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**Trade and Development Board**  
**Trade and Development Commission**  
Thirteenth session  
Geneva, 21–25 November 2022

## **Report of the Trade and Development Commission on its thirteenth session**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, 21 to 25 November 2022

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## Introduction

The thirteenth session of the Trade and Development Commission was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 21 to 25 November 2022, with physical and remote participation.

### I. Action taken by the Trade and Development Commission at its thirteenth session

#### A. The role of trade in a development-led global energy transition

(Agenda item 6)

##### Agreed conclusions

###### *The Trade and Development Commission*

1. *Reiterates* that international trade is a critical driver for transforming economies through diversification and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 7 on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
2. *Welcomes* the continuation of related substantive discussions on (a) commodities and development; and (b) trade, services and development, through respective multi-year expert meetings;
3. *Acknowledges* the role that trade in services plays in economic diversification; takes note of the expert discussions on digitally deliverable services and their current regulatory practices; and takes note of the creation of the informal working group on services data;
4. *Acknowledges* the constructive considerations of the background document prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat on how trade and trade policy could promote a sustainable energy transition, particularly of developing countries;
5. *Stresses* the importance of synergies between UNCTAD and relevant United Nations and other international organizations within their respective mandates and resources concerning the role of trade in a sustainable global energy transition to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, leaving no one behind, including with the trade divisions of the United Nations regional commissions;
6. *Expresses concern* about the cost-of-living crisis and its adverse impact, especially on developing countries;
7. *Notes with appreciation* the capacity-building initiatives carried out by the UNCTAD secretariat for developing countries for sustainable development, on issues such as non-tariff measures, alternative economic frameworks such as the circular economy, sustainable oceans economy, trade and gender, competition and consumer protection law and policy and voluntary sustainability standards; and encourages UNCTAD to continue its work in these areas;
8. *Calls upon* the UNCTAD secretariat to continue to examine the effects of climate change in terms of trade on developing countries and how environmental sustainability can promote global trade;
9. *Calls upon* the UNCTAD secretariat to continue to monitor and report on trade trends and policies, including their impact upon competition, consumer protection and the creative economy;
10. *Encourages* knowledge-sharing and the promotion of cooperation and partnership in the areas of science, technology and innovation between stakeholders, notably between Governments, the private sector and civil society, including academia, to facilitate technology development to support the energy transition;

11. *Further calls upon* the UNCTAD secretariat to continue to support the competitiveness of developing countries in the production and trade of renewable energy and to analyse how international trade and trade policy can facilitate the global energy transition.

*Closing plenary meeting  
25 November 2022*

## **B. The geography of trade and supply chain reconfiguration: Implications for trade, global value chains and maritime transport**

(Agenda item 7)

### **Agreed conclusions**

#### *The Trade and Development Commission*

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of trade facilitation, customs automation, adequate transport infrastructure, services, port management and a conducive legal and regulatory framework and of ensuring the efficiency, sustainability and resilience of trade logistics systems;
2. *Recognizes with appreciation* the capacity-building initiatives carried out by UNCTAD in developing countries on trade facilitation, transit, customs automation, sustainable freight transport, public–private partnerships in logistics, shipping connectivity, supply chain resilience, port management and transport law;
3. *Recognizes* the efforts mobilized by the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) Programme to assist member States, including the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, in automating, harmonizing and simplifying efficient customs procedures and catalysing customs reforms through the use of state-of-the-art technology and proven experience on the field; and notes the appreciation expressed by the beneficiary countries;
4. *Encourages* the ASYCUDA Programme to continue to extend its scope beyond customs automation to facilitating international trade and building electronic-government solutions that connect government agencies, such as assistance in building national single window systems based on advanced technology, including by securing relevant financial resources;
5. *Notes* that the impact of the pandemic on the maritime supply chain has tested the ability of maritime logistics to maintain the efficient flow of global trade, highlighting the importance of resilience, competition, trade facilitation and digitalization, regional trade and logistics cooperation and a just transition towards sustainable shipping;
6. *Commends* UNCTAD on *Review of Maritime Transport* and other related publications and the importance of their analysis, insights and maritime statistics for sound maritime transport, in particular in view of challenges that arose due to the pandemic;
7. *Calls upon* UNCTAD, in line with the Bridgetown Covenant, to reinforce its work to support the implementation of trade facilitation reforms, including the Agreement on Trade Facilitation of the World Trade Organization, and enhance its support for the development and the implementation of appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks.

