

# COURSE ON KEY ISSUES ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AGENDA – PARAGRAPH 166

## ENHANCING POLICYMAKING AND NEGOTIATION CAPACITIES

### GLOBAL CONTEXT

Trade and development policies can be an important instrument for growth and development. Taking advantage of that potential requires developing countries to integrate such policies into their national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. National goals such as poverty eradication, growth, economic transformation and production, diversification, export value added, employment expansion, gender equity and sustainable development also need to be coherent and consistent with trade and other economic policies at the national, bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. This is important for maximizing the contribution of national policies to development.

Such coherence and consistency in trade and development policies to meet global economic and trade challenges depend on the capacity and understanding that developing countries, including least developed countries and countries with economies in transition, have of key economic issues. An understanding of how various sectoral policies interrelate with national development strategies is also necessary. Integrating developing countries into the globalized world economy can be achieved only if these countries build resources, knowledge and skills that allow them to take ownership of their own development and achieve their development objectives.

The UNCTAD Course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda is designed to help build the necessary capacity. The course addresses the analytical and policy challenges that policymakers, Geneva-based delegates and other stakeholders from developing and transition economies face in promoting inclusive and sustainable growth and development. Managing those challenges helps their countries to integrate into the rapidly globalizing economy in ways that are beneficial for all countries. The course focuses on the linkages between trade, finance, investment, technology, logistics and macroeconomic policies in the context of major economic trends and debates in multilateral forums.

### HOW DOES THE COURSE IMPROVE EXPERTISE IN TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT?

The UNCTAD Course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda – known as the “paragraph 166 course” in reference to that paragraph in the Bangkok Plan of Action – primarily targets policymakers and academics both in government ministries and agencies and in permanent missions to the United Nations in Geneva (Switzerland).

The course is delivered in two forms: (a) three-week regional courses for economic policymakers and academics working in Government; and (b) short (half-day) courses for Geneva-based delegates. It emphasizes the various approaches taken

#### PROGRAMME FACTS AND FIGURES

**Programme scope:** 5 regions

**Programme start date:** 2001

**Number of courses conducted:**  
34 regional courses; 50 short courses  
(2007–2015)

**Number of courses per year:**  
2 regional courses and 5 short courses  
(average)

**Programme website:**  
[p166.unctad.org/](http://p166.unctad.org/)

by countries to maximize development gains. At the end of the course, participants are better able to understand the links between their specific work and the overall economic development objectives of their countries. This enables them to better contribute to the formulation of national trade-related policies and international negotiating positions that are consistent with the development interests of their countries.

There are five modules in the curriculum: industrial policies; foreign direct investment; science, technology and innovation; trade logistics and infrastructure; and trade policies and multilateral and regional trade agreements. The curriculum of each course is complemented by the expertise of the various United Nations regional commissions and experts from countries with multi-year commitments to host the programme.

UNCTAD has venues in 5 partner countries in Colombia, Mauritius, Oman, Serbia and Singapore that host the course in different regions.

## RESULTS AND IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- 86 per cent of the government officials trained during 2012–2014 considered that the courses significantly contributed to their understanding of key issues on the international economic agenda.
- Policymakers report how the course enables them to apply their newly acquired knowledge to their work on trade negotiations and policy development. For example:
  - One policymaker from the United Republic of Tanzania who attended a regional trade negotiation session after a paragraph 166 course stated that the course helped her to understand the relationship between achieving market access and developing the industrial and infrastructure pillars. She had used that knowledge to incorporate a development perspective into trade negotiations.
  - Another policymaker from Trinidad and Tobago reported that she had been asked to prepare an effective national science and technology policy. The knowledge gained at the regional course she attended proved invaluable in enabling her to lead a team of analysts. The draft national policy she prepared was approved before the national Board of Governors and taken to the Cabinet for its approval by the Minister of Science and Technology.

*“At first I expected to go through the usual trade policy issues of rules and negotiations for market access, but what I was exposed to throughout the course was overwhelming. Intense and packed as it was, I got to understand the important linkages of international trade, finance, investment, technology and innovation as they relate to economic development. These are the key pillars for any development strategy of a country. I got to appreciate the salient issues that should be considered in trade and investment that are relevant to the needs and interests of my country.”*

Principal Economist, Ministry of Trade and Industry of Zimbabwe, participant at the thirty-first regional course, Mauritius, 2015

*“The course is like a gift that keeps on giving – I was able to apply some of the knowledge at a recent treaty negotiation session. Many thanks to UNCTAD for this useful programme.”*

Crown Counsel, International Legal Affairs, Attorney General's Ministry, Belize, participant at the twenty-sixth regional course, Medellin, Colombia, 2013

### DONORS/ FUNDING SOURCE

**Current:** Host Governments, United Nations Development Account, United Nations Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation

**Past:** United Nations Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation