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**UNCTAD XI multi-stakeholder partnerships:
Progress made since UNCTAD XI**

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

1. UNCTAD XI, convened from 13 to 18 June 2004 in São Paulo, Brazil, launched partnerships in the areas of ICT for development; commodities; investment; and capacity building and training, including training, academic and research institutions. A description of the partnerships is also annexed to the São Paulo Consensus (TD/410).

2. Paragraph 114 of the São Paulo Consensus stipulates that the Board will annually review the implementation of these partnerships. To assist the Board in this task, the secretariat has prepared the present note, which provides an overview of each partnership and information on the progress achieved in building and implementing them.

A. Information and communication technologies for development (ICTfD)

Free and open-source software training

3. UNCTAD has started discussions with a number of private-sector companies, including SUSE Linux, Hewlett-Packard and Siemens, to explore opportunities for joint capacity building activities in developing countries.

4. The companies are expected to provide generic profiles of desirable local partners as well as of potential trainees who, after undergoing “train the trainer” workshops, would become local trainers in the use, maintenance and development of free and open-source software.

5. The UNCTAD Expert Meeting held from 22 to 24 September 2004 reinforced the value of free and open-source software for the development of local capacities as a vehicle for sustainable development.

E-tourism

6. With regard to the e-tourism initiative, consultations have been held with several partners (the University of Trento in Italy, the World Tourism Organization and the private sector, including Microsoft) regarding the development of an Internet-based e-tourism platform based on the technical requirements that UNCTAD has defined, taking into account developing countries’ needs. UNCTAD is currently reviewing different Internet platform options with existing providers. It is also reviewing potential additional options to support and improve the main e-tourism platform.

7. UNCTAD is preparing a training course on ICT and tourism. This course will ultimately constitute one module of the UNCTAD course on “Sustainable tourism” developed under the TrainForTrade methodology. The training course on ICT and tourism will aim to create awareness among policy makers and the private sector of the business opportunities and challenges that ICT pose when applied to the tourism industry.

8. UNCTAD has received requests from several developing countries (Benin, Lebanon, Mauritania) and regional organizations (Arab Maghreb Union) to benefit from the e-tourism initiative. As a result, a number of missions have been scheduled between now and the end of the year. A mission already visited Benin to assess the situation and map out the tourism marketing strategy as an element of a more comprehensive strategy on sustainable tourism for development.

9. A trust fund is being created to implement the e-tourism initiative, and a first contribution of US\$80,000 has been received from the Government of Portugal.

10. UNCTAD has promoted a coordination meeting of UN agencies to enhance synergies on tourism matters, which will be organized at the World Tourism Organization headquarters in Madrid, Spain, in November 2004.

The Global ePolicy Resource Network (ePol-NET)

11. UNCTAD as a partner of this initiative is currently contributing materials on ICT strategies to further develop the ePol-NET website (www.epol-net.org). UNCTAD continues to provide its expertise in the design of e-strategies as well as in specific subjects such as e-commerce, legal and regulatory issues, measuring of ICT for development, e-finance and aspects of e-government.

Trade-related e-finance for small and medium-size enterprises

12. The parallel event organized at UNCTAD XI under the above heading encouraged discussion and sought concrete implementation initiatives in trade-related e-finance for enterprises, primarily for SMEs.

13. Private-sector participants in the event supported UNCTAD's proposal on risk sharing arrangements in trade-related e-finance and other similar initiatives. At this initial stage, the secretariat is establishing lines of communication between UNCTAD and trade-related e-finance providers for the implementation of these initiatives, and it expects to receive further information that will be analysed and shared with its partnership network and member States.

14. UNCTAD is also seeking extrabudgetary funds to support pilot capacity-building activities in several countries.

Measuring information and communication technologies for development

15. A global stocktaking exercise on ICT statistics is being conducted in developing countries. In July 2004, a metadata questionnaire on ICT statistics was sent out by ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA and UNCTAD to statistical offices in all non-OECD countries. Results are currently being collected and processed. The OECD will carry out a similar exercise with its member countries at the end of 2004.

16. The UN Regional Commissions, with the substantive support of other partners such as ITU, OECD, UNCTAD, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, the UN ICT-TF and the World Bank, will organize workshops to take stock of e-measurement activities, taking into consideration the results of the metadata questionnaire. The workshops will identify priorities for action in the area of ICT indicators and agree on a common set of core indicators at the regional level.

Provisional venues and dates:

- ESCWA (Western Asia): Beirut, 4–5 October 2004
- ECA and ITU (Africa): Gaborone, Botswana, 25–29 October 2004
- ECLAC (Latin America and the Caribbean): Santiago de Chile, 3–4 November 2004
- ESCAP (Asia-Pacific): Bangkok, early 2005 (to be confirmed)

17. An international meeting on ICT indicators will be organized in early 2005 under the umbrella of the partnership. It will present the results of the global stocktaking exercise, consolidate the outcomes of the regional workshops and agree on a final list of core indicators. The meeting will also discuss developing countries' technical assistance needs with regard to compiling and identifying ICT indicators relevant to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and it will present

ongoing work concerning the creation of a global database on ICT indicators. This meeting will be held as a WSIS Thematic Meeting, and its outcome will be presented as an input to the second phase of the Summit (Tunis, 16–18 November 2005).

18. The partnership provides for a number of capacity-building activities, such as on-site training in national statistical offices, technical workshops at the regional level, the development of a training course on information society statistics, and the preparation of a guidebook on information society indicators. Since these activities will require additional resources, a meeting will take place in Geneva on 18 October 2004, hosted jointly by ITU and UNCTAD, to brief interested donors on the partnership, and particularly on the technical assistance activities necessary to help poor countries produce information society statistics.

B. Commodities

19. Improving the performance of the commodity sector is a key element in efforts to reduce poverty in most developing countries, in particular LDCs, and in achieving the MDGs. The commodities sector has many specificities that require focused and innovative approaches. These comprise finding solutions to traditional problems as well as enhancing the capacity to obtain development benefits from existing or emerging opportunities. The opening of new “windows of opportunity” pursuant to changing dynamics of international trade and the emergence of a new trade geography introduce a novel dimension to commodity-related development cooperation and partnerships.

20. Over the years, there have been numerous programmes and projects with regard to the commodities sector. After what France’s President Jacques Chirac described as a period of a “conspiracy of silence” and the view that these problems would be taken care of through general macro-level policies and measures, the commodity sector and sector-specific ideas have again emerged on the international agenda.

21. Ideas emanating from, and action undertaken by, one stakeholder group alone, be it intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, NGOs or any other group, however, normally provide only partial solutions and attract a partial following. Although these initiatives have significant value, the potential for cross-fertilization and making use of complementarities cannot be adequately exploited. Perhaps more importantly, the necessary framework for conceptualizing and promoting new ideas and partnerships is missing. The International Task Force on Commodities (ITFC) aims to fill these gaps.

Progress made so far in implementing the partnership, including a short description of the specific activities undertaken under the partnership

22. Prior to UNCTAD XI, the UNCTAD secretariat held extensive consultations with relevant international organizations, governments in both developed and developing countries, large corporations engaged in commodity-related activities, and NGOs. Broad support, a strong commitment to participate and a large degree of enthusiasm were expressed for this approach to reinvigorating, in a novel framework, commodity-related development efforts. An initial list of potential Task Force members is being drawn up, and several individuals have expressed interest in participating.

23. With regard to the operation of the Task Force, the partners will be contributing their time and expertise. Contributions to the operation of the action groups will either be a continuation of ongoing activities (for those that are already in operation) or will be generated on a case-by-case basis (for new

action groups). The resources that can be allocated by the UNCTAD secretariat to the servicing of the ITFC are limited and insufficient to enable the ITFC to function as effectively as desired: some extrabudgetary funding will be required. Prior to UNCTAD XI and the actual launching of the Task Force, no intensive fundraising activities were undertaken. So far no firm commitments have been made for extrabudgetary resources. However, now that the preconditions for operationalizing the Task Force are all satisfied, funding possibilities are being considered. These include provision of in-kind support such as hosting meetings of the Task Force and the secondment of staff.

