coordination and analytical tasks they have to perform. To increase the efficiency of SPS Enquiry Points and Notification Authorities, the GTZ is organizing tailor-made training for key staff. Participants acquire basic skills to process enquiries and to notify draft SPS measures correctly and timely. In that connection, mechanisms for harmonizing information flows between different ministries involved in drafting regulations, conformity assessments and standards will have to be established. Furthermore, training is provided in the downloading of notifications from other WTO members, the assessment of potential impacts of notified measures on trade, and the dissemination of notifications as a day-to-day business. In the long run, the GTZ sees Enquiry Points as coordinators of a national consultation process with regard not only to mandatory SPS measures, but also to private-sector standards.

Linking small farmers to horticultural export markets through group certification

44. A viable option for the certification of small farmers is group certification under option two of EurepGAP. Group certification is already successfully used by other schemes, for example the Forest Stewardship Council and IFOAM. A key element in EurepGAP's option two is a documented quality management system that allows the external certification body to certify the entire group rather than each individual group member. The GTZ is providing practical guidance on how to establish and document such an internal control system. It developed a manual, approved by EurepGAP, which includes operational procedures and recording forms for a fictitious farmers' group. The manual can be used by producers' associations as a starting point for creating their own documents, with contents being adopted according to the situation of their farmers and the specific circumstances within their groups. On the basis of the lessons learned in a trial phase (2005–2007) with pilot groups in Africa, Asia and Latin America, a completed and improved final version will be made available as public shareware.

Good Risk-based Agricultural Social Practices

45. To be able to compete with efficient market chains and subsidized agricultural products, some producers worldwide reduce their inputs into social conditions for workers and their families. Most workers are vulnerable to depreciative working conditions. Consumers in developed countries are becoming more and more concerned about the working conditions of migrant workers or workers' welfare on farms, and retailers feel obliged to respond to these concerns. In a public–private partnership project between the GTZ, EurepGAP and Coop (Switzerland) a set of Good Risk-based Agricultural Social Practices (GRASP) have been elaborated. The set will be tested in selected developing countries, discussed in national work groups (multi-stakeholder approach) and adapted to national/regional needs. The first priority is the applicability and verifiability of the requirements to be proposed in the 2007 revision of the EurepGAP standards.

B. ISEAL Alliance

46. The ISEAL Alliance is setting up a network of organizations interested in improving small-producer access to (multiple) certifications, which brings together the experiences of producer groups, extension agencies, certification bodies, standards owners and traders,

among others.⁷ It will be developing by August 2006 a separate page on the Alliance website where various tools and approaches for improving small producer access to certifications can be found. One particular project will be to facilitate the development of a common framework for internal quality management systems that small producers could use in order to increase their capacity for managing their own operations and for interfacing with external certification systems. As there are a number of efforts already under way, the approach taken is to begin with one existing modular system and invite comments and suggestions from the broader network.

C. ITC

47. ITC organized a consultation under its Executive Forum programme in Malaysia in June 2005 to consider the best approach to quality assurance for strategy-makers in developing countries and transition economies through the creation of an appropriate infrastructure. This has resulted in the ITC publication entitled "Innovations in export strategy: A strategic approach to the quality assurance challenge", which can be downloaded from the web page of the Standards and Quality Management service of ITC at www.intracen.org/eqm. ITC has also reproduced a document prepared by JCDCMAS (www.jcdcmas.net) on building corresponding technical infrastructures to support sustainable development and trade, which can be downloaded from the same web page. JCDCMAS is the Joint Committee on Co-ordination of Assistance to Developing Countries in Metrology, Accreditation and Standardization, and was established by the principal organizations that have mandates to strengthen technical infrastructures and deliver capacity-building in metrology, standardization and conformity assessment (including accreditation). Its members are BIPM, IAF, IEC, ILAC, ISO, ITC, ITU, OIML and UNIDO.

48. ITC is developing, jointly with ISO, a diagnostic tool to be used by enterprises regarding their readiness to implement ISO 22000:2005, Food safety management systems — Requirements for any organization in the food chain. It will be available soon, in hard-copy form and as a CD-ROM.

49. An interactive Workshop on Influencing and Meeting International Standards: Challenges for Developing Countries was organized by ITC, jointly with the Commonwealth Secretariat, in Geneva in June 2005. The publication, with the same name and based on case studies on TBT and SPS issues in six countries, was used as background material for the workshop. The meeting reviewed the recommendations for technical assistance contained in the joint ComSec/ITC publication, which will lead to the development of project proposals for provision of assistance to requesting countries in order to influence proposed international standards and to meet such standards.

