



TRAINMAR

Bulletin

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The Bulletin comes from the Human Resources Development Section of UNCTAD's Division for Services Infrastructure for Development and Trade Efficiency (SITE). SITE aims to help developing countries and countries in transition to strengthen all services that support their foreign trade.

Terms employed in this Bulletin do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country or territory.

Introduction

The Bulletin is prepared by the TRAINMAR Central Support Team (CST) at UNCTAD headquarters in Geneva. The year 2000 passed without a single issue of the Bulletin, and so this issue is devoted to a survey of events that had *central* significance for TRAINMAR during the year. It is appropriate to note that this is not a report on TRAINMAR: while UNCTAD provides support to the network, it does not control the network or its progress – which are the responsibility of members. Information concerning individual members and regional networks, and notably the training services provided, is made available directly by them in regional reports.



UNCTAD X

The tenth ministerial conference of UNCTAD was held in Bangkok from 12 to 19 February 2000. Readers of earlier Bulletins will recall that UNCTAD X was expected to be a watershed with regard to UNCTAD's support to TRAINMAR. Countries expect UNCTAD to intervene in many new fields, and questions are rightly raised whether it is necessary to continue using scarce resources for a programme that has already received support for 20 years. The CST made a special effort, therefore, to provide information to delegates that could help them make a realistic judgement. In particular, a special display was prepared (see picture) so that visitors and delegates at UNCTAD X could identify our information stand on TRAINMAR, which was manned continuously for detailed questions, while brochures were prepared for casual visitors.

Within the conference debate, attention focused on broader policy issues rather than individual programmes. One of these wider issues was human resources development (HRD), of which training is only one component. HRD was recognized as having great importance for development in many domains, including trade-supporting services. TRAINMAR, and its sister programme TrainForTrade, were included among activities that needed to be continued. This support for HRD accords very closely with the views of the CST, which for many years has argued that training remains of limited value unless it is put in an HRD context. So often, good training has little impact owing to a lack of comprehensive HRD. Similarly, training frequently fails to be good because there is not the community support that will be generated through a comprehensive approach to HRD.

TRAINMAR is:

- a **system** for locally managed training in the field of services for maritime trade
- a **network** of training centres that use the system and are ready to share their efforts
- an UNCTAD **programme** to help the network contribute to trade growth, diversification and profitability through professional training of managers and decision makers.

For detailed information about TRAINMAR, see the web page: < www.trainmar.org >

UNCTAD X adopted the Bangkok Plan of Action (UN document TD/386), which provides the policy orientations for UNCTAD work over the next four years. It can be found on the UNCTAD web site (see back page of the Bulletin). HRD is mentioned several times in this extensive Plan of Action, both explicitly and through references to training, acquisition of skills and capacity building. The latter is almost synonymous with HRD if one considers that HRD must embrace organizational change so that human competence can be used effectively, and that human competence is the key source of development capacity today. But in the Plan of Action capacity building has taken on a special connotation to refer to the training of community leaders to enable them to master international issues and negotiate effectively on matters of national priority within international forums.

Prior to UNCTAD X, a number of member institutes submitted information about their activities so that the CST could prepare an electronic reference source for interested delegates. It had been hoped to include this information in a new web site for the network. Unfortunately, time has not yet been found to do this; this does, however, provide an introduction to the next section.

Web site

Members may recall the first TRAINMAR web page, installed on the GeoCities site by Bismark Sitorus while with the CST. The page could not be maintained after Bismark was transferred to work on trade facilitation issues within UNCTAD, so it became out of date. The CST did not have sufficient capacity to restructure the page or to prepare a new one. However, the CST has taken the domain name trainmar.org and installed on it the web page of ATAS, the Latin American TRAINMAR association, already prepared and maintained by Sven Callebaut of the CST as part of his support functions for the networks of Latin America and the Caribbean. The new page should be extended quite soon to provide general TRAINMAR information as well as to give access to the information for specific regions. Since the last regional meeting of the Asia and Pacific network (see the next section) a separate web page has been prepared for that network. Based on contributions from each of the members, the work has been done by Rakash Malakar of Campion College, the member in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Regional meetings

The regional meeting of the Asia and Pacific network was held in Bangkok from 15 to 18 February 2000. These dates were chosen to overlap with UNCTAD X so as to profit from various synergies. In particular, staff members of the CST were able to contribute to both events within limited travel funds, participants were able to see UNCTAD at work, and cooperation with UNESCAP was facilitated since its key staff members were necessarily in Bangkok at that time. The picture on

this page shows Barry Cable, Chief of the Water Transport Section at ESCAP, talking with Kathy Everlet of the CST in front of the TRAINMAR display at UNCTAD X. Another synergy was the presence of Anne DeSouza from TRAINMAR Trinidad, who was able to help the CST to present the programme at the UNCTAD X conference centre and to make a most stimulating guest appearance at the regional meeting to talk about a key topic: the marketing of training services.



