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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation
and Development
Expert meeting on increasing the participation of developing
countries' SMEs in global value chains
Geneva, 18–19 October 2007

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Expert meeting on increasing the participation of developing countries' SMEs into global value chains
4. Adoption of the report of the meeting

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Item 1. Election of officers

1. It is recommended that the expert meeting elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. The provisional agenda for the expert meeting is reproduced in section I above. A detailed programme will be available one week before the meeting.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/EM.31/1 Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3. Expert meeting on increasing the participation of developing countries' SMEs into global value chains

3. At its forty-first executive session, held on 18–20 April 2007, the Trade and Development Board agreed that the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development should convene an expert meeting on increasing the participation of developing countries' SMEs in global value chains.

4. Global value chains refer to the interrelated production activities performed by firms at different geographic locations. In the new global economy, companies now have the ability to source products and services from a variety of vendors at various stages of their operations. Although several aspects of global value chains are now largely understood, notably their main drivers and governance structure, their impact on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in both developed and developing countries, has not yet been thoroughly researched. A joint research project, recently conducted by UNCTAD, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the University of Fribourg and Geneva entitled "Enhancing the Role of SMEs into Global Value Chains", aims to shed light on these issues.¹

5. The expert meeting will contribute towards the work of UNCTAD on policy analysis on enterprises' competitiveness, particularly that of SMEs. The meeting is expected to contribute towards raising awareness and sharing best practices on policies that favour the integration of SMEs into global value chains. It should complement UNCTAD's earlier work that focused on policy formulation and analysis on SME development, and increase technical cooperation in this area, particularly in the context of the Aid for Trade initiative.

6. The outcome of the meeting will be used to complete a checklist of initiatives to advise developing countries on how to set up and sequence the implementation of a productive capacity programme. The outcome of the expert meeting will also be directly relevant to the 2008 Commission on Enterprise, with the theme "Entrepreneurship in Africa", leading to UNCTAD XII. It will support the São Paulo Consensus that recognized the importance for developing countries and economies in transition to "build stronger supply capabilities responsive to market demands, promote technology development and transfer,

¹ The Government of Switzerland, through the Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN/RUIG), funded the research.

encourage enterprise networking, increase productivity and improve the competitiveness of their enterprises”.

7. To facilitate the discussion, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared an issues note. The expert meeting will also benefit from the lessons learned from UNCTAD’s technical assistance projects in this area. In addition, experts are encouraged to prepare brief papers on the subject under discussion. These papers will be made available at the meeting in the form and language in which they are received.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/EM.31/2 “Enhancing the participation of small and medium enterprises in global value chains”, issues note by the UNCTAD secretariat

Item 4. Adoption of the report of the meeting

8. The report of the expert meeting will be submitted to the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development at its next session. The expert meeting may wish to authorize the Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chairperson, to prepare the final report after the conclusion of the meeting.

Inputs from experts

Experts nominated by member States are encouraged to submit brief papers (approximately five pages) as contributions to the work of the meeting. The papers should be submitted to the UNCTAD secretariat in advance of the meeting. Papers, which will draw on national and private sector experience, will be made available at the meeting in the form and language in which they are received.

Experts are requested to submit papers by 1 October 2007 to: Ms. Fulvia Farinelli, Enterprise Development Branch, Division on Investment, Technology and Enterprise Development, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, Fax: +41 22 917 0122, E-mail: Fulvia.Farinelli@unctad.org