50. ITC has prepared a document entitled *ITC's Strategy for Trade and the Environment* (April 2005). It contains a list of ideas for projects that could be designed and implemented by ITC within its mandate and competence.

⁷ For further information about the network and activities, please contact Dr. Sasha Courville at sasha@isealalliance.org. Information and resources will be accessible from the ISEAL website: www.isealalliance.org.

D. UNCTAD/FAO/IFOAM International Task Force (ITF) on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture and UNEP–UNCTAD Capacity-building Task Force (CBTF) on Trade, Environment and Development

51. The ITF is a public–private platform for dialogue established in 2003 to help remove technical barriers to organic trade, including through the facilitation of exports of organic produce from developing countries. It has commissioned many papers and adopted a common strategy for solutions, whereby organic production takes place in accordance with local conditions and international trade takes place on the basis of the international standard. The fifth ITF meeting will be held in Stockholm in October 2006. More information on the analytical work of ITF and the policy discussions can be obtained from the ITF website: www.unctad.org/trade_env/ITF-organic/welcome1.asp.

52. The UNEP–UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development has a project entitled "Promoting Production and Trading Opportunities for Organic Agriculture Products from East Africa", benefiting Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. It has commissioned a number of background studies, including on best practices for Governments wishing to support their organic sectors. National teams are undertaking integrated assessments of organic agriculture in the three countries. Regional cooperation is also crucial. The CBTF has joined forces with the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) to support the development of an East African Organic Standard (EAOS), the second draft of which is available for public comment. The EAOS was developed by a private–public sector working group comprising members from the three countries.

E. FAO

Recent FAO activities

53. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) is a multidisciplinary area of work in FAO, which is attracting from members a significant and growing demand for assistance. Activities are focused on the provision of information, technical assistance and capacity-building to help developing countries cope with changing and globalizing food systems and the proliferation of GAP standards over recent years without their sustainable development objectives being compromised.

54. Recent GAP-related activities have included a FAO-Thailand Workshop on GAP for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (FFV), held in September 2005, to take stock of progress and of lessons learned in the implementation of the Thailand GAP FFV programme, and to identify issues and priorities for improvement. A technical cooperation project (TCP) for strengthening compliance with the SPS requirements for expanded exports of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables in Thailand was executed, and a TCP in Colombia is ongoing to increase the productivity, competitiveness and management capacity of communities by implementing GAP. A cross-country study on investment and capacity-building for GAP implementation systems in the export FFV sector in Kenya, Chile, Malaysia and South Africa is being completed. A new, updated FAO GAP website is in preparation; it will outline the many resource materials, activities and workshops in all regions across the world, and will be accessible in autumn 2006.

Cooperation with UNCTAD

55. UNCTAD participated in the FAO-Thailand workshop in September 2005, and the FAO in turn provided advisory support to the UNCTAD/PHILEXPORT Sub-regional Stakeholder Consultation on Potential and Challenges of EurepGAP in Asia, held in Manila in December 2005. The FAO Regional Office in Latin America participated in the UNCTAD/Inmetro Sub-regional workshop on Potential and Challenges of EurepGAP in Central and South America, held in December 2005, which was aimed at opening subregional dialogue between government, the private sector and representatives of academia. The Chilean case study on investment and capacity-building for GAP implementation systems in the export FFV sector was presented.

Future activities

56. The FAO is currently implementing a project entitled "Capacity building and awareness-raising on sustainable agriculture and rural development and GAP to contribute to food safety and quality and integrated natural resources management in Kenya and Uganda". The project activities will centre on a subregional workshop in Kenya, a national workshop in Uganda (in early 2007) and a training programme on GAP to be organized in cooperation with Wageningen University in the Netherlands and Makerere University in Uganda. Consultations for jointly organizing the subregional African workshop with UNCTAD are ongoing.

57. Other FAO future activities include an International Workshop on GAP to be organized in conjunction with the University of Talca (Chile) and the Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario (INDAP), in October 2006, to create a regional GAP exchange network, analyse studies and tools needed for GAP policy design and promote consensus for a regional GAP project taking into account the specific country realities.

F. OECD

58. In 2001, the Joint Working Party on Trade and Environment (JWPTE) embarked on a project entitled "Environmental requirements and market access" to better understand the trade effects that environmental regulations and other technical measures taken by Governments of OECD member States and private bodies have on developing country exports. A total of 21 case studies have been examined in order to identify specific market access difficulties arising from a variety of environmental/health requirements, ranging from limits on pesticide residues in snow peas and tea to standards for organic foods and beverages. Also covered are private industry and NGO initiatives such as eco-labels for cut flowers and the International Fruit Container Organisation's returnable packaging initiative.

