



DITC/COM/MISC/2022/3  
(22/241gd)

## NOTIFICATION

### Workshop on industrial hemp

Geneva, 18 January 2023

The UNCTAD secretariat has the honour to invite member States to a workshop on industrial hemp to be held with physical and remote participation on 18 January 2023, in Room XXI of the Palais des Nations, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

#### Background and purpose of the meeting

The Bridgetown Covenant, in paragraphs 123 and 127 (m) and (kk), encourages UNCTAD to continue its work on commodity dependence and on the challenges faced by developing countries in diversifying their economies. During the thirteenth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development, held from 10 to 12 October 2022, two meetings were dedicated to specific commodities based on the recent work of the UNCTAD Commodities Branch. These were bamboo and phosphates. In order to continue sharing UNCTAD research work on commodities with the public, the Commodities Branch will organize a workshop on industrial hemp at the Palais des Nations on 18 January 2023.

The UNCTAD Commodities Branch has recently produced a report on industrial hemp that will provide the background material for a forum on the ecological properties and economic potential of this commodity. National experiences will also be shared on the development of an industrial hemp value chain.

Industrial hemp does not have intoxicating properties. Nonetheless, it remains a controversial plant, as it is often mistakenly associated with use as an intoxicant. The report discusses the general uses of industrial hemp, and how they are reflected in international production and trade statistics. Based on current experiences and empirical expertise, the report also defines the steps that could be taken by developing countries where climate and agronomic characteristics are favourable to cultivate the crop in order to exploit its economic and social potential. The report provides some information about production worldwide and trade of industrial hemp products. Overall, about 40 countries currently produce some significant quantities of industrial hemp. However, due to a narrow set of hemp products covered by international trade statistics, recorded trade flows do not fully reflect the true size of the global industrial hemp market. Indeed, despite an estimated overall value of about \$5 billion in 2020, trade in such products, as reported in international trade datasets, amounted to a mere \$42 million. Thus, a clear effort is urgently needed to include a more representative set of hemp-related products in international product classifications.

Information about prices of hemp products is also scarce. Currently available sources of information are scattered and are not easily comparable. However, some patterns emerge within the sector. Important price differences exist between raw, semi-processed hemp, hemp yarn and more sophisticated derivative products. To fully exploit the potential of industrial hemp, countries would need to take specific actions. For instance, a clarification of the legal status of hemp as distinct from intoxicant cannabis substances could be the first step taken by Governments. A precise

understanding of production constraints imposed by regulatory frameworks in destination markets would also be necessary to identify market potential. Regional cooperation to facilitate the establishment of production chains may also be a strategy for developing countries to consider.

## **Participation**

This workshop is open to all member States of UNCTAD. Other organizations, including specialized agencies, intergovernmental bodies and non-governmental organizations in the general and special categories, as well as academia and the private sector, may participate as observers.

Experts will participate in the workshop in their personal capacities and are expected to have proven expertise in the subject matter. They may be selected from government ministries such as those dealing with trade, industry, agriculture, and may also be selected from the private sector, including representatives of producer associations or cooperatives, and non-governmental organizations.

Online registration is mandatory for all those wishing to attend the meeting and is required to be included in the list of participants. Please register for this session at [Workshop on industrial hemp](#). Registration requires uploading an official letter of nomination to represent an organization at this workshop. For government representatives, a note verbale or an email from the permanent mission in Geneva will suffice.

Further inquiries regarding registration should be sent to the UNCTAD secretariat, Intergovernmental Outreach and Support Service, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10; email: [meetings@unctad.org](mailto:meetings@unctad.org) and/or [commodities@unctad.org](mailto:commodities@unctad.org).

Experts wishing to participate as panellists should contact the UNCTAD secretariat by 10 January 2023. Please contact Marco Fugazza at [marco.fugazza@unctad.org](mailto:marco.fugazza@unctad.org).

## **Financial assistance**

Experts and meeting participants will participate in the workshop in their personal capacities. No financial assistance is available to facilitate participation.

## **Background documents and written contributions**

To facilitate the discussion, the secretariat has prepared a report titled *Commodities at a Glance: Special Issue on Industrial Hemp* (UNCTAD/DITC/COM/2022/1), a concept note and a provisional programme, all available online at <https://unctad.org/meeting/workshop-industrial-hemp>.

Experts are encouraged to prepare and submit to the workshop brief papers (of about five pages) related to one or more of the issues contained in the provisional programme and to the experiences of their countries.

## **Logistics**

The session will be held with physical participation, in room XXI of the Palais des Nations, and remote participation, through a simultaneous interpretation platform in English and French. A link to the formal virtual meeting will be sent to registered participants, at the email address used for registration, one day in advance of the start of the session.

Registration is required for all participants, attending virtually and in person [Workshop on industrial hemp](#). Before entering the Palais des Nations, participants are requested to collect their badges from the United Nations Security Service. Come well in advance and make sure you bring your valid UN Member State National Passport or ID card from a Schengen State. Because of the security measures in force, participants are strongly advised to arrive before 9 a.m. to complete entry procedures in good time and proceed to the meeting in Building E of the Palais.

For in-person attendance, before entering the Palais des Nations, participants are requested to collect their badges from the United Nations Security Service, at Villa Les Feuillantines, 13 avenue de la Paix. The Security Service is open from 8 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Because of the security measures in force, participants are strongly advised to arrive before 9 a.m. to complete entry procedures in good time and proceed to the meeting in Building E of the Palais through the Peace Gate bis. Participants are requested to carry a passport or similar national identity card with them. Taxis are not allowed to enter the grounds of the Palais des Nations. Visitors should therefore be dropped off at the indicated entrance gates. Furthermore, luggage may not be brought into the buildings unless the Security Service gives special clearance. [location of Villa Les Feuillantines](#) and how to [access the premises through the Peace Gate "bis"](#).

Please note that the United Nations Office at Geneva has established that wearing of masks is mandatory all United Nations Geneva conference rooms, both by meeting participants and staff. It is also strongly recommended that masks be worn in all indoor common spaces at the Palais des Nations premises while continuing to keep safe distances.

Taxis are not allowed to enter the grounds of the Palais des Nations; visitors should therefore be dropped off at the indicated entrance gates. Furthermore, luggage may not be brought into the buildings unless the Security Service gives special clearance.

### **Contact details**

All other enquiries should be addressed to Commodities Branch, UNCTAD, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10; tel.: +41 22 917 6286 / +41 22 917 5261; email: [commodities@unctad.org](mailto:commodities@unctad.org).



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