



DTL/TLB/MISC/2015/2
(15/100ams)

NOTIFICATION

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

Fourth session

Sustainable freight transport systems: Opportunities for developing countries

**Room XXVI, Palais des Nations
Geneva, 14–16 October 2015**

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 the fourth session of the multi-year expert meeting will be reported to the next session of the Trade and Development Commission to be held in 2016.

The fourth session of the multi-year expert meeting is entitled “Sustainable freight transport: Opportunities for developing countries” and will be held from 14 to 16 October 2015 in room XXVI of the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The meeting will commence at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 14 October 2015.

Background and purpose of the meeting

The importance of freight transport as a trade enabler, engine of growth and a driver of social development is widely recognized, but its growing activity poses a concern in view of adverse effects on the environment and the climate, namely due to the sector’s current resource consumption patterns and related implications for fuel efficiency and emissions. Complying with the Doha Mandate on transport, the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation will address the challenges and the opportunities associated with sustainable freight transport systems in developing countries, including those with special needs, namely the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States and some countries with economies in transition. Sustainable transport entails the ability to provide reliable, cost-effective, environmentally friendly, low-carbon, clean and climate-resilient transport systems.

The year 2015 is a decisive year for global sustainable development, a year in which the path will be set for a new post-2015 sustainable development agenda to succeed the Millennium Development Goals and a year in which a climate change agreement is expected to be reached at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP21). Freight transport is, thus, at a critical juncture at which its role in achieving sustainable development objectives can be further defined

and better understood. Freight transport underpins trade and its competitiveness and is essential for access, connectivity and economic integration at all levels, including national, regional and global. However, there is an untapped potential in the sector, as more value could be derived from freight transport by addressing its inherent oil dependency, enhancing its ability to provide access while being reliable and resilient, as well as by reducing its negative impacts on the environment and climate. In this context, the year 2015 provides an opportunity for the freight transport sector to assert its strategic importance as an economic sector in its own right as well as underscore its potential to also generate value in terms of economic viability, social equity, resource conservation and environmental protection.

The meeting will consider relevant issues challenging the sustainability of freight transport and identify approaches and instruments used to implement sustainable practices in freight transport. Examples of national experiences and industry-led initiatives will be presented for illustration purposes and to help formulate some best practices and lessons. The financial implications of implementing sustainable freight transport systems will also be discussed while exploring potential new sources of finance and the role of the private sector, notably through public-private partnerships and other innovative financing schemes in enabling sustainable freight transport systems.

Deliberations at the meeting will aim to inter alia:

- (a) Raise awareness about the role of freight transport in enabling sustainable development;
- (b) Improve understanding of key issues that undermine the sustainability of freight transport systems;
- (c) Identify relevant challenges, barriers and enabling factors;
- (d) Identify, based on best practices and lessons learned, opportunities associated with sustainable freight transport systems for developing countries wider dissemination and potential replication;
- (e) Highlight the underlying important systemic issues including finance, capacity-building and the need for partnerships and cooperation of both the private and public sectors.

It is hoped that expert discussions at the meeting will help generate insight and formulate conclusions and a way forward in light of the new post-2015 development agenda and the future climate change agreement under the UNFCCC COP21.

Nomination and Participation

Registration should be completed online. To do so, please use the following link: [Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation](#). Nominations and related communications concerning representation at the meeting 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.

Member States of UNCTAD are requested to nominate experts in the areas transport, infrastructure and services, including sustainable freight transport, environmental issues, corporate social responsibility and finance, and related information and communication technologies, at an early date and **no later than 28 September 2015 (31 August 2015 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 **28 September 2015**.

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 least developed countries, small island developing States 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 31 August 2015** 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.7/10. To facilitate the discussion, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared a background note entitled "Trade facilitation rules as a trade enabler: Opportunities for developing countries", which will be circulated as TD/B/C.I/MEM.7/11.

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 **28 September 2015** and addressed to Ms. Frida Youssef, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; fax: +41 22 917 0050; e-mail: frida.youssef@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.

Further information and contact details

All other enquiries concerning substantive issues should be addressed to the coordinators in the substantive division (contact Ms. Frida Youssef; fax: +41 22 917 0050; e-mail: frida.youssef@unctad.org).

(signed)

Mukhisa Kituyi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

14 August 2015