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NOTIFICATION

Ad Hoc Expert Meeting on Addressing the Transport and Trade Logistics Challenges of the Small Island Developing States: Samoa Conference and Beyond

**Room XXV, Palais des Nations
Geneva, 11 July 2014**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development is convening an Ad Hoc Expert Meeting on Addressing the Transport and Trade Logistics Challenges of the Small Island Developing States: Samoa Conference and Beyond. The meeting will be held on 11 July 2014 in room XXV of the Palais des Nations, Geneva from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Background and purpose of the meeting

The designation small island developing States (SIDS) was formally introduced at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in recognition of the unique economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities facing these island States and undermining the realization of their sustainable development. As SIDS are sea-locked, challenges related to transport, especially with regard to seaports and airports, are of particular concern. SIDS are critically dependant on well-functioning transportation services and reliable access to such services – in particular maritime and air transport services – to carry their trade, meet their import-dependent consumption needs and service their highly strategic tourism industries.

Transport-related challenges facing SIDS are heightened by the countries' remoteness, distance from main commercial centres, small land masses, small domestic markets, limited economies of scale and low transport connectivity. Together, these factors have the effect of raising transport costs, reducing access and undermining trade-led growth and sustainable development. High exposure to natural disasters and climate-change risks coupled with limited climate resilience and low resource and adaptive capacities further amplify these challenges.

Over the years, the international community has sought to focus attention on the need to address SIDS-specific vulnerabilities, including in relation to transport. The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados, 1994), the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (2005) and the five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy (2010) have underscored the role of transportation as the lifeline linking SIDS with the outside world, with each other and within their own countries. Equally, they have stressed the need to properly address the transport-related challenges of SIDS and devise adequate and innovative solutions and response measures. More recently, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference) outcome document included an explicit reference to sustainable transport and reaffirmed that SIDS remain a special case for sustainable development. In 2014, the International Year of SIDS and the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (Samoa Conference) offer a renewed opportunity to focus international attention on the unique transport-related challenges facing SIDS and consider ways in which these can be better understood and adequately addressed.

Against this background, and in line with the UNCTAD mandate, including in particular the Doha Mandate, which directs UNCTAD to “advise SIDS on the design and implementation of policies addressing their specific trade and trade logistics challenges linked to their remoteness and geographical isolation” (para. 56(j)), the Ad Hoc Expert Meeting to be held on 11 July will provide a platform for expert discussions on transport-related challenges facing SIDS and on how to best address these challenges. Preliminary results of a study on the subject that is currently in preparation ahead of the Samoa Conference will also be presented and feedback will be sought to help further articulate any conclusions and shape the way forward.

Relevant issues to be considered include, inter alia, the following:

- (a) Transport and trade logistics challenges in SIDS: Current state of play
- (b) Sectoral interlinkages between transport and trade, as well as other key economic sectors of relevance to SIDS, in particular, tourism and fisheries
- (c) Climate change impacts on transport infrastructure in SIDS and adaption needs
- (d) Financing as a cross-cutting enabling factor
- (e) Priority action areas and effective response measures
- (f) The role of partnerships, relevant partners and collaboration mechanisms.

Logistics

Before entering the Palais des Nations, participants are requested to collect their badges from the United Nations Security Service, Pregny Gate entrance, 14 Avenue de la Paix. The 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. to complete entry procedures in a timely fashion and proceed to the meeting in Building 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; visitors should therefore be dropped off at the indicated entrance gates. Furthermore, luggage may not be brought into the buildings unless the Security Service gives special clearance.

Participation

The meeting is open to all member States of UNCTAD and may be of particular interest to Government officials, non-governmental organizations, civil society groups and representatives of the private sector involved with issues related to SIDS generally and their transport and trade-related concerns in particular. Experts from international and regional organizations, including development banks dealing with transport and trade, including from the perspective of SIDS, will also be invited. Member States, 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 **4 July 2014**.

Documents and contributed papers

All experts are encouraged to prepare and submit relevant papers and contributions. These will be made available on the UNCTAD website in the form and language in which they are received. Contributed papers should be addressed and submitted to Ms. Wendy Juan, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, by fax +41 22 917 00 50 or e-mail wendy.juan@unctad.org.

Further information and contact details

All participants (whether holding a United Nations pass or not) should register online. To do so, please use the following link: [Ad Hoc Expert Meeting on Addressing Transport and Trade Logistics](#). All nominations and related communications concerning representation should be sent to the UNCTAD secretariat, Intergovernmental Support Service, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, by fax +41 22 917 0214 or e-mail meetings@unctad.org. Substantive and other inquiries may be addressed to the UNCTAD secretariat, Division on Technology and Logistics, Ms. H. Benamara by fax +41 22 917 0050 or e-mail hassiba.benamara@unctad.org.

(p.p. signed)

Mukhisa Kituyi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

24 June 2014