

Discussion Forum on
“Why Trade Matters in Development Strategies?”

27–29 November 2013, Geneva

Opening remarks

by

Mr. Petko Draganov

Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations Conference on Trade
and Development in Geneva

NOTES FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL

OPENING OF THE DISCUSSION FORUM WHY TRADE MATTERS IN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES ?

Wednesday 27 November, Room XXVI, 10 am

Distinguished Ambassador Piantini,
Distinguished representatives of Member States,
Distinguished speakers and participants,

On behalf of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Dr. Kituyi, it is a pleasure to welcome you to this Forum.

UNCTAD is convening this forum as the final component of a project we manage since 2009 with resources from the UN Development Account and in cooperation with the agencies of the UN Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity.

Allow me to briefly summarise the origins, the main features and the objectives of the project:

When observing the structure of the UN assistance plans at the country level (the UN “Development Assistance Frameworks” or the One UN Programmes), the role given to trade issues is marginal in all countries. The main part of the development assistance provided by the UN agencies is devoted, in terms of priorities and therefore in terms of allocation of resources, to social needs like health or education, while the economic aspects of development – and particularly the international economic dimension of development – are confined, at best, to a secondary role.

And even in the LDCs, that benefit from the Enhanced Integrated Framework, we observe that since very recently the EIF process and the Diagnostic Integration Studies have started to be perceived as part of the wider process of national development. To articulate the analysis and the trade assistance designed and implemented within the EIF with other areas of economic development is still an idea that hopefully will grow in the next years and will be transformed in practical mechanisms.

It was this observation that raised the need to foster the integration of trade and trade related assistance in the UN assistance plans, by explaining, at the field level, to the policy makers in charge of planning development and assistance, why trade matters. The project provided for the organization of national and regional workshops on why and how to integrate trade in the national assistance plans, and, from a broader perspective, what is the role of trade in development processes. A summary of these workshops will be presented this morning by Mr. Nicolas Depetris Chauvin, who is sitting here on the podium. Some of the Government officials who attended these workshops are with us today and we look forward to hear from them about their national experiences.

In view of these workshops, training modules were prepared with the inputs of all the agencies of the Cluster. The effectiveness of the training material was further enlarged by on line training courses prepared in cooperation with UNITAR. Mr. Depetris Chauvin will also refer to the results achieved so far by the dissemination online of this central theme: why trade matters and why it should be given attention in development strategies and assistance plans.

The agenda of this three days forum is in front of you. Each session includes, on the one hand, country presentations that will provide the vision from the field on the integration of trade issues and assistance at the national level. On the other hand, each session approaches a specific topic showing why and how trade is related, and has implications on another area and goal of development priorities, such as poverty reduction, job creation, food security, gender inequalities, environmental concerns. The wrap-up session on Friday 29 in the afternoon will look at a wide perspective of the aid policies and flows in the area of trade. In addition to their presentations and the papers that some of them prepared, follow-up actions will be devised with the participants that are based in the capitals, in view of ensuring the dissemination of the ideas and lessons shared in this Forum.

As you are aware, on Friday 29 in the morning you are all cordially invited to participate to a special session on the UN post-2015 Development Agenda, in this same room. We will be honored with the presence of Ms. Amina Mohammed, Special Advisor to the Secretary General of the United Nations on post-2015 development planning. That session aims at establishing a “Geneva Dialogue” on the topic and process that will have implications for the development strategies and the aid policies at the multilateral, regional and national levels.

I hope you will have interesting discussions and exchange of experiences.
I am now very pleased to give the floor to Ambassador Luis Manuel Piantini, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic.

Thank you.