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Newsletter

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UNCTAD's Empretec programme provides a one-stop-shop for information and business training. By stimulating public-private sector partnerships and developing an institution with a forward-looking advisory board, Empretec centres play a major role in connecting entrepreneurs with institutions. Wherever implemented, the training workshops create lifelong bonds that are essential for future business growth, forming a critical mass of successful, committed entrepreneurs who then become the driving force of the project.



*Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, and
Mr. Alan Kyerematen, former Director of the first Empretec Centre in Africa*

Empretec Africa Forum receives some good advice

The Empretec Africa Forum (EAF) members invited its Advisory Board to a meeting in Geneva to discuss the merits of their proposed forum's strategic plan. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD gave his support to the initiative as a milestone for the programme. The board members embarked in a very lively debate with the African directors about their concerns of the goals and aspirations of the EAF. A number of Advisory Board members felt that the argument for establishing the forum should be more persuasive and convincing. It was highlighted that some of the activities of the forum were already being undertaken by Empretec centres (e.g. developing course materials), while others were the core duties of UNCTAD (e.g. installation of new Empretec centres and fund-raising for them).

In return, the Chair, UNCTAD and the directors highlighted the fact that the forum needed to expand and promote cross-fertilization of centres. It was shown that, since the demise of Enterprise Africa, the former regional body managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to install Empretec centres in Africa, there had not been a single completed installation since 2001 (the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia). It was also stressed that the concept and need originated from Empretec centres in Africa - which were the drivers and owners of the forum.



Empretec Africa directors

It was advised that the secretariat of the forum be kept lean and that it choose its tasks wisely, as to not overlap with the work of the UNCTAD secretariat. Following the discussions, the Commonwealth secretariat invited the EAF to submit to the institution a proposal to evaluate the Empretec Centres in Africa and identify their strengths and weaknesses. This undertaking would help determine which tasks would be the most suitable and play to the forum's development.

There was also a recommendation from the European Union's Pro€invest to apply for its technical assistance in forging a strategy and an action plan for the forum.

Also in attendance was Mr. Alan Kyerematen, former Director of the first Empretec Centre in Africa, who provided an overview of the history of Empretec in Africa to the assembly. Later in the day, Mr. Kyerematen was nominated Chair of the Advisory Board of the Empretec Africa Forum.

The forum has already:

- Built a community of African Empretec centres, helping them to address common challenges;
- Organized regional training of trainers covering two subregions;
- Developed new curriculum and services based on the needs in the African region;
- Collaborated with partners (Commonwealth secretariat) to introduce monitoring and evaluation; and
- Conducted (in collaboration with Pro€invest) a diagnostic of private sector needs and preparation of a detailed work plan of the forum.

Multi-year Expert Meeting on Enterprise Development Policies and Capacity-building in Science, Technology and Innovation

There was quite a bit of interest generated at the first session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Enterprise Development Policies and Capacity-building in Science, Technology and Innovation, which took place 20-22 January 2009 in Geneva. It was attended by over 150 experts, who came mainly from capitals.



The multi-year expert meetings are a new means, following the Accra Accord, to discuss innovative ways that address complex issues and to develop policy recommendations. This meeting stressed the importance of an "enabling State" in promoting entrepreneurship and innovation, especially in times of economic crisis, and that innovation and entrepreneurship will play an important role in enabling the world to overcome some of the global economic difficulties. Policymakers stressed the need - particularly in this climate of global economic crisis - to develop national technological, innovation and entrepreneurial capabilities, and the ability to access needed technologies as key to achieving high and sustainable economic growth rates in the long term.

Experts presented different entrepreneurship best practice models for creating awareness and facilitating firm formation and growth. Experts also noted that entrepreneurial infrastructure should seek to improve business environment conditions as well as boost entrepreneurial capacity through awareness-building and skills development. The successful programmes develop entrepreneurship curricula for students from elementary school to university, as well as special target groups in the informal sector. Innovative approaches to building entrepreneurship education can be developed in collaboration with the private sector.

Spotlight on Endeavor

An example of successful programmes included Endeavor, a model for promoting high-impact entrepreneurship. Endeavor helps to transform economies of emerging markets by identifying and supporting "high-impact" entrepreneurs. Since inception, Endeavor has supported more than 330 high-growth entrepreneurs who have created more than 86,000 high-value jobs and generated revenues of more than \$2.5 billion. High-impact entrepreneurs have the biggest ideas and most ambitious plans. They have the potential to create thriving companies that employ hundreds, even thousands of people, and generate millions in wages and revenues. With Endeavor's guidance, they become role models, encourage others to innovate and take risks, and create sustainable communities.

