



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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Trade and Development Board

Fifty-fifth session

Geneva, 15–26 September 2008

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Provisional agenda and annotations*

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

The provisional agenda for the fifty-fifth session of the Trade and Development Board is reproduced in section I below. The secretariat's annotations, contained in section II, are intended to provide essential background information covering the provisional agenda items, together with a brief description of the relevant documentation.

A checklist of documents relating to all agenda items will be issued at the beginning of the session.

* The provisional agenda was approved by the extended Bureau of the Board on 13 June 2008. This document was submitted on the above-mentioned date as a result of processing delays.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Procedural matters:
 - (a) Election of officers
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the session
 - (c) Adoption of the report on credentials
 - (d) Provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Board
2. High-level segment: Trade and productive capacities for achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals
3. Interdependence: Mobilizing resources for development – commodity prices, productive capacity, supply and distribution
4. Review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010:
 - (a) *The Least Developed Countries Report 2008*: Recent economic, social and policy trends
 - (b) Sectors of key interest to the least developed countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010: Export competitiveness – policy issues and priorities
5. Economic development in Africa: Trade liberalization and export performance in Africa
6. Evolution of the international trading system and of international trade from a development perspective
7. Development strategies in a globalized world: Financial policies and productive investment related to trade and development
8. Investment for development: Transnational corporations, infrastructure and development
9. UNCTAD's contribution to the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields:
 - UNCTAD's contribution, within its mandate, to the implementation and to the review of progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, under its relevant agenda items, in particular the preparations for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus
10. Technical cooperation activities:
 - (a) Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD (report of the Working Party on its fifty-first session)
 - (b) Report on UNCTAD's assistance to the Palestinian people

11. Matters requiring action by the Board in the follow-up to the twelfth session of the Conference and arising from or related to reports and activities of its subsidiary and other bodies:
 - Hearing with civil society
12. Other matters in the field of trade and development:
 - (a) Progressive development of the law of international trade: Forty-first annual report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (New York, 16 June–3 July 2008)
 - (b) Report of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO on its forty-first session (Geneva, 4–5 December 2007)
13. Matters requiring action by the Board arising from or related to reports and activities of its subsidiary bodies:
 - Reports of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget
14. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters:
 - (a) Report by the President of the Advisory Body set up in accordance with paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action on the implementation of courses by the secretariat in 2007–2008 and their relevant impact; and the appointment of the members of the Advisory Body for 2009
 - (b) Designation of intergovernmental bodies for the purposes of rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the Board
 - (c) Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board
 - (d) Review of the calendar of meetings
 - (e) Membership of the Working Party for 2009
 - (f) Review of the lists of States contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX)
 - (g) Administrative and financial implications of the actions of the Board
15. Other business
16. Adoption of the report

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

Item 1. Procedural matters

1. The rules of procedure of the Board are contained in document TD/B/16/Rev.4 and Corr.1.

(a) Election of officers

2. In accordance with rules 18 and 19 of the rules of procedure, the Bureau of the Board consists of 12 members: the President, 10 vice-presidents and the Rapporteur, i.e. four members from list A (Africa/Asia), four from list B, two from list C and two from list D, as referred to in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX), as amended.

3. In accordance with the cycle of rotation that has been in operation since UNCTAD IX, the President of the Board for the fifty-fifth session will be a representative of one of the States in list A (Asia) and the Rapporteur a representative of one of the States in list B. The 10 vice-presidents will therefore be as follows: three from list A (Africa/Asia); three from list B; two from list C; and three from list D.

(b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the session

Agenda

4. The provisional agenda for the session is reproduced in section I above.

Organization of work

5. In order to accommodate the suggestions made by delegations, meetings of the session of the Board have been organized in such a way as to ensure that no two meetings take place at the same time. They have been designed with a view to ensuring effective participation by delegations, particularly small delegations, and also to making the most efficient use of the conference resources of the United Nations.

Establishment of sessional committees

6. In accordance with rule 62 of its rules of procedure, the Board may wish to set up two sessional committees. It is proposed to allocate agenda item 4 to Sessional Committee I and agenda item 5 to Sessional Committee II.

Schedule of meetings

7. The overall timetable for the two-week period of the Board will be circulated at a later date to take into account developments before the opening of the session.

(c) Adoption of the report on credentials

8. In accordance with rule 17.2 of the rules of procedure, the Bureau of the Board will examine the credentials and submit its report to the Board.

