

UNCTAD Ad-hoc Expert Meeting on Policy Interfaces between Trade and the SDGs

Monday, 12 October 2015
10h00–13h00, Room XXVII, Palais des Nations, United Nations Geneva

"The extensive development of equitable and mutually advantageous international trade creates a good basis for the establishment of neighbourly relations between States, helps to strengthen peace and an atmosphere of mutual confidence and understanding among nations, and promotes higher living standards and more rapid economic progress in all countries of the world." (Section 1, the Final Act of the UNCTAD I, (E/CONF.46/141, Vol. I), June 1964)

Background

On 25th September 2015, the United Nations (UN) member States adopted *the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The Agenda presents the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be globally achieved by the year 2030. According to the Agenda, the SDGs and the associated 169 targets are “integrated and indivisible”, and that “the interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realised”. “International trade is an engine for inclusive growth and poverty reduction, and contributes to the promotion of sustainable development”, so states *the Addis Ababa Action Agenda* of the 3rd Conference on Financing for Development (paragraph 79).

But do we really know how, and in which context, trade contributes to the promotion of a particular SDG? There is nothing novel about this approach: Linking trade outcomes to development has been the *raison d’être* of UNCTAD since its establishment in 1964 (UNCTAD, 1964).¹ In practice, however, it remains to be a considerable challenge for trade policymakers to map out exact policy “interfaces” between trade and the SDGs, particularly those in the social and the environmental dimensions.

UNCTAD **Ad-hoc Expert Meeting on Policy Interfaces between Trade and the SDGs** will seek to illuminate certain interlinkages between trade and the SDGs, with particular attention paid to how practitioners outside the trade community view the benefit, or the detriment, of trade to sustainable development in their own areas. Interactive debate will focus on:

- What are the key areas for policy coordination to make trade work for the SDGs?
- How can such policy coordination be accomplished?
- How can we “measure” the effectiveness of such policy coordination for future reviewing and monitoring of the trade-SDG linkages?

The outcome of the meeting will be reflected in UNCTAD’s forthcoming publication titled *Trade, Market Access, and the SDGs*.

Program

09.40-10.00 Registration

10.00-10.10 **Welcoming and introductory remarks**

- Joakim Reiter, Deputy Secretary-General, UNCTAD (TBC)
- Guillermo Valles, Director, Division on International Trade, UNCTAD

¹ See Section I of UNCTAD (1964), [Volume I: Final Act of the UNCTAD I](#) (E/CONF.46/141, Vol. I), June 1964.

10.10-11.30 **Session I: Does trade really matter to the SDGs? Views from development practitioners**

This session: (i) hears from development practitioners on how international trade interacts with their daily work in promoting sustainable development in different countries; and (ii) discusses what may be “policy interfaces”, or areas for policy coordination that are needed to make trade work for improving a country’s capacity to achieve the SDGs.

Speakers (in alphabetical order)

- David Cheong, Trade and Employment Specialist, ILO
- Elisabeth Losasso, Project Manager, WWF International
- Carlos Passarelli, Senior Expert, UNAIDS
- Marc Van Ameringen, Executive Director, Gain - Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition

Followed by interactive debate

11.30-11.40 *Coffee break*

11.40-12.50 **Session II: How do we make trade contribute to the SDGs? Can we “measure” it?**

Building upon the discussions at the 1st session, **this session:** (i) draws upon findings from successful policy coordination to use trade for social and/or environmental objectives; and (ii) discusses approaches to “measure” or assess effectiveness of such policy coordination for future reviewing and monitoring of the trade-SDG linkages.

UNCTAD experiences

- *Trade and Gender Program* - Simonetta Zarrilli, UNCTAD
- *Bio-trade Initiative* - Bonapas Onguglo, UNCTAD

Discussants (in alphabetical order)

- Giorgia Giovanetti, Professor of Economics, University of Florence
- Katherine Hagen, Executive Director, Global Social Observatory
- Jordie Keane, Economic Advisor, Commonwealth Secretariat
- Lichia Saner Yiu, President, Centre for Socio-economic Development -CSEND

Followed by interactive debate

12.50-13.00 **Wrapping up and the way forward**