59. The scope of the study goes beyond identifying the problems facing exporters in developing countries by exploring practices that have contributed to problem-solving. The major market-access problems identified in the study include limited access to information, conflicting national requirements in the absence of international standards and inadequate means to meet new requirements. Each case study also explored what has been done to address these problems. For instance, there have been several initiatives to improve access to information, develop international standards at the global level and build capacity for research in developing countries. The case studies also provide examples of how exporters' concerns have been taken into account in developing and implementing standards and

regulations at the national level. The case studies have been published as a monograph in the OECD Trade Policy Studies series, entitled *Environmental Requirements and Market Access*. It is also available at <http://webdomino1.oecd.org/comnet/ech/tradeandenv.nsf>.

G. SUSTAINABLE TRADE AND INNOVATION CENTRE

60. The Sustainable Trade and Innovation Centre (STIC) was launched at the 2002 World Summit for Social Development as a Type II Partnership. It is chaired by Dr. Ben Ngubane, Ambassador of South Africa in Japan, former Minister of Science and Technology. STIC's network aims at facilitating public-private partnerships to help developing country exporters respond to, anticipate and ultimately shape the environmental and social dimensions of international trade, thereby capturing a greater share of value added. STICs are in place in Europe, Indonesia and Japan, and are being developed in India, the Philippines, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and South Africa. STIC-Japan, STIC-Indonesia and STIC-Europe have signed a joint memorandum of understanding open to other STICs.

61. STIC-Indonesia has just completed, in the framework of a contract between STIC-Indonesia, STIC-Europe and EuropeAid, a report on the opportunities for Indonesia in sustainable trade and the agro-food (which is on the agenda of the UNESCAP-UNCTAD Conference), aquaculture and textile sectors.

H. UNESCAP

62. UNESCAP is coordinating the implementation of the Development Account Project "Capacity Building in Trade and Environment", a joint project of four UN Regional Commissions (UNECA, UNECLAC, UNESCWA and UNESCAP) in partnership with UNCTAD, UNEP and WTO. The two-year project, which started in 2005, aims to enhance the capacity of developing countries to formulate coherent trade and environment policies that address both export competitiveness and domestic environmental concerns, thereby increasing market access for products in international markets while enhancing environmental sustainability. In each of the four regional components, the project has commissioned regional studies and is organizing regional and subregional capacity-building workshops. In the Asia-Pacific region, activities focus on the food and food processing sector. Activities are implemented in coordination with the work of the CTF on horticulture in order to ensure synergies. Subregional workshops are being organized for the Pacific (7-8 June 2006), South-East Asia (26-27 July 2006) and South Asia (6-7 September 2006) in order to present and discuss the findings of the regional study. Country-case studies have been prepared also for China, Fiji, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. A concluding regional workshop is scheduled to take place in Bangkok from 16 to 18 October 2006.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND PLANS FOR FUTURE CTF ACTIVITIES

63. The meeting confirmed and further clarified the important role of the CTF. It also recognized the important contribution made through sector-specific activities under the umbrella of the CTF.

64. On the basis of suggestions for future CTF activities as summarized above and further discussions with key partners, the UNCTAD secretariat will prepare a detailed work plan for activities to be carried out until the next CTF meeting. It is envisaged that the work plan will, by and large, be as follows:

(a) Sector-specific activities will initially continue to focus on EEE and horticulture, taking into account the suggestions summarized above. Preliminary elements of the work plan for each sector are presented below. The UNCTAD secretariat will explore with interested partners analytical and capacity-building activities relating to the impact of new chemical safety requirements on developing countries and their adjustment to them.

(b) The above-mentioned study on the CTF online portal on environmental requirements will be completed and discussed with members of the working group and other interested parties.

EEE

65. The following activities are envisaged:

(a) Policy dialogues may be facilitated in a small number of interested developing countries on conceptual approaches to the design and implementation of adjustment strategies to help the EEE sector in meeting environmental requirements. Such dialogues may include a number of issues highlighted in the breakout group discussions (see above), such as methodologies for studies on the costs and benefits of alternative adjustment strategies.

(b) In cooperation with other partners, the CTF could play a role in holding capacity-building seminars on environmental (and social) issues important for local suppliers in the supply chain, drawing on in-house expertise in environmental management of TNCs.

(c) The CTF, in cooperation with the European Commission, may organize stakeholder dialogue(s) to analyse the implications of the EuP and REACH directives for the EEE sector in developing countries.

(d) The CTF, in cooperation with other initiatives, could explore how it could provide a platform for coordination and exchange of national experiences.