In-session documentation

(d) Provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Board

9. The draft provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Board will be prepared by the secretariat. The Board may wish to refer consideration of this item to the consultations of the President of the Board with the Bureau and coordinators.

In-session documentation

Item 2. High-level segment: Trade and productive capacities for achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

10. The high-level segment will look at practical ways to strengthen global partnership for development, focusing in particular on enhancing trade and building productive capacities, in order to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. It will identify specific policy mechanisms at all levels through which development partnership can be strengthened in the areas of aid, trade, finance, investment and technology. These mechanisms should help achieve poverty

reduction, food security and employment goals, taking account of gender and environmental dimensions, and provide a more sustainable economic development framework for other human development goals. It will also look at UNCTAD's contribution. Member States may wish to share information about successful actions and partnerships they have undertaken to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Documentation

TD/B/55/3 Trade and productive capacities for achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

Item 3. Interdependence: Mobilizing resources for development – commodity prices, productive capacity, supply and distribution

11. This agenda item will provide an opportunity for delegations to discuss current and emerging issues in the global economy in the area of macroeconomic management, including commodity prices and the role of institutions. Special attention will be given under this item to food prices and their repercussions for developing countries and the Millennium Development Goals and to the actions member States can take to increase their productive capacities, including in the food sector. The *Trade and Development Report, 2008* – especially in its chapters dealing with current trends in the world economy, as well as trends at the regional level – will serve as background to the deliberations of the Board under this item, together with presentations by the secretariat and external experts.

Documentation

UNCTAD/TDR/2008 and Overview *Trade and Development Report, 2008*

Item 4. Review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010

12. Pursuant to paragraph 113 of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010, UNCTAD has continued its efforts to undertake concrete steps to mainstream actions and commitments contained in the Programme of Action into its activities and into the work of the intergovernmental machinery. Its activities focus on research and policy analysis, consensus-building, technical cooperation and capacity-building.

(a) *The Least Developed Countries Report 2008: Recent economic, social and policy trends*

13. *The Least Developed Countries Report 2008: Growth, Poverty and the Terms of Development Partnership* will be presented to the Board. The 2008 report focuses on recent economic, social and policy developments in the least developed countries. These countries experienced their highest rates of growth for 30 years in 2005 and 2006 and the report examines what underpins this growth performance and how robust it is. The report also provides a new set of estimates of income poverty to assess to what extent economic growth has trickled down to households and to the daily lives of citizens. It assesses progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and analyses progress towards more effective development partnerships at the country level within the least developed countries. It focuses, in particular, on progress towards country-owned development strategies within the framework of the poverty reduction strategy papers and on the establishment of country-level aid management systems, both of which are encouraged by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Documentation

UNCTAD/LDC/2008 *The Least Developed Countries Report 2008: Growth, Poverty and Overview*
and Overview *and the Terms of the Development Partnership*

(b) Sectors of key interest to the least developed countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010: Export competitiveness – policy issues and priorities

14. Under this sub-item, the Board will have the opportunity to discuss sectors of key interest to least developed countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action. The background paper provides a fresh look at specific sectors where the least developed countries have comparative advantages and where their efforts and their development partners should focus in the implementation of the Programme of Action in the years ahead. A comprehensive assessment of exports – including coffee, cocoa, groundnuts, horticulture, fishing, textiles and tourism – and their contribution to poverty reduction in the least developed countries, as well as a synthesis of selected national case studies, will be made available for the consideration of the Board.

Documentation

UNCTAD/ALDC/2008/1 Export competitiveness and development in the least developed countries

TD/B/55/8 UNCTAD-wide activities in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010: Seventh progress report

Item 5. Economic development in Africa: Trade liberalization and export performance in Africa

15. The 2008 report on *Economic Development in Africa: Export Performance after Trade Liberalization – Some Patterns and Policy Perspectives* will be presented to the Board. This year's report examines trade liberalization and export trends in Africa. It analyses why aggregated export performance and the export performance of major sectors have been relatively weak and makes policy suggestions for improving this situation.

Documentation

TD/B/55/6 Economic development in Africa: Export performance after trade liberalization – some patterns and policy perspectives (Overview)

UNCTAD/ALDC/AFRICA/2008 *Economic Development in Africa: Export Performance after Trade Liberalization – Some Patterns and Policy Perspectives*

Item 6. Evolution of the international trading system and of international trade from a development perspective

16. The Board will review recent developments in the international trading system of particular relevance to developing countries, especially developments in the post-Doha work programme, as well as various bilateral and regional initiatives (e.g. South–South agreements and economic partnership agreements between the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the European Union), and coherence between these trade agendas in the light of recent trends in international trade. The

Board will also consider the persistent and emerging trade policy challenges, particularly in terms of the development dimension for developing countries, from these processes that require greater attention at the national and international levels. Particular attention could be placed on the linkages of trade and trade negotiations with the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and with the global food crisis. A background note will be prepared by the secretariat and other relevant reports will be made available.

