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(12/371gd)

NOTIFICATION

Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development

Geneva, 25–26 February 2013

The first session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development will be held on 25–26 February 2013 in room XXVI of the Palais des Nations, Geneva. It will commence at 10 a.m. on Monday, 25 February.

Background and purpose of the meeting

The Doha Mandate, adopted at UNCTAD XIII, stresses that development of services and access to them, supported by adequate regulatory and institutional frameworks, is important for sound socioeconomic development. The objective of the expert meeting is to identify best-fit practices in regard to policymaking, regulations, institutions and trade negotiations, with a view to linking services, trade and development in a balanced manner, including a strengthening of national services regulation without creating trade barriers.

The infrastructure services sectors, which encompass transport, telecommunications, energy and financial services, constitute the backbone of the economy in all countries and contribute directly and indirectly to growth, income generation and better living standards. These sectors also assume an important social function, as access to basic services (including electricity, gas, and safe drinking water), financial inclusion and the bridging of the digital divide, are catalytic to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Weak infrastructure services sectors often hamper the development of other services sectors, including tourism, distribution and services relating to information and communications technology, especially in the least developed countries and in small and vulnerable economies.

The first session of the expert meeting will examine cases of building regulatory and institutional competence with a focus on factors leading to success and lessons learned so as to address bottlenecks in building the supply capacity of services in developing countries. This will help to identify best practices in overcoming challenges to regulatory and institutional frameworks with a view to enhancing the provision capacity, efficiency and competitiveness of the infrastructure services sectors. The issues that experts will address will include the following:

- (a) What is the link between the infrastructure services sectors and other economic sectors, including other services sectors?
- (b) How best can regulations be made conducive to attracting and sustaining investment in infrastructure?
- (c) How should functional criteria for benchmarking the performance of services providers be set?
- (d) How should regulators adapt regulation to changing market conditions and to technological developments?



- (e) What tools should be used to ensure and promote universal access in different infrastructure services sectors?
- (f) What role can regulators play in promoting the industrial development of particular sectors?
- (g) How can regulators exercise independence in decision-making when they are affiliated with a government ministry?

Participation

Experts, who will participate in the meeting in their personal capacities, are expected to have proven expertise in regulation, policymaking or trade negotiations, in any of the sectors mentioned above. The meeting may also be of interest to experts from research institutions, civil society and the private sector, whose focus is on infrastructure services sectors and their linkages with the rest of the economy, including other services. Member States of UNCTAD are requested to inform the secretariat of the names of their participating experts at an early date, not later than **11 February 2013**. Specialized agencies and international and regional 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 **11 February 2013**. There is no limit to the number of experts, including from governments, who can participate in the meeting. **Participants who wish to be panellists should contact UNCTAD no later than 31 January 2013.**

Experts are encouraged to prepare and submit to the meeting brief papers (5–12 pages) related to one or more of the issues contained in the provisional agenda, which will be available on the UNCTAD website. These papers will be made available to the meeting in the form and language in which they are received. They should be sent in advance of the meeting to the coordinators in the UNCTAD secretariat whose contact details are provided in this notification.

Financial assistance

Depending on the availability at the time of funding in the trust fund for financing the participation of experts, funds may be made available to finance the participation of a limited number of officially nominated experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Governments requiring funding are invited to explicitly request financing in their letters of nomination. The decision as to which experts should receive financing will be based on **the direct involvement and expertise of the nominated experts in infrastructure services sectors to be covered by the meeting**, on the principle of equitable geographical representation and on the needs of beneficiaries, in particular, least developed countries. Changes in the experts nominated will be considered as new nominations.

Nominations with requests for financing should be received no later than **31 January 2013** and should be accompanied by the following information about the nominee:

- (a) Curriculum vitae;
- (b) Mailing address;
- (c) Telephone and fax number;
- (d) E-mail address;
- (e) Name of a contact person in the 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

The provisional agenda for the meeting, together with the secretariat's annotations thereto, will be circulated as document TD/B/C.I/MEM.4/1. In order to facilitate the discussion, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared an issues note, which will be circulated as document TD/B/C.I/MEM.4/2.

Logistics

The meeting will take place at the United Nations Office at Geneva, Palais des Nations. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the six official languages of the United Nations.

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 (Bâtiment 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 entrance gates. Furthermore, **luggage may not be brought into the buildings unless the Security Service gives special clearance.**

Nominations and enquiries

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 (0)22 917 0214; e-mail: meetings@unctad.org.

All other enquiries should be addressed to the coordinators in the substantive divisions, tel.: +41 (0)22 917 5701, +41 (0)22 917 5082 or +41 (0)22 917 5640; fax: +41 (0)22 917 0044; e-mail: liping.zhang@unctad.org, sophia.twarog@unctad.org or aurangzeb.butt@unctad.org.

(signed)

Supachai Panitchpakdi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

14 January 2013