<http://www.endeavor.org/>

Two major results were achieved at this first multi-year expert meeting, which will serve as a best practice to the other four UNCTAD multi-year expert meetings: the use of virtual meetings through the establishment of the E-Forum (http://vi.unctad.org/joomla/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1) and the introduction of the notion of flexibility in the choice of topics to be examined by these expert meetings in the future.

The E-forum will solicit contributions from the experts who have been nominated by their respective Governments but are unable to attend the meeting. Views, comments and suggestions submitted to this forum will be duly summarized and reflected in the Chair's summary. On the second point relating to the notion of flexibility, experts participating in the meeting drew a new list of topics as suggestions for future activities for the next three years leading to UNCTAD XIII. This was contained in the draft outcome submitted by the Chair and Vice-Chair for consideration at the next meeting of the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission, to be held in May 2009.

The discussions culminated with the identification of four actionable outcomes:

1. Suggestions for future work: Experts recommended that the topics for the next three meetings be revised, taking into consideration the new issues identified by the experts;
2. Inter-sessional work: Experts identified the following areas for follow-up during the sessions: (i) preparation of voluntary peer reviews on enterprise development policies and capacity-building in science, technology and innovation (STI); and (ii) setting up an inventory to disseminate information (e.g. online) and serve as a clearing house to connect those wishing to expand their programmes with other experts from the group;
3. Commitments: The Global Observatory for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (Spain) offers a platform for institutions around the world (public institutions, companies, universities, research centres, international organizations and civil society) to collaborate in generating ideas,

- proposals and projects;
4. Proposals for cooperation: Experts offered to share experiences and volunteered to contribute to the multi-year expert meeting in specific areas of interest. Several voluntary contributions have already been earmarked.

Study tour of business linkages in Uganda



To really get to know how a project works and to decide if it is best for your constituents, it is always best to get up close and personal. That is just what the delegations from Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania did on their study tour in Uganda. Upon the successful implementation of the two-year pilot business linkage programme by Enterprise Uganda, UNCTAD requested Enterprise Uganda to share its experiences with other colleagues from Africa. Enterprise Uganda gladly offered to host a delegation comprising of eight officers from the Empretec centres in Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania in December 2008.

The delegation wanted to visit barley growers in Eastern Uganda to get a better understanding of (a) the organizational and linkage arrangements between East African Breweries Limited and Kapchorwa Commercial Farmers; (b) the benefits each has enjoyed from the deliberate linkage; and (c) the challenges experienced and key lessons drawn from the partnership.

What was particularly interesting was recognizing some of the successes, as a result of their local participation in the business linkage programme, such as a few noted here:

- Development of an institutional structure and capacity;

- Building of trust and reliability in their services, culminating with a contract secured from a World Food Programme;
- Organization of a reference centre for local and international banks and farmers organizations;
- Increased household earnings;
- More positive attitudes now that members have tangible results;
- Increasing stakeholder interest and participation. Uganda was able to attract the assistance of the Commodity Exchange and receives a grant to install a rural information system at the secretariat;
- Winning the best practice award "Best Overall in the Country 2006" from the European Union Civil Society capacity-building programme;
- Increasing interaction with financial institutions. Farmers can now access farming equipment on a lease basis upon recommendation from the association. One bank has extended a portfolio of up to 1 billion Ugandan shillings to farmers and established a branch in the town for ease of access to financial services.



The delegation left Uganda with a lot of food for thought and - it is hoped - visions of how to recreate this success in their own countries.

News from EMPRETEC Centres

- The seventh workshop was held in the Dominican Republic (2-7 February 2009);
- Mrs. Duke, Director of Enterprise Nigeria, has been invited to speak at the upcoming Expert Meeting on Mainstreaming Gender in Trade Policy (10-11 March 2009);
- Regional training of trainers will take place in Nigeria and Uganda;

- UNCTAD and SEBRAE will sign an agreement of cooperation.

Upcoming events

- Expert Meeting on Mainstreaming Gender in Trade Policy (10-11 March 2009)
- UNCTAD study tour of South Africa on business linkages (1-10 March 2009);
- An assessment mission to the United Republic of Tanzania for business linkages (24-27 February 2009);
- UNCTAD mission to Peru for the establishment of Empretec (28 March-2 April).

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