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Terms of reference for multi-year and single-year expert meetings*

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* These terms of reference were approved by the Extended Bureau of the Trade and Development Board on 31 October, 26 November and 30 November 2012. The terms of reference for the other multi-year expert meetings will be further discussed and approved at a later date.

I. Terms of reference for multi-year expert meetings

A. Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development¹

1. The Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development will form a continuation of the pre-Doha multi-year expert meetings on investment for development and on enterprise development policies and capacity-building in science, technology and innovation (STI) by expanding the scope of the expert deliberation to the new topics of the Doha Mandate and applying the outcome tools of the previous multi-year expert meetings to these new topics, namely the Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development, the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework and the Framework for Science, Technology and Innovation Policy.

(a) Investment for Productive Capacity-Building and Sustainable Development: The Regional Context (January 2013)

2. The link between productive capacity-building and regional integration is an essential component of today's strategies aiming at achieving inclusive growth and sustainable development. The expert group meeting will analyse the impact of regional integration, including subregional, regional and interregional initiatives, on investment flows and the integrating effects of regional investment clusters, and draw best practice policy lessons, including with regard to regional investment agreements, regional investment promotion and related sustainable development implications. (Doha Mandate, para. 65 (a), (b), (g) and (m)).

(b) Innovation for Productive Capacity-Building and Sustainable Development: Policy Frameworks, Instruments and Key Capabilities (April 2014)

3. The experts will discuss how developing countries can establish innovation policies adapted to their specific needs and environment. Attention will be paid in particular to the capabilities that developing countries can concentrate on as a priority for better innovation performance at the firm and at the economy-wide levels and to the role that regional and interregional cooperation can play in the development of capabilities relating to STI. The experience of developing countries with various innovation policy instruments (for example, innovation funding, fiscal incentives, technology parks and incubators, public-private partnerships and business-academia collaboration), and the linkages that should be developed with other policy areas will also be discussed. In this context, the role of global value chains in making STI capacity an instrument for supporting national development, helping local industry become more competitive and for developing export diversification efforts of developing countries (Doha Mandate, para. 56 (p)) will be analysed.

¹ Approved by the Extended Bureau of the Trade and Development Board on 31 October 2012.

(c) Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-Building and Sustainable Development (January 2015)

4. The meeting will address the various technical dimensions of the UNCTAD Entrepreneurship Policy Framework and analyse the nexus between entrepreneurship and productive capacity. Building on an assessment of existing developing countries' capacity strengths, the meeting will examine implementation in each area of the framework, including national entrepreneurship strategies, entrepreneurship policy road maps, their monitoring and evaluation, and the regional dimensions of the Framework (Doha Mandate, para. 65 (a), (g) and (m)).

(d) Wrap-up (December 2015)

5. The fourth session of the expert meeting will bring together the findings of the three preceding meetings, with a view towards refining UNCTAD's Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development, the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework and the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Framework.

B. Commodities and development²

1. Background

6. Commodities production and trade sustain the livelihoods of billions of people in the developing world, and commodities constitute essential inputs for a wide range of economic activities. Commodities also provide export revenues and employment, and contribute to poverty reduction. In value terms, they account for more than half of most developing countries' total merchandise exports. Therefore, major changes in international commodity markets have a direct impact on the economic performance of commodity-dependent developing countries (CDDCs), and on the well-being of their populations. For some countries, commodity dependence has been associated with poor economic performance.

7. Following decades of largely stagnating or falling prices, most commodities experienced rapidly rising prices from about 2003, except for the brief periods in late 2008 and 2009. However, this has not translated into inclusive growth and sustainable development in the majority of CDDCs for a variety of reasons.

8. Appropriate policy measures are, therefore, needed at all levels to strengthen export competitiveness; promote economic diversification, value addition, agricultural production and food security; and reduce poverty in CDDCs.

2. Objective

9. The objective of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development is to enable CDDCs to harness development gains from the integration of global markets and commodities trade and to address the commodities problematique, including the impact of commodity price volatility on vulnerable groups, so that they can meet internationally agreed development goals (e.g. Millennium Development Goals) and formulate sustainable and inclusive development strategies that promote economic diversification and value addition, and reduce poverty.

² The terms of reference were approved (except for the fourth session) at the Extended Bureau meeting on 30 November 2012. The terms of reference for the fourth session will be reviewed ad referendum.

3. Main issues

10. The multi-year expert meeting will:

(a) Monitor the developments, opportunities and challenges in commodity markets, giving due attention to those commodity sectors that are relevant to CDDCs.

First session – March 2013

(b) Review policies and strategies that propel commodities as an engine of sustainable and inclusive growth and development. In this context, the expert meeting would critically look at the following issues:

(i) Policy options that increase the participation of value chains; improve diversification, value addition and standards compliance; improve competitiveness, including managerial acumen and marketing skills; reduce transaction costs along commodity supply chains; and increase returns;

(ii) Policy tools that support CDDCs and improve institutional capacity-building, governance and transparency, research and development, agricultural extension services and training, commodity finance (including warehouse receipt systems) and market information services.

Second session – 2014

(c) Review and identify opportunities for commodity-based trade and development, with a focus on natural resources sectors – energy (oil and gas), and minerals and metals – with key issues relating to the energy matrix, including renewable energies; the capture of resource rents and their use for broad-based development (e.g. future generation fund, fiscal (taxation) regimes and sovereign wealth funds); and the integration of natural resources sectors in broad-based national development policies and strategies.