Documentation

TD/B/55/4 Evolution of the international trading system and of international trade from a development perspective

Item 7. Development strategies in a globalized world: Financial policies and productive investment related to trade and development

17. This agenda item will provide an opportunity for the Board to review past experience with financial reform related to trade and development, and new requirements for adequate institutional arrangements at the national, regional and international levels to strengthen the role of the financial sector in the process of development, structural change and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The *Trade and Development Report, 2008* – especially in its chapters on the financial aspects of investment in productive capacity, the role of official development assistance in investment, growth and sustained poverty reduction, and debt sustainability – will serve as the background to the deliberations of the Board under this item, together with presentations by the secretariat and external experts.

Documentation

UNCTAD/TDR/2008 and Overview *Trade and Development Report, 2008*

Item 8. Investment for development: Transnational corporations, infrastructure and development

18. Under this item, the Board will examine some key questions on: (a) the role and evolution of transnational corporations' participation in infrastructure; (b) the development impact of such participation, including the extent to which foreign direct investment and such participation contributes to the achievement of infrastructure-related development objectives; and (c) the implications in terms of future priorities and policies for Governments. The report examines, in particular, the options available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, which have difficulty in attracting foreign direct investment into their infrastructure industries.

Documentation

TD/B/55/5 Investment for development: Transnational corporations, infrastructure and development

Item 9. UNCTAD's contribution to the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields:

- **UNCTAD's contribution, within its mandate, to the implementation and to the review of progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, under its relevant agenda items, in particular the preparations for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus**

19. In its resolution 57/270 B, the General Assembly stressed the need to make maximum use of existing United Nations mechanisms for the purpose of reviewing the implementation of commitments made within the United Nations system in key areas of development. In this regard, it invited the Trade and Development Board to contribute, within its mandate, to the implementation and to the review of progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, under its relevant agenda items.

20. Paragraph 11 of the Accra Accord states that: "UNCTAD, within its mandate, should make a contribution to the implementation and follow-up to the outcomes of relevant global conferences. It should continue to contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. With all aspects of its work it will help to implement the global development agenda and pave the way to 2015. It should also contribute to the implementation of specific actions requested in the 2005 World Summit, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010, the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society. It should also contribute to furthering the implementation of the internationally agreed goals in the Doha Ministerial Declaration and other relevant decisions."

21. The Board is expected to respond to the two requests addressed to it by the General Assembly in paragraph 27 (a) of resolution 57/270 B on the basis of a note to be prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat.

Documentation

TD/B/55/7 Progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, and UNCTAD's contributions

Item 10. Technical cooperation activities

(a) Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD (report of the Working Party on its fifty-first session)

22. The Board will review the technical cooperation activities undertaken in 2007, as well as developments in UNCTAD's technical cooperation, in particular issues related to trade- and investment-related capacity-building and progress in the implementation of decision 478L of the Board regarding technical cooperation. In considering this item, the Board will be assisted by the outcome of the fifty-first session of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget, due to be held from 1 to 5 September 2008, including a review of technical cooperation activities undertaken in 2007.

Documentation

TD/B/WP/202	Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD
TD/B/WP/202/Add.1	Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD – Annex I: Review of activities undertaken in 2007 (English only)
TD/B/WP/202/Add.2	Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD – Annex II: Statistical tables (English only)
TD/B/WP/206	Report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme budget on its fifty-first session

(b) Report on UNCTAD's assistance to the Palestinian people

23. The secretariat reports annually to the Trade and Development Board on its programme of technical assistance to the Palestinian people. The report includes an update on Palestinian economic performance and the secretariat's findings of related policy analysis and research. In line with the United Nations strategic framework for 2008–2009, the Accra Accord, the São Paulo Consensus and the Bangkok Plan of Action, in the past year UNCTAD's assistance to the Palestinian people has been intensified. Building on the experience of the secretariat as a whole, and in close cooperation with Palestine, the programme is designed to achieve specific national development objectives within four clusters: trade policies and strategies; trade facilitation and logistics; finance and development; and enterprise, investment and competition policy.