24. Estimates indicate that the initial needs for starting the exercise in a sufficiently credible and effective manner, including the holding of the first meeting, are on the order of US\$100,000. The longer-term needs call for an additional \$1,960,000.¹ This latter figure includes financing part of the substantive and administrative support and holding the subsequent meetings of the Task Force (four or five meetings until UNCTAD XII). To generate the desired impact, the Task Force will also need to publicize its work and undertake extensive awareness-raising activities on commodity issues through website activities, high-level meetings and press releases. These activities are crucial if the ITFC is to be successful in instigating and stimulating the work of action groups and helping to generate additional financial resources.

25. It is hoped that, resources permitting, the first meeting of the ITFC will take place in the first quarter of 2005. The Task Force itself will decide the time frame for subsequent meetings.

Links with related activities

26. UNCTAD is involved with several partnerships in the field of commodities, which can be considered “action groups” as defined in the concept note that was prepared on the ITFC. These include the “sustainable commodity initiative” (<http://www.iisd.org/trade/commodities/sci.asp>), the International Task Force on Commodity Risk Management in Developing Countries (<http://www.itf-commrisk.org>) and the partnership on sustainable economic development and mining. The ITFC is expected to take these into account when organizing its work. Moreover, the work of the ITFC will provide crucial inputs into the implementation of the mandate spelled out in paragraph 100 of the São Paulo Consensus.

C. Investment for development

Partners

27. Partner institutions from the public and private sectors, international organizations, the NGO community and academia include, among others, Fundação Dom Cabral, ICC, ICSTD, IFAC, Instituto Ethos, InWent, ITC, JBIC, MIGA, OECD and WAIPA (World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies) and its regional partners.

28. This association allows UNCTAD to expand its ongoing activities and to extend into new but related areas. More specifically, the partnership focuses on the following core areas: (1) enhancing the understanding of issues related to FDI; (2) attracting FDI and benefiting from it; and (3) facilitating the exchange of experiences.

¹ In both cases, cash requirements will be substantially reduced if interested countries agree to make in-kind contributions as mentioned above.

Progress made so far in the implementation of the partnership, including a short description of the specific activities undertaken

29. Following are examples of specific activities initiated since the launch at UNCTAD XI:

Investment knowledge for development

30. UNCTAD, jointly with the International Trade Centre (ITC), launched a prototype website on Trade and Investment Analysis.

31. InWEnt (Capacity Building International, Germany), together with UNCTAD, began activities to support capacity building in FDI statistics in Africa, including the preparation of country profiles and a workshop on capacity building for African countries on promoting FDI.

Improving the investment climate

32. The partnership between UNCTAD, the ICC and others reinforces the follow-up implementation by countries of the recommendations of Investment Policy Reviews regarding a country's investment climate and potential to attract FDI and benefit more from it. Towards this end, UNCTAD intensified its follow-up activities, including the updating of relevant tools (Investment Compass, Tax Compass).

33. Another aspect includes the follow-up to the work on good governance in investment promotion (GGIP), in particular the implementation of recommendations in the four LDCs that participated in the first phase of the GGIP programme, and the raising of international awareness of the importance of good governance practices in public institutions that promote and service foreign investors.

34. UNCTAD, the Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS), India, and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Switzerland, enhanced their cooperation to increase understanding of international investment policy issues and to improve their development dimension. A first round of consultations with IISD took place on a list of joint research topics. Similar consultations with CUTS are underway. Joint workshops, information exchange and joint research activities are expected to strengthen the understanding of policy makers and civil society stakeholders in developing countries and economies in transition regarding key issues in international investment policies at various levels and their development impact.

35. JBIC (Japan Bank for International Cooperation), the Investment Advisory Council and ICC jointly initiated a project to improve the investment climate in LDCs (the "Blue Book"). Work has begun in Cambodia and Laos.

Information for investors

36. UNCTAD, the ICC and local chambers of commerce stepped up their efforts to help LDCs promote investment by publicizing their efforts to improve their regulatory framework for FDI, particularly in the context of the Investment Guides. Within this partnership, work on Kenya, Tanzania and East Africa has already begun.

37. UNCTAD and the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) finalized a cooperation agreement on joint activities for the promotion of transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

38. In the context of MIGA's FDI Promotion Centre website for IPAs, MIGA and UNCTAD identified areas of cooperation to further develop training materials, e-learning and other specialized tools.