Third session – 2015

(d) Review and identify policy actions to mitigate the negative impact of growing volatility and price swings in commodity markets on global food security and economic welfare, so as to improve market functioning and countries' resilience to shocks; and increase access to market intelligence and financial resources, and market access for CDDCs.

Fourth session – 2016³

(e) Review and evaluate UNCTAD activities to assist CDDCs, in the light of the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals, as appropriate, including efforts to strengthen commodity production; improve food security and export competitiveness, taking into account the needs of small-scale producers, family, farms, women and youth, in their efforts to increase gains from commodity production and trade; address the negative impact of volatility in commodity markets and integrate sustainable and inclusive growth and development strategies into national policies.

11. In carrying out this work under the multi-year expert meeting, appropriate coordination will be undertaken, within UNCTAD's mandate, with relevant international, regional and other actors, including international commodity bodies that are already active in this area.

³ See footnote 2.

4. Expected outcomes

12. The Multi-year Meeting on Commodities and Development will provide a forum:

(a) For sharing country experiences with regard to benefiting and ensuring development gains from the commodity economy, particularly in commodity sectors that have experienced near-record high prices in the past couple of years;

(b) For examining ways and means to assist countries in dealing with long-standing challenges of commodity dependence, including overcoming difficulties in diversification, value addition, inefficiencies in supply-side capacities, volatile commodity prices, and Dutch Disease and governance issues in natural resource sectors;

(c) For learning from success stories in commodity trade, and identify practical options and actionable outcomes for addressing at all levels the opportunities and challenges of long-standing commodity trade and development issues. Such options and outcomes may be in the form of inventories of best practices such as family farming, checklists and indicative guidelines, sets of criteria or principles, and model frameworks;

(d) For reviewing and evaluating UNCTAD's contribution to assisting developing countries in the area of commodities trade and development.

5. Target experts

13. The multi-year expert meeting will serve as a forum on the interface between commodities trade and development that is sustainable and inclusive. Country experts should be nominated from government ministries and agencies dealing with commodities and agrifoods trade, and natural resources (e.g. minerals and metals, oil and gas), as well as from the private sector, including representatives of producer organizations (e.g. cooperatives), and practitioners from the industry, research institutions and civil society organizations.

II. Explanatory notes for single-year expert meetings⁴

A. Tourism's Contribution to Sustainable Development

1. Background

14. Cross-border travel for recreational and leisure purposes has become one of the fastest-growing economic activities worldwide. In many developing countries, tourism has not only become an important activity within the services sector but also an important source of employment and economic growth. This holds particularly true for the least developed countries and other developing economies that are endowed with natural and historical assets conducive to tourism activities.

15. The expert meeting will provide an opportunity to examine what developing countries need to do to build a sustainable tourism sector that contributes to structural transformation, inclusive economic development and poverty reduction. Therein sustainability refers to the economic, sociocultural and environmental aspects of tourism development. Further, the meeting aims to address linkages that tourism creates with different sectors, such as agriculture or construction, and to discuss mechanisms of how to make tourism beneficial to local communities.

⁴ At its meeting on 26 November 2012, the Extended Bureau approved the two topics for single-year expert meetings and took note of the explanatory notes.

16. The agenda will build on several institutional mandates, predominantly the Doha Mandate, the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

2. Objective

17. Contribute to the development of environmentally and socially sustainable tourism sectors.

3. Main issues

18. Given the multifaceted nature of tourism, the meeting will address a wider range of issues, including the following:

- (a) Environmental sustainability (e.g. environmental protection);
- (b) Social sustainability (e.g. local community development and the role of women in sustainable tourism);
- (c) Strengthening of cross-sectoral linkages;
- (d) Enterprise development and investment attraction;
- (e) Infrastructure development;
- (f) Human resources policies;
- (g) Laws and guidance to promote tourism;
- (h) Mainstreaming tourism in national development plans;
- (i) Role of South–South, North–South and triangular cooperation, including the role of development banks, in promoting and developing sustainable tourism sectors.

4. Expected outcome

19. Identify key issues and policy options related to the role of tourism for economic development, for consideration by the Trade and Development Commission.

5. Target participants

20. Tourism experts from member countries (government officials, private-sector representatives, civil society), academics, members of the United Nations Steering Committee on Tourism for Development.⁵

21. While UNCTAD will be the lead agency of the expert meeting, some sessions could be jointly organized with agencies of the Steering Committee.

⁵ International Labour Organization, International Trade Centre, UNCTAD, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Tourism Organization and World Trade Organization.

B. Assessing the Impact of Public–Private Partnerships on Trade and Development in Developing Countries

1. Objectives

22. Public–private partnerships can play an important role in ensuring that participation in global supply chains is conducive to the sustainable growth and development of developing countries and the building of the local supply capacity by developing countries' small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to engage and scale-up in these chains. The meeting will identify ways and means in which public–private partnerships in developing countries can help build local supply capacity, including through infrastructure development, and establish linkages between local producers and global supply chains, in particular in the agriculture and commodities sectors, with a view to drawing policy lessons. Every effort will be made to involve other relevant international organizations, regional commissions and regional development banks in the meeting.

2. Expected outcome

23. The expert meeting is expected to contribute to a better understanding of ways and means in which public–private partnerships in developing countries can help build local supply capacity, including through infrastructure development, and establish linkages between local producers and global supply chains. The expert meeting is also expected to result in an inventory of best practices in terms of addressing the challenges and difficulties faced by developing countries' SMEs in this regard, in particular in the agriculture and commodities sectors. Such understanding and inventory will help in the design of related policies and programmes in developing countries.
