



DITC/TNCD/MISC/2014/1
(14/09gd)

NOTIFICATION

Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development

Geneva, 15–17 April 2014

The second session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development will be held on 15–17 April 2014 in room XXVI of the Palais des Nations, Geneva. It will commence at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 15 April.

Background and purpose of the meeting

Infrastructure services sectors – transport, energy and financial services, and services relating to information and communications technologies – are essential to the efficient functioning of all modern economies and strengthened productive capabilities. Access to some essential infrastructure services sectors are also fundamental to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and future post-2015 sustainable development goals, including in achieving universal access to water, energy, finance and digital technology, and in eradicating poverty.

The Doha Mandate, adopted at UNCTAD XIII, stresses that development of services and access to them, supported by adequate regulatory and institutional frameworks, is important for sound socioeconomic development. The objective of the expert meeting is to identify “best fit” practices in regard to policymaking, regulations, institutions and trade negotiations, with a view to linking services, trade and development in a balanced manner and including strengthening national services regulation without creating trade barriers.

Regulatory and institutional frameworks matter strongly in the functioning of many infrastructure services, owing to their nature as essentially network industries, large economies of scale (as a result of large sunk costs) and high information asymmetries (financial, related professional services). Devising adequate regulatory and institutional frameworks that are best fit to national circumstances and priorities have emerged as the key challenge to Governments. One important aspect of the regulatory framework deals with opening of markets through trade liberalization. Countries have undertaken trade liberalization of infrastructure services at multilateral and regional levels with a view to supporting national regulatory objectives.

The second session of the multi-year expert meeting will discuss the trends in the production, trade and regulation of infrastructure services sectors and examine in detail the services sectors’ regulatory and institutional frameworks and liberalization at the regional level, and how parties to regional trade agreements negotiate joint infrastructure services provisions and regulations. Particular attention will be given to the liberalization commitments of regional trade agreement partners in the infrastructure services sectors and the cooperation arrangements between regional trade agreement partners on infrastructure building and on regulatory cooperation. Another important issue is how to achieve developmental regionalism combining market access with cooperation frameworks inter alia to build productive capacity. Professional services relating to these sectors will also be discussed.

Participation

Experts, who will participate in the meeting in their personal capacities, are expected to have proven expertise in regulation, policymaking or trade negotiations in any of the sectors mentioned above. The meeting may also be of interest to experts from research institutions, civil society and the private sector whose focus is on infrastructure services sectors and their linkages with the rest of the economy, including other services. Member States of UNCTAD are requested to inform the secretariat of the names of their participating experts at an early date, not later than **15 March 2014**. Specialized agencies and international and regional intergovernmental bodies wishing to participate in the meeting, as well as non-governmental organizations in the general category and those in the special category wishing to participate as observers, are requested to inform the UNCTAD secretariat of the names of their representatives **by 15 March 2014**.

Experts are encouraged to prepare and submit to the meeting brief papers (5–12 pages) related to one or more of the issues contained in the provisional agenda, which will be available on the UNCTAD website. These papers will be made available to the meeting in the form and language in which they are received. They should be sent in advance of the meeting to the coordinators in the UNCTAD secretariat whose contact details are provided in this notification.

Financial assistance

Depending on the availability of funds in the Trust Fund for Financing the Participation of Experts at the time of nomination, funds may be allocated to finance the participation of a limited number of officially nominated experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Governments requiring funding are therefore invited to explicitly request this in their letters of nomination. It should be understood that funds currently available in the dedicated trust fund are very limited (up to a total of three experts for each meeting), and nominations shall be considered based on that availability. The decision as to which experts should receive financing will be based on the direct involvement and expertise of the nominated experts, on the principle of equitable geographical representation and on the needs of beneficiaries, in particular least developed countries. Changes in the experts nominated will be considered as new nominations.

Nominations with requests for funding should be received no later than **5 March 2014** and should be accompanied by the following information about the nominee:

- (a) Curriculum vitae
- (b) Mailing address
- (c) Telephone and fax numbers
- (d) E-mail address
- (e) Name of a contact person in the respective permanent mission in Geneva.

Once the list of experts to be financed has been finalized, all travel arrangements will be made in accordance with United Nations rules and regulations – that is, the use of the least- costly fare will be applied.

Background documents

The provisional agenda for the meeting, together with the secretariat's annotations thereto, will be circulated as document TD/B/C.I/MEM.4/4 In order to facilitate the discussion, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared an issues note, which will be circulated as document TD/B/C.I/MEM.4/5

Logistics

The meeting will take place at the United Nations Office at Geneva, Palais des Nations. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the six official languages of the United Nations.

Upon arrival, participants are requested, before entering the Palais des Nations, to collect their badges at the United Nations Security Service, Pregny Gate entrance, 14 Avenue de la Paix. The Security Service is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Because of the security measures in force, participants are strongly advised to arrive before 9 a.m. in order to complete entry procedures in good time and proceed to the meeting in the E-Building (Bâtiment E) of the Palais. 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, and visitors will therefore be dropped off at the entrance gates. Furthermore, luggage may not be brought into the buildings unless the Security Service gives special clearance.

Nominations and enquiries

Nominations and related communications concerning representation at the meeting should be sent to the UNCTAD secretariat, Intergovernmental Support Service, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10; fax: 41 22 917 0214; e-mail: meetings@unctad.org.

All other enquiries should be addressed to the coordinators in the substantive divisions, tel.: 41 22 917 5866 or 41 22 917 5640; fax: 41 22 917 0044; e-mail: mina.mashayekhi@unctad.org and aurangzeb.butt@unctad.org.

(p.p. signed)

Mukhisa Kituyi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

21 February 2014