Capacity building in technology transfer and intellectual property rights

39. UNCTAD's partnership with ICTSD is reinforcing its efforts to assist developing countries in human capacity and institution building in the area of technology transfer and intellectual property rights, particularly with respect to the implementation of the TRIPS Agreement and new developments resulting from multilateral treaties and regional and bilateral trade agreements. Joint activities include policy-oriented interdisciplinary research, capacity building in intellectual property policy formulation, and outreach and dissemination.

40. The "Observatoire Technologique" of the Centre des Technologies de l'Information (CTI) of the State of Geneva and UNCTAD signed an agreement with a view to implementing a capacity-building programme in the field of e-administration in developing countries, especially the LDCs, through customized training, based on the transfer of experience and knowledge to engineers undergoing training in the framework of specific applications. Several countries have already expressed their interest in the scheme, and UNCTAD and CTI are currently studying these projects.

Linkages for development

41. UNCTAD, together with the Ethos Institute and the Fundação dom Cabral (both of Brazil) as well as GTZ have begun project activities to establish sustainable business linkages between foreign affiliates and domestic enterprises in Brazil, which are considered a pilot for similar partnerships in other countries later on.

42. UNCTAD also finalized its cooperation agreement with the OECD to further its work on global value chains and clusters. The joint research project "New Configurations of Global Value Chains and the Resulting Consequences for SMEs" is under preparation. The partnership leverages the work on the promotion of entrepreneurship through the UNCTAD/EMPRETEC network and the OECD Centre on Entrepreneurship.

Investment Stakeholder Network

43. UNCTAD, in partnership with WAIPA and its regional partners, initiated the network concept of investment stakeholder institutions within and among countries to facilitate an exchange of experiences among FDI stakeholders in the area of investment. The network, which will include a virtual platform, is being established on a regional basis. Investment promotion agencies of the Caribbean Rim countries have endorsed the initiative and are making progress with regard to modalities. During UNCTAD XI, WAIPA and the Andean Community joined forces to advance the Andean Investment Promotion Strategy.

44. The "Investment for Development" partnership is an open-ended, flexible structure that allows UNCTAD to mobilize partners and resources according to the evolving demands of its developing-country clients.

D. Capacity building and training, including training and academic institutions

UNCTAD Virtual Institute partnership

45. Since UNCTAD XI, two partner universities, the University of Jordan and the University Pierre Mendès France (Grenoble, France) have formally joined the Virtual Institute network, in addition to the founding members, which are the University of Campinas (Brazil), the University of Mauritius, Jawaharlal Nehru University (India) and the University of Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania). UNCTAD has also received other applications and expressions of interest in cooperation, which are currently being reviewed.

46. The website of the Virtual Institute has been enhanced through the inclusion of additional UNCTAD substantive resources (Trade in Services) and sections facilitating the use of the site and the Virtual Institute itself, as well as the development of features allowing university members to share resources with other members and to update information about themselves.

47. With regard to the development of teaching resources based on UNCTAD's analytical work, two sample sections (on ICT Strategies and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures) have been posted on the Virtual Institute site. In addition, a module on FDI has been developed, drawing on material used for courses relating to paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action.

48. Teaching resources from the University of Campinas have been made available on the site for other members wishing to use and adapt them.

49. The Virtual Institute has also initiated exchanges among its members regarding curriculum development. In addition to the curricula posted by the University of Campinas (post-graduate course in International Economic Diplomacy) and the University of Mauritius (MSc/postgraduate course in International Trade and Economic Diplomacy), the University of Jordan has contributed syllabi for courses in International Finance, Theory of International Trade and Commercial Policies, Economics Development, Economic Feasibility Study and Financial Economics.

50. The Virtual Institute newsletter was launched in late July 2004 to provide members with details of the Institute's current activities and future projects, abstracts of recent UNCTAD publications, and links to other trade- and development-related sites.

51. In addition to the previous contribution from Canada, the Virtual Institute is benefiting from the UN Fulbright fellowship programme. An expert in pedagogy is working with UNCTAD on a six-month assignment.