Regular meetings of regional networks were held also in the Caribbean, Central America and South America, at which progress was reviewed, further cooperation was planned and strategies were revised. A rather different meeting was organized for African countries, where TRAINMAR has not been active as a network for several years. UNCTAD's Port Management Certificate programme has been operating in three countries (Benin, Gabon and Senegal), and in March 2000 a joint meeting was held in Las Palmas (Canary Islands, Spain) in which countries, ports and training centres interested in both programmes were able to participate. Agreement was reached that enables countries to pursue both programmes together and contacts have since been progressing between interested countries and Evelyn Benvenisti of the CST.

Briefing sessions

There is constant change in the client base for training services in the field of maritime trade. It is important, therefore, that training suppliers make regular efforts to ensure that clients are aware of the services available and are invited to contribute to desired changes in these services. This was one of the themes in Anne DeSouza's talk to participants in the Asia and Pacific regional network meeting. In consequence, members attending that meeting agreed that they would take steps to organize client contact meetings during the year. This was the background against which the CST decided to organize contact meetings with government representatives in Geneva through a series of briefing

sessions. While different in nature from the contact meetings of member institutes, it was hoped that these would provide a model and encouragement for member institutes.

The briefing sessions, in English, French and Spanish, were held in May and June 2000 for Geneva-based delegates. The CST had set two goals for these sessions: on the one hand, to give Governments a clearer idea of the services available through TRAINMAR and encourage them to use the services for improving trade, and on the other hand, to stress the role that public authorities play in support of training services. Power-Point presentations were made at each session, showing the role of TRAINMAR, the approach, progress made in each region, and plans for the future. Experience showed that too much information had been packed into these briefing sessions, but the results were beneficial in two respects: the level of understanding of the programme among government representatives was notable when TRAINMAR was discussed at later inter-governmental meetings; and personal contact between the CST and delegates on a wide range of related issues became frequent and fruitful.

TRAINMAR strategy

The progress made by TRAINMAR networks in different regions has been unequal. While network potential has been demonstrated by significant outputs, there has been concern about disparities between regions – which can be positive if they reflect advances that can be transferred to other regions, but will be negative if they cause barriers that discourage reciprocal cooperation. Members have also shown concern about the level of support that UNCTAD is able to provide, compared with expectations from early experience with TRAINMAR and with regard to future developments within the UNCTAD secretariat. Through spontaneous dynamics within the network, proposals were made for a fresh look at strategy for the programme and the network. With coordination from Sven Callebaut of the CST, a group of interested persons representative of all regions was formed and consultations were undertaken in two phases. In the first phase a framework for consultation was drawn up and group members exchanged views, through an electronic discussion group, over a two-month period. The second phase took place in mid-October, when the group came together near Frankfurt (Germany) for an intensive workshop to reach conclusions. The workshop was generously hosted by GTZ (a key German aid agency), which also paid the travel expenses of selected regional contributors.

The workshop proposed a mission statement for TRAINMAR (see box), an action plan to provide the results most urgently needed by members, and a statement of the support expected through UNCTAD to enable objectives to be achieved efficiently. A report on the workshop is available from the CST on request. Responsibilities for the different actions were assigned and results are awaited.

Mission for TRAINMAR

To contribute to human resources development for logistics and transport through common quality standards and networking.

Meeting of experts on HRD

Following UNCTAD X, Governments asked the secretariat to organize a meeting of experts on “HRD and training in trade-supporting services: key to growth with special potential for LDCs”. Although this was in the wider context of UNCTAD’s work, preparations for the meeting were handled largely by the CST. This was natural in view of the way in which the role of TRAINMAR has gradually moved from ports and shipping to wider aspects of services for the movement of goods (i.e. services to maritime trade), and the fact that it has appeared increasingly necessary for training to be integrated with HRD on a continuous basis. Preparation for the meeting took from June 2000 onwards, leading up to the meeting in Geneva from 13 to 15 December. Experts at the meeting included two TRAINMAR personalities: Kailash Dewan from Nepal, who served as Rapporteur for the meeting, and Luis Musolino from Argentina, who is a regular adviser for TRAINMAR in eastern Europe. The maritime sector was well represented with speakers from the ports of Cotonou and Singapore, while the Chairman of the meeting was Alexandre Aziabu, who was Director of the port of Lomé before becoming special adviser to the Prime Minister of Togo.

