



UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Trade Regulations Meeting.

25 - 27 September 2017, Room XXVI, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Draft Agenda

Regulations and standards are a main hurdle to trade. Business surveys as well as quantitative assessments show that with falling tariffs, Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) have become the more important impediment to trade. Challenges include costs of compliance and in particular the lack of transparency. At the same time, many regulations and standards provide benefits for consumer protection and other sustainable development objectives.

The Non-Tariff Measures Week sheds light on the importance of NTMs on international trade and development, and shows successful global and regional approaches to tackle the challenges including transparency initiatives and regulatory cooperation.

NTMs include a broad basket of policies that can potentially affect trade. On the one hand, traditional trade policy instruments, such as quotas or price controls (often termed non-tariff barriers), still persist in some sectors. On the other hand, a wide array of regulatory measures address, inter alia, health and environmental protection (Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures and Technical Barriers to Trade), post-sales services, rules of origin, government procurement and intellectual property. In the 21st century, such regulatory measures are a central focus in trade agreements and have a bigger impact on trade than traditional barriers. They are however also more complex and the line between legitimate public policy objectives and protectionism is blurred.

The Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST) developed a taxonomy for the International Classification of NTMs, which became a common language for the international trade community, including for researchers, regional and international organizations as well as governments. This was the first step towards enhancing transparency and understanding of NTMs. Significant effort has also been made in the subsequent global and comprehensive mapping of NTMs by UNCTAD and its partners. The current NTMs database covers more than 80 per cent of world trade.

The Meeting follows up on the September 2015 and October 2016 Expert Meetings on NTMs Classification to take stock of the policy agenda and the further development and revision of the NTMs taxonomy. The meeting aims at a revised version of the International Classification on Non-Tariff Measures. The focus of the first two days is on mandatory NTMs, followed by one day on Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS). All interested participants are welcome to the NTMs week.

MAST group members:



International
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25 September to 26 September 2017 NTMs Week and MAST meeting

Monday, 25th September 2017

10.00 - 10.30

Opening remarks

Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD (tbc)

How do NTMs link to economic, social and environmental objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda?

10.30 - 11.30

Policy Debate: the Role of Transparency in Trade-Related Regulations

High-level policy makers and experts discuss transparency in trade-related regulation. Which information do SMEs, policy makers, and trade negotiators need, and what is missing? How can trade costs be reduced while allowing for consumer and environmental protection? What is the outlook on transparency and regulatory cooperation in the multilateral trading system?

11.30 - 13.00

Global and Regional Initiatives on NTMs Transparency and Regulatory Cooperation

Global and regional organizations from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America share their experiences. Which lessons can be learnt from their efforts to enhance transparency on NTMs and approaches to address regulatory divergence and non-tariff barriers?

Lunch Break

15.00 - 16.30

NTMs and Economic Integration: Why do trade regulations matter?

Leading experts present new evidence shedding light on the diverse area of NTMs and trade restrictiveness. Which lessons can be drawn for unilateral policy making and trade agreements?

16.30 - 18.00 am

Boosting Sustainable Development: Impact of NTMs and Policy Responses

How can policy makers support sustainable development by addressing NTMs in a smart way? New research and case studies are presented for different countries and regions.

Tuesday, 26th September 2017

10.00 - 12.00

The International Classification of NTMs: State of Play for Revision

Chairs of the six working groups present the newly developed or revised chapters of the International Classification to lay the ground for improved transparency of a wider range of NTMs.

12.00 - 13.00

Break-out Sessions: Expert Working Group Meetings

Working groups meet to discuss in detail their progress in the development or revision of chapters and finalize their technical work.

Lunch Break

15.00 - 16.30 **Break-out Sessions: Expert Working Group Meetings, cont.**

16.30 - 18.00 **Revised Classification and Adoption**

MAST members and observers adopt the revision of the International Classification of NTMs.

Wednesday, 27th September 2017

10.00 - 18.00 **Voluntary Sustainability Standards and International Trade**

Policy Makers and Experts focus on voluntary standards
