

Distr.: Restricted
xx May 2015

Original: English only

Trade and Development Board**Trade and Development Commission****Seventh session**

Geneva, 18–22 May 2015

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Promoting and strengthening synergies among the three pillars**Progress report on activities related to the implementation of
the provisions of the Doha Mandate related to commodities*****Note by the UNCTAD secretariat***Executive summary*

This progress report highlights the major activities and outputs delivered by the UNCTAD secretariat related to the implementation of the provisions of the Doha Mandate specifically related to commodities. These provisions are detailed in paragraphs 4, 5, 27, 31(i), 46, 56(g), 61 and 65(g) of the Doha Mandate which are additional to and complement the Accra Accord mandates on commodities. The Doha Mandate recognizes the commodity problematique that persists in many commodity-dependent developing countries (CDDCs), particularly in Africa and in least developed countries (LDCs).

During the period – June 2014 to May 2015 – covered in this progress report, the secretariat ensured greater synergies among the three pillars of UNCTAD's work – research and development, consensus building and technical cooperation – as it continued to assist commodity-dependent developing countries address the commodity problematique, move up global value chains, and improve their competencies and capacities to harness development gains from commodities production and trade.

* This is a draft advance copy that is being circulated unedited.

Introduction

1. UNCTAD adopted the Doha Mandate at its thirteenth session (UNCTAD XIII) held in Qatar in April 2012. The Mandate reaffirms and builds upon the Accra Accord, which remains valid and relevant during the implementation period of the Doha Mandate.
2. Provisions related to commodities under the Doha Mandate¹ reaffirm and build on the comprehensive mandate on commodities provided under the Accra Accord.² Paragraph 91 of the Accra Accord is considered to be the all-inclusive mandate which anchors the work of the secretariat in the areas of commodities trade and development. Paragraph 27 of the Doha Mandate calls for the secretariat to assist commodity-exporting developing countries to identify and implement appropriate policies at all levels to address the impacts of volatility of commodity prices, and formulate sustainable and inclusive development strategies, particularly those that increase value addition and economic diversification.
3. As one of the processes implemented to fulfil the role of UNCTAD, as defined by the Doha Mandate³, the secretariat will continue to convene annual Multi-year Expert Meetings on Commodities and Development over a four-year period, from 2013 to 2016. On 15-16 April 2015, the secretariat delivered its seventh Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development which was the third Multi-year Expert Meeting to take place under the Doha Mandate.
4. This report brings together major activities and outputs of the secretariat during its implementation of the commodity-specific provisions of the Doha Mandate as well as the Accra Accord during the period from June 2014 to May 2015.⁴

I. Research and analysis

A. Contributions to the intergovernmental Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development

5. The Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development (MYEM) is an annual expert meeting approved by the fifty-fifth session of the Trade and Development Board (TDB) of 15-26, 2008 and then reaffirmed in the Doha Mandate. The topics and the terms of references for the four expert meetings under the Doha Mandate (2012-2016) were approved by the Trade and Development Board in December 2012.⁵
6. These expert meetings provide an intergovernmental forum for member states and other development partners to seek out and deliver “practical options and actionable outcomes” for addressing to the long-standing problems in commodities trade, and in doing so, assuring the development gains from the commodity economy.
7. Besides addressing thematic topics, the expert meetings review market situation and outlook in global commodity markets, from agricultural to metals and to energy markets. For each expert meeting, the Secretariat prepares background documents to facilitate the substantive debate and discussions. These are complemented with papers and presentations made by experts.

¹ Paragraph 4, 5, 27, 31(i), 46, 56(g), 61 and 65(g).

² Paragraph 91–93, 183 and 208.

³ Paragraph 31 (i).

⁴ The last progress report was presented to the TDB in May 2014 covering the period from April 2013 to May 2014.

⁵ TD/B/EX(56)/CPR.2.