Horticulture

66. The following activities are envisaged:

(a) The results of country studies prepared as part of the CTF project entitled “Reflecting National Circumstances and Development Priorities in National Codes on Good Agricultural Practices that can be benchmarked to EurepGAP” (see annex I) will be published. The priorities for further empirical and conceptual studies will be assessed and studies will be commissioned, as appropriate.

(b) A subregional workshop will be held to discuss the results of studies on the national experiences of Ghana, Kenya and Uganda. It will be jointly organized with FAO (venue and dates yet to be decided).

(c) The CTF will explore possibilities of holding regional dialogues on the role of mandatory and voluntary standards and conceptual issues of adjustment strategies, involving government and private-sector standards bodies, producer/exporter organizations in developing countries and other stakeholders.

(d) CTF will (continue to) facilitate national policy dialogues in a small but representative set of interested developing countries (perhaps one or two countries per region), with a view to, inter alia:

- Clarifying conceptual and policy issues on the most appropriate ways of adjusting to public- and private-sector standards;
- Assisting interested Governments, farmers' organizations and other stakeholders in exploring different options for EurepGAP certification.

(e) Consultations will be held with EurepGAP and other interested institutions (in particular FAO, the World Bank and GTZ) and stakeholders on, inter alia:

- Possible cooperation on regional meetings, as appropriate;
- Possible cooperation on product categories other than fruit and vegetables.

(f) UNCTAD will actively participate in the seminar on EurepGAP issues, which is planned to be held on the fringes of the October meeting of the WTO SPS Committee.

ANNEX I

CTF OUTPUTS IN 2005–2006

Studies and reports

1. The following studies have been prepared as part of the CTF project entitled “Reflecting National Circumstances and Development Priorities in National Codes on Good Agricultural Practices that can be benchmarked to EurepGAP”:

- Nigel Garbutt and Elomé Coetzer, FoodPlus, Options for the Development of National/Sub-regional Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for Horticultural Products Benchmarked to EurepGAP, Consultation Draft, September 2005.
- A series of national studies have been prepared as follows:

Africa

Ghana	Coordinated by Mr. Augustine Adongo, Chief Executive, Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters (FAGE), still in preparation
Kenya	Ruth Nyagah, Managing Director, AfriCert LTD, Nairobi, Kenya, January 2006
Uganda	Musa K. Muwanga, Coordinator, National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU), Kampala, June 2006

Latin America

Argentina	Martin Babboni and Valeria Glusman (Argencert, Buenos Aires, Argentina) and Dr. Jochen Neuendorff (Gesellschaft für Ressourcenschutz, GfRS, Göttingen, Germany), Buenos Aires and Göttingen, November 2005.
Brazil	Paul Espanion (IBD/SBC), Daniela Mariuzzo (ECOLOG Consultoria), Juan Rojas (Serviço Brasileira de Certificações, SBC), Sergio Pimenta (Instituto de Ecologia Aplicada), Reinaldo Rodrigues (Instituto de Ecologia Aplicada) and Alexandre Harkaly (Instituto Biodinâmico, IBD)
Costa Rica	Bernard Kilian, Production and Research Manager, Sustainable Markets Intelligence Centre (CIMS), San José, Costa Rica, November 2005

Asia

Malaysia	Christie Robert and Sathianathan Menon, qa plus asia - pacific sdn. Bhd, Kuala Lumpur, November 2005
Thailand	Vicha Sardud, Director, Postharvest Technology Institute, Chiang Mai University, Thailand (2005)
Viet Nam	Phan Thi Giac Tam (team leader), Le Thanh Loan, Trinh Thuc Hien and Hoang Thi Thuy, Nong Lam University, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, November 2005

National and subregional dialogues

2. Between May and December 2005, the CTF, in cooperation with partners, organized the following subregional and national CTF workshops:

25–26 May 2005 Bangkok, Thailand	UNCTAD–UNESCAP Workshop, Exchanging National Experiences among the Principal Exporting Developing Countries: Environmental Requirements and Market Access for Electrical and Electronic Goods, CTF
25–26 November 2005 Bangkok, Thailand	UNCTAD/ ITD National Workshop on Good Agricultural Practice and Benchmarking to EurepGAP
28 and 29 November 2005 Manila, Philippines	UNCTAD/PHILEXPORT Subregional Stakeholder Consultation on Potential and Challenges of EurepGAP in Asia
8 and 9 December 2005 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	UNCTAD/INMETRO Sub-regional Stakeholder Meeting on EurepGAP: Opportunities and Challenges for Central and Southern America

65. The draft versions of the above-mentioned country case studies and all documents of the national and subregional workshops are accessible online through the CTF website at www.unctad.org/trade_env/test1/projects/taskforce.htm.

ANNEX II

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