



DTL/TLB/MISC/2014/1
(14/28gd)

NOTIFICATION

Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation

Second session: Trade facilitation rules as a trade enabler: Options and requirements

Geneva, 1–3 July 2014

The Trade and Development Board approved the terms of reference for a Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation. The multi-year expert meeting addresses, over four sessions, trade logistics issues in developing countries. The findings and recommendations of this expert meeting will be reported to the next session of the Trade and Development Commission to be held in 2015.

The second session of the multi-year expert meeting is entitled “Trade facilitation rules as a trade enabler: Options and requirements” and will be held from 1 to 3 July 2014 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, in room XXVI. The meeting will commence at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 1 July 2014.

Background and purpose of the meeting

The Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation will address some emerging and persistent issues that developing countries are facing and which need to be dealt with as a matter of priority. In accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the Doha Mandate, the expert meeting will address trade logistics issues in developing countries, including those with special needs, namely the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries, small island developing states and countries with economies in transition. Drawing from UNCTAD’s three pillars of work, discussions will consider all relevant aspects, namely technical assistance and capacity-building, research and analytical work, and consensus-building.

The increasing number of regional trade agreements on trade facilitation may pose additional challenges to trade facilitation, but may also promote reform and a further global harmonization of rules. Trade facilitation is receiving increasing attention and investment at national, regional and multilateral levels; experts will discuss and analyse trade facilitation implementation plans, ways to mainstream trade facilitation in the development strategies of LDCs and other structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies, and its impact on the trade, including the trade balances, of some countries.

There is a need to share experiences and best practices in trade and transport facilitation committees to ensure collaboration and coordination among stakeholders in the implementation of trade facilitation reforms. Customs automation programmes, such as ASYCUDA, as well as lessons learned from UNCTAD and World Trade Organization July 2004 Package annex D organizations and partners of the Global Facilitation Partnership in the development of trade facilitation implementation plans will also be addressed.

Experts will have the following objectives:

- (a) Contributing to a better understanding of benefits and costs related to transport and trade facilitation;
- (b) Contributing to a better understanding of the likely impact of trade facilitation and customs automation programmes on the trade of developing countries including LDCs and other structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies, as well as the importance of mainstreaming trade facilitation implementation plans in development strategies;
- (c) Identifying best practices, approaches and policy recommendations to improve trade logistics services and trade facilitation, including through involvement of the private sector;
- (d) Identifying areas for further research and analysis on issues relevant to trade facilitation;
- (e) Further strengthening the existing collaboration among networks of transport and trade facilitation experts;
- (f) Providing customs authorities as well as policymakers and negotiators with a better understanding of regional and multilateral agreements in the fields of trade facilitation and of the implementation of the resulting commitments, including through regional collaboration mechanisms.

Participation

Member States of UNCTAD are requested to nominate experts in the areas of transport infrastructure and services, border-crossing issues, trade facilitation and logistics, and related information and communication technologies at an early date and **no later than 20 June 2014 (26 May 2014 if funding is requested)**.

Experts who will participate in the meeting in a personal capacity are expected to have proven expertise in the subject and may be selected from government and non-governmental organizations, the private sector or academia. Specialized agencies and intergovernmental bodies wishing to participate in the meeting, as well as non-governmental organizations in the general category and those in the special category wishing to participate as observers, are requested to inform the UNCTAD secretariat of the names of their representatives by **20 June 2014**.

Financial assistance

Depending on the availability of funds in the Trust Fund for Financing the Participation of Experts at the time of nomination, funds may be allocated to finance the participation of a limited number of officially nominated experts from developing countries, including LDCs and countries with economies in transition. Governments requiring funding are therefore invited to explicitly request this in their letters of nomination. It should be understood that funds currently available in the dedicated trust fund are very limited (up to a total of two experts for each meeting), and nominations shall be considered based on that availability. The decision as to which experts should receive financing will be based on the direct involvement and expertise of the nominated experts, on the principle of equitable geographical representation and on the needs of beneficiaries. Changes in the experts nominated will be considered as new nominations.

Nominations with requests for funding should be received **no later than 26 May 2014** and should be accompanied by the following information about the nominee:

- (a) Curriculum vitae;
- (b) Mailing address;
- (c) Telephone and fax numbers;

- (d) E-mail address;
- (e) Name of a contact person in the respective permanent mission in Geneva.

Once the list of experts to be financed has been finalized, all travel arrangements will be made in accordance with United Nations rules and regulations – that is, the use of the least costly fare will be applied.

Background documents and contributed papers

The provisional agenda for the meeting, together with the secretariat's annotations thereto, will be circulated as document TD/B/C.I/MEM.7/4. To facilitate the discussion, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared a background note entitled "Trade facilitation rules as a trade enabler: Options and requirements", which will be circulated as TD/B/C.I/MEM.7/5.

Experts are encouraged to prepare and submit brief papers related to their studies, findings and/or their country's experience. These papers will be made available to the meeting in the form and language in which they are received.

Papers should be submitted by **20 June 2014** and addressed to Mr. Bismark Sitorus, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; fax.: +41 22 917 0050; e-mail: bismark.sitorus@unctad.org.

Logistics

Upon arrival, participants are requested, before entering the Palais des Nations, to collect their badges at the United Nations Security Service, Pregny Gate entrance, 14 avenue de la Paix. The Security Service is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Because of the security measures in force, participants are strongly advised to arrive before 9 a.m. in order to complete entry procedures in good time and proceed to the meeting in the E Building (Batiment E) of the Palais. Participants are requested to carry a passport or similar national identity card with them. Taxis are not allowed to enter the grounds of the Palais des Nations and visitors will therefore be dropped off at the requested entrance gates. Furthermore, luggage may not be brought into the buildings unless the Security Service grants special clearance.

Nominations and enquiries

Registration should be completed online. To do so, please use the following link: [Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation, second session](#). All communications concerning representation should be sent to the UNCTAD secretariat, Intergovernmental Support Service, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10; fax: +41 22 917 0214; e-mail: meetings@unctad.org.

All other enquiries concerning substantive issues should be addressed to the coordinators in the substantive division (contact Mr. Jan Hoffmann; fax.: +41 22 917 0050; e-mail: jan.hoffmann@unctad.org).

(signed)

Mukhisa Kituyi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

12 May 2014