8. The seventh session of the MYEM on Commodities and Development was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 15 and 16 April 2015. The meeting gathered together 120 participants including delegates, experts, UNCTAD staff and academia. The Secretariat prepared two background notes to backstop the discussions. These are (a) Recent developments and new challenges in commodity markets, and policy options for commodity-based inclusive growth and sustainable development;⁶ and (b) Policy actions for mitigating the impact of price volatility in commodity markets on global food security and increasing access to market intelligence, financial resources and markets for commodity-dependent developing countries.⁷
9. The key issues discussed at the expert meeting relate to i) recent developments in commodity markets and policy options to ensure broad-based inclusive growth and sustainable development, amid falling but volatile prices and, ii) policy options to mitigate the impacts of volatile prices on food security situation in developing and least developed countries.
10. Lacklustre economic conditions and oversupply kept commodities prices down albeit with short term fluctuations in 2014 and early 2015. However, in non-energy market, most of the prices remain high compared to their levels before the recent commodity boom. In energy markets, oil prices have dropped significantly since June 2014. These changes have various impacts on development policy in CDDCs and for the international development agenda. Experts generally agreed that economic diversification remains essential for commodity producing countries.
11. Volatile commodities prices remain topical and have adverse impacts on food security in developing and least developed countries. A number of policies to address the issue were discussed during the meeting. They include: short-term contingencies, such as food reserves and national and international safety nets; and medium- to long-term solutions, including economic diversification, market-based risk management strategies and efforts to capture value addition in specific commodity value chains.
12. The secretariat prepared and submitted a report of the expert meeting to the Trade and Development Commission, after the completion of the meeting.

B. Contributions to the United Nations General Assembly and Other Organizations

13. Besides the research and analytical works undertaken by the Special Unit on Commodities on key issues related to commodities trade and development, it is obligated to backstop deliberations on commodities at the General Assembly, contribute to chapters on commodities issues in the annual United Nations report, the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP), and deliver the UNCTAD Commodities and Development Report, working papers and ad hoc studies on traditional as well as contemporary issues on commodities.
14. Pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on commodities, the secretariat is obligated to prepare and submit biennially analytical reports on world commodity trends and prospects for its deliberations.

2015: General Assembly Paper

15. Pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/203, the secretariat is preparing an analytical report on “World commodity trends and prospects” for the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

⁶ TD/B/C.I/MEM.2/29.

⁷ TD/B/C.I/MEM.2/30.

16. The report updates assessment of commodity trends and prospects, long-term commodity prices and ways to strengthen coordination among international commodities organizations and other relevant international organizations.⁸

Contributions to the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP)

17. The Special Unit on Commodities has been contributing to the non-oil commodities sections of the chapter on international trade in the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP). The secretariat made contributions to the annual and mid-year updates of the WESP in past years.
18. In 2014 and 2015, the secretariat contributed analysis on key agricultural and food products, industrial and precious metals, minerals and raw materials; that is, non-oil commodities.⁹

C. Major reports, working papers and ad hoc studies

19. Pursuant to the provisions of the Accra Accord,¹⁰ the secretariat has strengthened its role in research and analysis on commodities and trade-related issues of importance to its clientele of commodity-dependent developing countries. It continues to seek and strengthen research partnerships with the private sector and academia, leveraging such partnerships to deliver cutting-edge research on commodities and trade-related issues.

2014: Commodities at a Glance

20. Commodities at a Glance, is a relatively new product, first published – in English and French – by the secretariat in March 2011. The report provides pictorial snapshots of comprehensive data on commodities concerning topical issues of importance to CDDCs. It collects, presents and disseminates accurate and relevant statistical information linked to international primary commodity markets in a clear, concise and user-friendly format.
21. In 2014, at the request of member states countries, we made some deep changes regarding the format of this document, including a large piece of analysis of the market under review in each specific edition. The fifth edition, issued in May 2014, is the first number of this kind in this publication's short history.
22. The fifth issue focused on rare earths. Rare earths are required in small quantities, but they are essential inputs to the development and production of highly sophisticated products. They are in high demand in technology development, national (defence) security applications, renewable energy industries (e.g. wind energy), automobile catalysts, permanent magnets, and optical and medical equipment. Furthermore, they are also omnipresent in everyday lives of people, in products such as mobile phones, computers, fluorescent lights, plasma screens and batteries.
23. The adjective 'rare' does not imply that this group of elements¹¹ are physically unavailable or are the rarest elements in earth's crust. In fact, rare earth elements are more abundant than some other major minerals. However, they are generally not concentrated in commercially viable quantities, and sometimes associated with

⁸ UN General Assembly Resolution 68/203: Commodities.

⁹ WESP 2015 : <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/>

¹⁰ Accra Accord paragraph 92.

¹¹ There are 17 rare earth metals, 15 from the chemical group called lanthanides, plus two others – yttrium and scandium.

radioactive elements (e.g. uranium), making them difficult and expensive to handle safely.