24. The report reviews the conditions that led to the contraction and stagnation of the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory in 2006 and 2007. It points out that the policy space presently available to the Palestinian Authority is much less than that available to local governments in many countries. It argues that empowering the Palestinian Authority with the full range of fiscal, monetary, exchange-rate, trade and labour policy instruments, and the needed capacities, is essential to the reversal of economic regression and to movement towards full employment. The technical assistance activities of UNCTAD that are under way or that have been completed since 2007 are reviewed, as are the resource shortfalls that have forced the suspension of strategic technical cooperation projects scheduled for implementation in 2008.

25. As in previous years, in taking note of the report on UNCTAD's assistance to the Palestinian people, the Board may wish to draw the General Assembly's attention to the deliberations under this item in its report on its fifty-fifth session, in accordance with General Assembly decision 47/445. The Board may also wish to consider the implications of the new extrabudgetary resource constraints affecting the implementation of technical cooperation projects extended by the secretariat to the Palestinian people.

Documentation

TD/B/55/2 Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people

Item 11. Matters requiring action by the Board in the follow-up to the twelfth session of the Conference and arising from or related to reports and activities of its subsidiary and other bodies

– **Hearing with civil society**

26. The Trade and Development Board will hold a half-day informal hearing with non-State actors to allow them to express their views on the issues before the Board.

The outcome of the informal hearings will be summarized by the secretariat for submission as an input to the discussions of the Board. Participation will be based on the procedure used for the participation of civil society and private-sector organizations during the preparatory process of UNCTAD XII. The report on the hearing will be before the Board.

In-session documentation

Item 12. Other matters in the field of trade and development

(a) Progressive development of the law of international trade: Forty-first annual report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (New York, 16 June–3 July 2008)

27. The forty-first session of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law was held in New York from 16 June to 3 July 2008. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2205 (XXI), the report of the session will be before the Board.

Documentation

A/63/17 Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on its forty-first session

(b) Report of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO on its forty-first session (Geneva, 4–5 December 2007)

28. At its forty-first session, held from 4 to 5 December 2007, the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre reviewed the Centre's technical cooperation activities.

Item 13. Matters requiring action by the Board arising from or related to reports and activities of its subsidiary bodies:

– Reports of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget

29. The reports of the Working Party on its fiftieth and fifty-first sessions will be before the Board for its consideration.

Documentation

TD/B/WP/200 Report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget on its fiftieth session

TD/B/WP/206 Report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget on its fifty-first session

Item 14. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters

(a) Report by the President of the Advisory Body set up in accordance with paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action on the implementation of courses by the secretariat in 2007–2008 and their relevant impact; and the appointment of the members of the Advisory Body for 2009

30. In accordance with Board decision 466 (XLVII), the President of the Advisory Body will inform the Board about the activities of the Advisory Body and on the

implementation of paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action. The Board will be invited to appoint members of the Advisory Body for 2009 on the basis of the recommendations of the regional groups.

(b) Designation of intergovernmental bodies for the purposes of rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the Board

31. At present there are 112 intergovernmental organizations in status with UNCTAD. A list of these organizations is contained in document TD/B/IGO/LIST/7. There are no new applications before the Board for its consideration at this session.

(c) Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board

32. At present there are 200 non-governmental organizations in status with UNCTAD: 110 in the General Category and 90 in the Special Category. A list of these organizations is contained in document TD/B/NGO/LIST/9. The Board will be invited to consider one application, from the UBUNTU-World Forum of Civil Society Networks.

Documentation

TD/B/55/R.1 Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of Board

(d) Review of the calendar of meetings

33. The Board will have before it the calendar of meetings for the remainder of 2008 and an indicative calendar for 2009.

(e) Membership of the Working Party for 2009

34. The Board will be required to approve the membership of the Working Party for 2009 on the basis of nominations from the regional groups.

In-session documentation

(f) Review of the lists of States contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX)

35. The Board will have before it, as appropriate, the updated membership list of UNCTAD and the Board.

Documentation

TD/B/INF.211 Membership of UNCTAD and membership of the Trade and Development Board

(g) Administrative and financial implications of the actions of the Board

36. The Board will be informed during the session of the administrative and financial implications of any proposals before it.

In-session documentation, if required

Item 15. Other business

Item 16. Adoption of the report

37. In accordance with Board decision 259 (XXV), two versions of the report are prepared: (a) the report of the Board to the General Assembly, containing the resolutions and decisions emanating from the session and any other material which the Board decides to transmit to the Assembly; and (b) the full account of the proceedings, which constitutes the official record of the Board's session.
