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Trade and Development Board

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Item 15(a) of the agenda

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 2011–2012 and their relevant impact; and the appointment of members of the Advisory Body for 2013

Report of the Chair of the Advisory Body for the year 2011–2012, established in the context of paragraph 166 of the UNCTAD X Plan of Action

1. The Trade and Development Board, at its forty-seventh session in 2001, adopted a decision to establish an Advisory Body to advise the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on the broad objectives, content and structure of the regular courses provided for in paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action. You will remember that this particular mandate was renewed by the São Paulo Consensus, the Accra Accord and again by the Doha Mandate this year. These courses are coordinated within the Knowledge-sharing, Training and Capacity Development Branch of the Division on Technology and Logistics.

2. The Advisory Body for the year 2011–2012, which was formed at the last session of the Board in 2011, met in June 2012. I will today report on the outcome of this meeting, the implementation of the courses held since the previous meeting of the Board and the plans for the remaining courses for this biennium. I shall also provide you with information on the post-course evaluation for Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held in July 2011, and the short courses for Geneva-based diplomats in 2012.

Outcome of the Advisory Body meeting in June 2012

3. At the meeting in June this year, the Advisory Body welcomed and approved the offer from the Government of Morocco to host the twenty-first regional course. You may recall that this course was scheduled to be held in Cairo in January 2011 but, due to exigencies there, the course had to be postponed. The course was held at the University Mohammed V – Souissi in Rabat. We would like to express our sincere thanks to the Government of Morocco for its timely offer which has enabled the secretariat to deliver the programme for Africa.

4. The Advisory Body took note that the first multi-year venue would be validated at the next course for Western Asia to be held in Oman. We are grateful for the commitment and generous support of the Government of Oman for hosting the three editions of the course starting in November of this year. Further, I wish to stress the additional efforts made by the Government of Oman to assist the secretariat in realizing savings with a very tight budget this biennium by covering additional costs.

5. The Advisory Body also requested the Government of Mauritius to consider further assistance to the secretariat for the course, to be held at the University of Mauritius in mid-2013.

6. It also recommended to the Secretary-General to renew efforts to identify a multi-year venue for countries with economies in transition. I am therefore urging member States from the region which are in a position to do so to respond positively to the secretariat's efforts to identify such a venue. Moreover, the Advisory Body requested the secretariat to launch a similar proposal for multi-year venues for the Asia and the Pacific and the Latin America and Caribbean regions in 2013.

Implementation of courses held since the last Board meeting and this biennium

7. Since the last meeting of the Board last year, the secretariat has delivered the twenty-third edition of the course for the Asia-Pacific region in Singapore in November 2011; the twenty-fourth edition was delivered for countries with economies in transition in Belgrade, Serbia, in July of this year and, as I previously mentioned, the twenty-first edition of the course for Africa was held in Morocco earlier this month. We are grateful to the Governments of Singapore and Serbia for their generous offers to host these events.

8. The other courses that will be held in this biennium will be as follows:

(a) The twenty-fifth regional course for Western Asia in Oman in November 2012, as mentioned earlier;

(b) The twenty-sixth regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean at the EAFIT University, Medellín, Colombia, in February 2013;

(c) The twenty-seventh regional course for Africa at the University of Mauritius in mid-2013;

(d) The twenty-eighth regional course for Asia and the Pacific in Singapore in late 2013.

Post-course evaluation of the twenty-second regional course in Colombia, July 2011

9. I shall now report on the post-course evaluation undertaken for the twenty-second course held in Colombia last year. The participants reflected that there had been a noticeable improvement of their knowledge of international economic issues after attending this regional course, particularly trade policy issues and strategies for economic growth, the international financial structure, industrial policy and foreign direct investment. They also reported that they were able to apply this knowledge particularly in their analysis and reporting of international economic matters, writing policy papers and providing advice to colleagues and working groups.

10. Moreover, they mentioned that there had been recognition of their contribution within their departments; some have assumed greater responsibilities due to the knowledge gained at the course.

11. Many participants and their supervisors indicated that the content of the course was substantial and necessary as a training tool to address the trade capacity gap.

Short courses for Geneva-based delegates

12. I shall now report on the short courses for Geneva-based delegates.
 13. The secretariat delivered three short courses for Geneva-based delegates in the second semester of 2011, and another three in the first semester of 2012. A further three are planned for the autumn of this year.
 14. These short courses have been well attended, and it is clear from the evaluations by Geneva-based delegates that they are informative and raise awareness of trade topics useful for the delegates' professional duties.
 15. I wish to applaud the efforts of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to ensure that the courses continue to be delivered with a high level of quality. I call upon all members of the Trade and Development Board to support the Secretary-General's efforts in this regard.
 16. It now remains for me to thank the members of the Advisory Body, namely Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Chile, Honduras, Jamaica, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for the constructive manner in which they contributed to the deliberations of this Body and provided the necessary support to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD in the implementation of this important capacity-building activity.
 17. Finally, I congratulate the Ambassador of Estonia on his appointment ex officio as the new Chair of the Advisory Body, and wish him a fruitful and successful term.
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