24. Global supplies of the rare earths are concentrated in China, which accounts for 91 per cent of world's production and 66 per cent of exports in 2012.¹² Global demand has significantly increased since the mid-1990s and despite a slight contraction in 2011 and 2012, and usage is expected to continue to grow in the future. This brings to fore the important issue of supply vulnerability in importing countries. Future market shortages and associated price increases could have a direct impact on the cost of production of strategic goods manufactured in importing countries as well as on the competitiveness of their companies and industries and consequently, an indirect impact on employment and their economies.
25. In 2015, the Special Unit on Commodities expects to produce two editions of this publication. The forthcoming issue of the Commodities at a glance (number 6) will deal with "gold", examining the developments in the gold market over the past five years. Given its large set of uses and its irreplaceable interest as a safe-haven asset, demand for gold increases in times of economic and financial instabilities.
26. The seventh issue of the Commodities a glance will review the state of the shale oil and shale gas markets and their latest developments. This analysis will provide some insights into the contribution of shale gas and oil in the recent developments in the energy market within the context of international negotiations on climate change which will be held in Paris in December 2015.

2014: The State of Commodity Dependence 2014

27. The "State of commodity dependence", which is published biannually, provides an overview of the commodity-related situation of 135 developing member states of the United Nations. Graphical presentations depict regional and global perspectives of commodity dependence in developing countries. While the 2014 report was completed by the end of the year 2014, it became available to member states and the public in April 2015 during the Global Commodities Forum and the seventh session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development. This report is generally distributed to member states.

Work in Progress

2014: UNCTAD Commodities and Development Report

28. The 2014 UNCTAD Commodities and Development Report¹³ focuses on the key issues facing smallholder farmers in agriculture food (agrifood) and commodities production and sustainable development in developing countries. It aims to contribute to the active policy debate on how the productivity of smallholder agriculture can be developed in a sustainable manner. It identifies a policy matrix, including the institutional prerequisites, which bring out the best in small holder farming systems as a means of optimising their use of resources, thereby enhancing the advantages already associated with their farming practices.
29. The report is being finalised and should be launched in the coming months.

2015 Cocoa study

¹² UNCTAD/SUC/2014/1.

¹³ The second UCRD is expected to be published in spring 2015.

30. The Special Unit on Commodities is preparing a research paper on Cocoa which is an update of its analysis¹⁴ published in 2008. The paper focuses on recent developments in cocoa industry with regards to increasing concentration. That is, vertical and horizontal integration in the industry.
31. Market concentration in commodity sector has effectively become prominent and has been debated by various stakeholders including governments and NGOs as well as international and regional institutions such as the World Bank, the International Cocoa Organization, the United Nations, and the European Commission. The purpose of the study is to contribute to these debates by examining some recent consolidation patterns in the cocoa global value chain (GVC) and their potential impacts on the stakeholders along the chain, in particular small farmers and traders. Furthermore, the study assesses the integration of cocoa farmers in the world markets and identifies relevant policy options that would help governments, private sector and producers to foster the development of a sustainable cocoa production.

II. Intergovernmental consensus building

32. The consensus building pillar of UNCTAD is important to the secretariat's work on commodities trade and development. Consensus reached in the context of the intergovernmental process of the Trade and Development Board on the commodity economy has ramifications, for example, on an estimated 2 billion people who are engaged in agricultural and food production throughout the developing world.
33. Despite the growth of manufacturing and services industries in world trade, agriculture and food, and commodities sectors still remain the engines of growth in most developing countries. The sectors generate foreign exchange, provide employment and income opportunities, support livelihoods and reduce poverty. Poverty reduction starts with addressing the core problems associated with agricultural foods and commodities production in the developing world.
34. The Accra Accord mandated UNCTAD to "promote intergovernmental cooperation in the field of commodities and consensus-building on ways of integrating commodity policies into national, regional and international development and poverty reduction strategies; trade-related policies and instruments for resolving commodity problems; and investment and financial policies for accessing financial resources for commodity-based development, including with respect to ODA, Aid for Trade and other possibilities."¹⁵
35. During this reporting period, the Special Unit on Commodities maintained its extensive inter-agency cooperation network, with a view to promoting a comprehensive approach to commodity sector development. It continued its close cooperation with organizations both within and outside the United Nations system, such as the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), FAO, World Trade Organization (WTO), International Trade Centre (ITC), World Bank, United Nations regional commissions, and international commodity bodies.
36. Furthermore the secretariat continues to service a number of conferences and international commodity bodies and study groups, and serve as a neutral platform for policy dialogue, given its mandate on key issues regarding global commodity supply chains, markets and international trade and development. Some of these events have

¹⁴ UNCTAD/DITC/COM/2008/1.

