



ECIDC/MISC/2013/1
(13/39ams)

NOTIFICATION

Multi-year Expert Meeting on Promoting Economic Integration and Cooperation First session

Supporting infrastructure development to promote economic integration: the role of public and private sectors

Geneva, 11–12 April 2013

The Multi-year Expert Meeting on Promoting Economic Integration and Cooperation, “Supporting infrastructure development to promote economic integration: the role of public and private sectors”, will open at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 11 April 2013, in room XXVI of the Palais des Nations.

Background and purpose of the meeting

The current financial turmoil that has seriously affected developed countries has highlighted the need on the part of developing economies to find new and independent sources of sustainable growth and development. Increased trade and capital flows amongst these economies are one possible source. However, while these flows have been on a strongly upward trend in recent years, there still exist significant obstacles to their future expansion, most notably in the form of infrastructure gaps.

Infrastructure development, particularly at the regional level, has the power to foster intraregional trade, thereby creating regional markets and in the process helping to accelerate growth and reduce poverty. Together with expanded demand, it is also conducive to diversification, regional economic convergence and reduced inequality. Yet promoting regional infrastructure is a multifaceted task and typically requires large-scale funding involving complex financial engineering, an appropriate regulatory framework and above all human, technical and institutional capacities for successful outcomes.

This expert group meeting will explore the role of different partnerships initiatives and cooperation mechanisms in supporting infrastructure development to promote economic integration among developing countries. Representatives of both the public and private sectors are expected to bring to the expert meeting their own perspectives and to highlight specific issues in connection with their particular areas of expertise, helping us move closer to a more rounded view of the challenges facing cross-border infrastructure development.

The main objectives of this expert meeting are to:

- Examine the different initiatives and mechanisms in support of regional infrastructure projects for sustainable growth and development;
- Identify the key factors behind successful experiences, and the main causes of disappointing results; this will help inform policy and, hopefully, lead to more positive outcomes;



- Factor out the key constraints facing different categories of developing countries and discuss the role that more resourceful developing countries can play at the regional level;
- Share and discuss experiences and lessons in promoting regional integration through regional infrastructure development.

The meeting will be structured around three sessions:

The opening session will examine the links between infrastructure and development, focusing on the effects of infrastructure provision on growth, poverty and inequality.

The second session will assess the role of different partnership initiatives and cooperation mechanisms in supporting infrastructure development to promote economic integration among developing countries. The experts will focus in particular on three specific mechanisms that have informed the discussions of development cooperation in this area: privatization, public–private partnerships and financing from regional development banks.

The third and final session will discuss the impact on development of trade facilitation and logistics and assess the policy challenges involved and the potential role of development cooperation.

Participation

UNCTAD member States are requested to nominate experts to participate in this meeting at an early date and not later than **28 March 2013**. Experts will contribute in their personal capacity. They are expected to have proven expertise in the subject, and may be selected from government institutions, academia, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Experts may also be invited as resource persons. Specialized agencies and intergovernmental bodies wishing to participate in the meeting, as well as non-governmental organizations in the general category, together with 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 March 2013**.

Financial assistance

Depending on the availability of funds at the time of nomination, funds may be allocated 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 clearly request financing 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 three experts), 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, 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 **11 March 2013** 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 and the secretariat's annotations will be circulated as document TD/B/C.1/MEM.6/1. In order to facilitate the discussion, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared a background document which will be circulated as TD/B/C.1/MEM.6/2. These documents and further information about the expert meeting will be available in due course on the UNCTAD website (www.unctad.org), under the heading "Meetings". Experts are encouraged to prepare and submit in advance brief papers related to their studies, findings and/or country's experience. These papers will be made available to the meeting in the format and language in which they are received.

Logistics

The meeting will take place at the United Nations Office in Geneva, Palais des Nations. Simultaneous translation 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, Geneva. 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 their 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.

Further information and contact details

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, Switzerland; fax: +41 22 917 0214; e-mail: meetings@unctad.org.

All other enquiries should be addressed to Mr. Richard Kozul-Wright, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; fax: +41 22 917 0044; e-mail: richard.kozul-wright@unctad.org or candy.catala@unctad.org or angela.thompson@unctad.org.

(signed)

Supachai Panitchpakdi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

21 February 2013