Various documents for the meeting can be found on the Internet at < www.gtpnet-e.com/unctadhrd/hrd.nsf >. The report of the meeting, published as UN document TD/B/COM.3/32, can be found through the UNCTAD web site. While the experts looked closely at training, including the use of modern technology for distance learning, their principal recommendations concerned HRD policy-making. The focus was on communities for the implementation of HRD, and on the importance of sharing experience among communities. It may be noted that an intergovernmental commission that considered the experts’ findings has recommended a pilot exercise to help in developing a policy framework for HRD. The outputs of TRAINMAR will benefit significantly from this work, and members may contribute to initiatives taken at local and national level to enhance HRD for trade-supporting services.

Flexible learning

Technology has made new types of training possible, particularly for individual interactive study. This concerns notably computer-based products, using CD-ROM or the Internet or the two together. Not only can such training be more up to date and interesting for each learner, but also it can meet a modern need for professionals to study with minimal interference to their

daily work. However, there are few such products to meet very specific needs, local and professional, such as arise for maritime trade services. Furthermore, many general products on the market have not matched the potential offered by the technology. TRAINMAR has judged it necessary that local trainers be able to put together courses that make an appropriate mix of technology, general training products, and traditional training media adapted to meet the growing need for individual learning. A project has been undertaken, therefore, to create a new TRAINMAR course that will help experienced trainers use training methods flexibly. This course, simply called Flexible Learning Methods, has been created by a team of three old hands with TRAINMAR: John Douglas, Graham Tarr and Teresa Yeo. Course materials were completed in November 2000, ready to be validated through a group of 15 trainers from different regions. Most of the study is through individual learning, in which participants deal with the tutor by E-mail. Having completed this phase, the validation group came together for a one-week workshop, held in Antwerp (Belgium) from 19 to 23 February 2001, to complete the course and help work out a strategy for its long-term use.

This project had generous financing from the Government of the Netherlands, while the workshop is receiving help from the APEC-Antwerp/Flanders Port Training School.

CD-ROM

A second project in the use of technology in training has started more recently. This is to turn an existing traditional TRAINMAR course, "Environmental management of ports", into an interactive CD-ROM-based course suitable for guided individual study. With guidance from Kathy Everlet of the CST, who also managed preparation of the course "Flexible Learning Methods", this course is being developed through cooperation between one of the authors of the original course – Rodrigo Garcia of Chile – and a very advanced multi-media unit in Alexandria, Egypt. This unit has ties with the TRAINMAR member in Egypt through their joint association with the Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport. This project had only just started at the end of 2000, but a first module had already been produced as a trial, and was demonstrated at the meeting of experts discussed above by Dr Mohamed Yussef, director of the unit, when he gave a most interesting introductory talk on multimedia technology in education and training.

Both for the technology in use and the interregional cooperation involved, this is an activity being followed with great interest by the CST. There will be more

work to do after the physical materials have been completed, notably to review the tutoring arrangements necessary for best results; but it is hoped that this will be a precursor to many future courses. Financial support has been necessary to carry this effort to success, and this has come, once more, from the Government of the Netherlands.

Evaluation

TRAINMAR is just one among the varied programmes run by UNCTAD. To illustrate the variety with merely two, there is DMFAS, which helps countries in the management of their foreign debt, and EMPRETEC, which was set up to help countries in enterprise development. Each year, the intergovernmental body that supervises the work of the secretariat chooses one programme to evaluate in depth. In September 2000, it was decided that TRAINMAR should be the next to be evaluated. The evaluation study is being conducted by a team consisting of an independent consultant and two government representatives based in Geneva. The outcome will include recommendations for the future orientation of the programme. Although the study relates to the programme, that is to say the work of the secretariat, including its use of donor resources, the context is clearly the network and it will be necessary for the team to look at the results achieved through member institutes. The cooperation of all network members is being sought in order to provide performance information that can be reviewed by the team, and several member centres may be asked if they would receive a visit from the team.

The study is being conducted between February and May 2001, so that a detailed report can be circulated in time for consideration by Governments in September.

TRAINMAR programme coordinator

Mike Daunt, who has been coordinator of the programme for more than 12 years, while carrying out other responsibilities within UNCTAD as chief of the SITE Division's HRD section, is due to retire early in 2001. Efforts are being made to appoint a new coordinator to take over immediately he leaves.

Want more information concerning UNCTAD or TRAINMAR?
See the UNCTAD web page: < www.unctad.org >

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