¹⁵ Paragraph 93(b).

become flagship events in their domains: the Africa Oil, Gas and Minerals Trade and Finance Conferences, and the Global Commodities Forum.

37. Some of the selected activities implemented by the secretariat under the consensus-building pillar are highlighted below.

A. Africa Oil, Gas and Minerals Trade and Finance Conference and Exhibition – Africa OilGasMine

38. The Africa OilGasMine Conference is one of the flagship events of the secretariat's work on commodities trade and development,¹⁶ which has gained both momentum and stature in the past few years. This annual conference brings together the "Who's Who" in Africa's vast oil, gas and mining space. Over the years, high-levels participants from the public sector (Heads of State, or Ministers) and key decision-makers from the industry (CEO's of major gas, oil and mining companies) have attended the annual conference, which is hosted in different African countries.
39. UNCTAD organized an OilGasMine Special Event during the World Investment Forum, on 15 and 16 October 2014 in Geneva. The theme of the Special Event was: "Achieving sustainable development goals through investment in oil and gas field services". The Trade Commissioner of the African Union Commission (AUC) expressed an interest in exploring the possibilities of implementing a proposal to establish an "African Gas Hub".

B. Global Commodities Forum – GCF

42. In line with the provisions established in the Accra Accord, UNCTAD launched in March 2010 the inaugural Global Commodities Forum (GCF). GCF provides UNCTAD with a unique opportunity "to build consensus on policies that allow developing countries to maximize the opportunities and address challenges of globalization and economic integration, and that promote an enabling environment for sustained economic growth and sustainable development".¹⁷
43. GCF is a major multi-stakeholder meeting, which brings together major stakeholder groups, including ministers and other high-level policymakers, regulators, business leaders, experts, academics and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Together they debate solutions to the perennial and new problems associated with the production and trade of commodities.
44. The first three sessions of the GCF were supported mainly by a large grant from the Common Fund for Commodities. The Forum has also received generous financial support from the Governments of China, France and Switzerland; Gaznat; Afreximbank; and Audit Control and Expertise.
45. As of 2015 the secretariat has hosted six GCFs, the most recent one on 13-14 April 2015 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.
46. The theme of the 2015 GCF was "Trade in commodities: Challenges and opportunities," a broad theme through which to take stock of a busy last year on commodities markets, including a dramatic fall in oil prices, and a more modest drop in commodity prices in general. The Forum proposed five seminar-like topics, which,

¹⁶ Pursuant to paragraph 98 of the Accra Accord which calls on the secretariat to provide advisory services and trade-related capacity-building activities to natural resources-rich developing countries.

¹⁷ Paragraph 93 (b).

instead of focusing on the price movements themselves, provided a survey of challenges and opportunities arising from the current context.

