

Trade and Development Board

Fifty-eighth session

Geneva, 12–23 September 2011

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 2010–2011 and their relevant impact; and the appointment of members of the Advisory Body for 2012

Report of the Chair of the Advisory Body for the year 2010–2011, 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 and again by the Accra Accord. 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 2010–2011, which was formed at the last session of the Board in 2010, met in March and September of 2011. At the meeting in March, it examined the terms of reference that had been developed by the secretariat to establish multi-year venues for the courses, and decided to launch a call for proposals to member States for the regional courses in Africa, in countries with economies in transition, and in Western Asia. At the meeting on 21 September 2011, it evaluated the proposals and decided on the selection of venues.

3. I will today report on the outcome of these two meetings, the implementation of the courses held since the previous meeting of the Trade and Development Board, and the plans for the remaining courses for this biennium. I shall also provide you with information on the delivery of short courses for Geneva-based diplomats.

4. Following its meeting in March 2011, the Advisory Body approved the terms of reference for the establishment of multi-year venues and the secretariat subsequently issued a call for proposals on 17 May 2011 to member States in Africa, countries with economies in transition, and Western Asia. The deadline for receiving proposals at UNCTAD was 12 August 2011. Proposals were received from:

- (a) Mauritius, for Africa, and
- (b) Oman, for Western Asia.

No proposal was received from transition-economy countries.

5. It was not possible for the members of the Advisory Body to review another proposal for the Western Asia region which was sent shortly before the meeting.

6. After reviewing the proposals, the Advisory Body approved the following:
 - (a) Oman – as the multi-year venue for Western Asia for 2012, 2014 and 2016; and
 - (b) Mauritius – as the multi-year venue for Africa for 2013, 2015 and 2017.
7. It was also agreed that venues would be subject to evaluation.
8. I thank the Governments of Oman and Mauritius for their generous offers. I call upon member States from transition economies that are in a position to do so to consider hosting the course for 2012 and possibly 2014 and 2016.
9. Since the last meeting of the Trade and Development Board, the secretariat has delivered two courses, as follows:
 - (a) Course for Western Asia in October 2010 held in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) in Beirut, Lebanon;
 - (b) Course for Latin America and the Caribbean held in July 2011, in Medellín, Colombia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and EAFIT University.

I wish to extend my thanks to UNESCWA and the Government of Colombia, for their support for these courses.

10. I will now report on the evaluation of these two courses and share with you the many positive indications of their value for member States, as follows:
 - (a) The evaluations of the Western Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean courses confirm the contribution of these courses to bridging the “trade capacity gap” that exists within developing countries on trade and development issues.
 - (b) The demand for these courses keeps growing, as witnessed by the increase in the number of nominations by Governments.
11. UNCTAD’s perspectives were complemented with regional perspectives presented by United Nations regional commissions in the two regions concerned, and with contributions by local experts. The participants particularly appreciated the design of the programme, which combined presentations, working groups, debate sessions and exercises.
12. In this biennium, two more regional courses were scheduled, namely for the African and Asia-Pacific regions. The African course was originally planned to be delivered in Cairo in January this year; however, due to events in Egypt, it was postponed. In cooperation with the African Group, an alternative was found at the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia, for the course to take place on 26 September–14 October 2011. However, on the security advice of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Lusaka, the course could not be held as planned.
13. The course for the Asia-Pacific region will take place in Singapore in November/December 2011. The secretariat will do all it can to hold the course in Africa early in 2012, taking into account overall budgetary constraints.
14. I shall now report on the short courses for Geneva-based delegates.
15. The secretariat delivered three short courses for Geneva-based delegates in the second semester of 2010, and another three in the first semester of this year. A further three are planned for the autumn of this year.
16. 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.

17. 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.

18. It now remains for me to thank the members of the Advisory Body, namely Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Chile, Egypt, Honduras, Iraq, Morocco, Oman, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Zimbabwe, 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.

19. Finally, I congratulate the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Lesotho on his appointment as the new Chair of the Advisory Body, and wish him a fruitful and successful term.