47. One session at the 2015 Forum examined "The prospects for transparency-themed governance reform in the Swiss trading sector." This followed a session in the 2014 Forum with a similar theme. In both years, this topic attracted the majority of the press attention directed at the Forum. Indeed, a variety of stakeholders are interested to know how the reform agenda in the commodities sector will apply to the commodity trading sector, which is a multi-billion-dollar industry that today controls a significant share of physical and financial flows in the commodities value chain.
48. Representatives from the Swiss Government, trading companies, disclosure experts and civil society debated the elements for an eventual reform of the Swiss sector, from increased disclosure of commercial and financial information, to compliance with social norms. The Swiss Government and traders, before considering other options, prefer to explore voluntary measures first. Both parties repeated the need for a level playing field, applying to all competitors (i.e. including producers and buyers) and across jurisdictions. In the absence of a level playing field, there is a strong disincentive for individual governments or firms to risk taking the lead in improving disclosure and ethical performance.
49. Given the international imperatives of this situation in the Swiss trading sector, UNCTAD highlighted the need for an international, multistakeholder process to harmonize existing voluntary initiatives - for example, the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) - and identify governance gaps for the creation of new, complementary initiatives. This process should have the dual goals of: a) establishing the level playing field that companies and governments need to commit without risking their competitive position; and b) building consensus around norms and the tools for their implementation.
50. Another general theme that emerged from sessions at the 2015 Global Commodities Forum was the renewed impetus to include commodity-related development priorities in the post-Bali work programme for the Doha Round of WTO negotiations. In the context of the agricultural focus of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), it is important to maintain the momentum that the 2013 Bali Ministerial Declaration. For their part, for example, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) can propose achievable commitments, especially in response to the Bali decisions related to food security, so that their priorities are better represented in the agreements.
51. With respect to extractive commodities, the Forum hosted a lively debate about the policy space available to developing countries within current WTO disciplines. Since 2008, we have seen resurgence in the use of restrictions by commodity producing countries. Export restrictions are legal, but their use is contentious. OECD analysis suggests that countries employing restrictions on raw material exports have had mixed success in achieving their policy objectives and that the net effect of export restrictions on trading partners and international markets is consistently negative. By contrast, developing countries that employ export restrictions highlight that natural resources are a rare and finite source of wealth for them and that their primary responsibility is to ensure that these resources contribute to the sustainable development of their economies. From this perspective, export restrictions are one of the few measures they can employ to coordinate trade and industrial policies as part of a holistic development strategy. Debates at the Forum did not reach a consensus on the use of export restrictions, but highlighted developing countries' desire to preserve policy space within trade agreements that allows them to employ trade measures as part of their commodity-led development strategies.

52. Documents pertaining to the sixth GCF are available on the UNCTAD website.¹⁸

D. Collaborations with other organizations – national, regional and international

UN-Energy

53. UNCTAD is a member of the inter-agency group of 21 member organizations with energy-related mandates in the United Nations system. UN-Energy was created after the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, and its purpose is to create a coherent approach towards a sustainable energy system, especially in developing countries, to meet the Millennium Development Goals.
54. As a member of the interagency alliance on energy, the secretariat participates in the quarterly Post-2015 Thematic Consultations on Sustainable Energy for ALL (SE4ALL) Video conference calls. Sustainable energy is now a standalone Sustainable Development Goal — SDG #7.
55. Presently, UN-Energy focus is on the “human face” of energy (Phase I), developing indicators on cross-cutting issues under four thematic issues; (i) energy and women’s health, (ii) energy and water, (iii) energy and food security, and (iv) energy and women’s economic empowerment. Under this phase, the main organizations involved are DESA, FAO, UNDP, WHO, WMO and the World Bank.
56. The second phase, starting in 2015, plans to fully integrate (i) energy and trade, and (ii) energy and governance, in its work plan.
57. UN-Energy and UNCTAD have agreed in principle to work closely to develop the ‘energy and trade nexus’, and indicators and tools for monitoring and developing them.

G-20 initiative on commodities: Agricultural Marketing Information System

58. UNCTAD, with nine other international organizations, contributes to the Group of 20 initiative on commodities, in the areas of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), AMIS Rapid Response Forum (RRF) meetings, and meetings of the Global Food Market Information Group.
59. The AMIS was launched in the aftermath of the 2007–2008 food crisis during the French Presidency of the Group of 20. AMIS aims to help improve the gathering and sharing of quality data on food balance sheets for four crops: wheat, rice, maize and soybeans. AMIS has gained in stature and scope since its inception. It monitors commodity markets and crop conditions, and promotes dialogue among key stakeholders in global commodity markets.

Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development

60. UNCTAD continues to collaborate with the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF). UNCTAD co-hosted its tenth Annual General Meeting which was held in Geneva, from 20–24 October 2013.
61. The IGF is a global forum that discusses practical issues related to the sustainable management and development of the mining sector. It serves as a forum for dialogue between member-country governments, mining companies and industry associations.¹⁹

¹⁸ <http://unctad.org/en/pages/MeetingDetails.aspx?meetingid=647>.

¹⁹ [http://www.globaldialogue.info/IGF%202013%20Flyer%20\(updated\).pdf](http://www.globaldialogue.info/IGF%202013%20Flyer%20(updated).pdf).

62. The tenth Forum brought together over 280 participants from 55 countries. Over 110 representatives of international financial institutions, multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations, industry associations, donor governments and other actors were also present. The overarching aim of the Meeting was to advance implementation of its Mining Policy Framework and in building a stronger IGF. The thematic focus was on social benefits and engagement, including community engagement, local revenue management, operational security and human rights, education and the role of women in the mining sector. Significant attention was also placed on the broader issue of sustainable development, the contribution the mining sector can make, and challenges the mining sector itself faces with regards to its own sustainability.
63. New to 2014 Meeting was the launch of the IGF Network Fair, featuring presentations by civil society organization, consultancy firms, industry, academia and international organizations. Participants highlighted that the Fair presented a welcome space to engage and collaborate and to informally discuss initiatives, approaches and information important to them. In particular, Participants exchanged experiences regarding the G7 Fast-track Partnerships for Extractive Sector Transparency.
64. The Forum is an important platform for consensus-building on the key issues affecting mining and improving the mining sector's role in sustainable development. Its success is due to the continuous engagement of government officials dealing with mining to exchange views on global trends, individual country challenges and lessons learned relating mining sector. It is important to seek ways to strengthen and ensure the ongoing relevance of the IGF and to promote its complementarity with regard to existing initiatives on mining policy and governance at national, regional and international levels.

III. Technical cooperation

65. In compliance with the provisions of the Doha Accord,²⁰ the Special Unit on Commodities implemented technical cooperation activities that have helped build capacity in key areas of commodities (e.g., market information systems, commodity finance and agricultural standards) in many CDDCs. Some of these activities, which are regional and intraregional in scope, cover the following major themes:
 - (a) Agricultural market information services – Infocomm and InfoShare;
 - (b) Compliance with international trade standards, technical regulations, food laws and certification schemes including sustainable standards – Sustainability Claims Portal;
 - (c) Commodity financing, commodity exchanges (e.g., warehouse receipt systems) and commodity risk management.
66. Extra-budgetary resources diminished, after the completion of the European Union (EU) funded All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme (AAACP), in December 2011. As such, during current reporting period, funding for technical cooperation programmes and projects in the area of commodities has been minimal.
67. On the brighter side, the secretariat has successfully applied for and received project funding (US\$641,000) under the 9th Tranche of the United Nations Development Account to finance the project titled “Strengthening the capacity of the Economic Community of Central Africa Member States (ECCAS) to enhance domestic production linkages from the mineral resources sector”. The project will be implemented in collaboration with ECCAS, Economic Community of Africa, African Union Commission, and the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

²⁰ Paragraph 31(i).

68. The secretariat has also successfully proposed a project on “Value addition of cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa” under the 10th tranche Development Account cycle (2016-2019). The proposed project has been shortlisted for a total budget of US\$ 591, 000 and will soon be included in the budget fascicle under the 10th tranche. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of three selected cotton producing countries in Eastern and Southern Africa (Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe) to assess objectively the economic viability of the development of cotton by-products and formulate effective evidence-based policies that promote the value addition of these by-products. The implementation partner is COMESA.

A. Contributions to the UNCTAD Virtual Institute

69. The Special Unit on Commodities supports the UNCTAD Virtual Institute in developing and delivering tailor-made training courses on commodity economics, production and trade, prices and trends, and other topical issues as the impact of the financial crisis on commodities, the financialization of commodity markets, and natural resources development and development in extractive industries.
70. Virtual Institute training is targeted at university staff and students, post-graduate researchers, and personnel from governments as well as the private sector. The Virtual Institute is an exemplar of interdivisional cooperation within the secretariat, helping to leverage the synergies between research and analysis on one hand, and technical assistance as well as institutional capacity-building in CDDCs on the other.
71. In collaboration with the Virtual Institute, the secretariat delivered, in November 2014, a lecture on "Food Security and International Trade: What's the Nexus?" at University of Nairobi, Kenya. The lecture addressed key dimensions and policy perspectives of food security, including the role of international trade in food security.

B. Iron Ore Trust Fund Project

72. The secretariat implements the Trust Fund Project on Iron Ore Information. Reports generated by the project provide comprehensive information on developments in the world markets for iron ore for interested parties – producers, purchasers, shipping agents, suppliers, industry and government representatives, researchers, analysts and consultants. The reporting costs are offset by donor contributions from several governments and from sales of project publication.
73. In 2014, UNCTAD conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the Trust Fund in order to improve its effectiveness and financial viability. There were no publications made by the Trust Fund that year. As a result of the evaluation, new Terms of Reference for the successive bidder for the contract to provide the information for the Trust Fund stipulate the establishment of an electronic version of the Iron Ore Statistics which is to include historical data previously published by UNCTAD and the most up-to-date data. In 2015, the Trust Fund plans to resume its regular publications.