*Closing plenary meeting  
25 November 2022*

## **C. Other action taken by the Commission**

1. The Trade and Development Commission, at plenary meetings on 21 and 25 November 2022, considered agenda items 3, 4 and 5.

### **(a) Reports of expert meetings**

(Agenda item 3)

#### **(i) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development**

2. On behalf of the Chair of the thirteenth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development, the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur presented the report.

3. The Commission took note of the report, as contained in document TD/B/C.I/MEM.2/55.

#### **(ii) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development**

4. On behalf of the Chair of the ninth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development, the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur presented the report.

5. The Commission took note of the report, as contained in document TD/B/C.I/MEM.4/27.

#### **(iii) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Enhancing the Enabling Economic Environment at All Levels in Support of Inclusive and Sustainable Development, and the Promotion of Economic Integration and Cooperation**

6. The Chair of the fifth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Enhancing the Enabling Economic Environment at All Levels in Support of Inclusive and Sustainable Development, and the Promotion of Economic Integration and Cooperation, presented the report.

7. The Commission took note of the report, as contained in document TD/B/C.I/MEM.8/15.

#### **(iv) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation**

8. On behalf of the Chair of the ninth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation, the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur presented the report.

9. The Commission took note of the report, as contained in document TD/B/C.I/MEM.7/27.

### **(b) Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy**

(Agenda item 4)

10. On behalf of the Chair of the twentieth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy, the UNCTAD secretariat presented the report.

11. The Trade and Development Commission took note of the report, as contained in document TD/B/C.I/CLP/66, and endorsed the agreed conclusions as contained therein.

### **(c) Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy**

(Agenda item 5)

12. On behalf of the Chair of the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy, the UNCTAD secretariat presented the report.

13. The Trade and Development Commission took note of the report, as contained in document TD/B/C.I/CPLP/32, and endorsed the agreed conclusions as contained therein.

## II. Chair's summary

### A. Opening plenary meeting

14. In her opening remarks, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD stated that the pandemic, climate change and the cost-of-living crisis were leading to increased poverty and hunger at an alarming speed and that geopolitics were driving globalization at present. In this regard, the Commission had two substantive topics on its agenda. The Secretary-General, regarding the two topics, emphasized that trade policy and regional trade agreements could go a long way towards promoting regional value chains in the renewables industry, to support in particular developing countries with regard to productive diversification in low-carbon growth; and that trade facilitation, including digitalization, played a major role in addressing some of the systemic challenges with regard to international trade. The Secretary-General concluded by stressing that development needed to be returned to the centre of the international policy agenda on trade, logistics and the energy transition.

15. Some regional groups and several delegates noted that, as climate change was leading to existential challenges in several countries, urgent action was required, to shift to a low-carbon global economy. In this context, one regional group and several delegates welcomed the outcomes of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Another regional group and some delegates noted that a holistic and multilateral approach was needed in order to address climate change-related challenges. One regional group and one delegate stated that, to be sustainable, the global energy transition had to be economically viable, particularly in developing countries. A few regional groups and one delegate stressed the important role of the international trading system in the transition and that trade agreements could enhance regional harmonization, cooperation and renewables production. In addition, one regional group and some delegates stated that a just, fair and development-friendly transition was critical, recalling the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. One regional group and one delegate noted that the energy transition was both a challenge and an opportunity. Another delegate noted challenges related to the commercialization of renewables, affordability, raw material needs and the development of storage facilities; stated that the politicization of energy had led to price increases in global hydrocarbon markets; and noted the need for a gradual, balanced and technologically neutral transition. One regional group and some delegates noted that trade-restricting measures might hinder efforts towards the energy transition. Another regional group noted that the war in Ukraine had disrupted global energy systems, affecting people worldwide, and exacerbated existing trends in tightening energy and food markets, triggering price volatility and energy security risks. One regional group and several delegates stressed that technology transfer, capacity-building, equitable access to markets, resource mobilization and access to finance were crucial in developing countries, to ensure a sustainable, development-led transition. In this context, two delegates noted that renewables value chains were concentrated in a few countries and that developing countries needed to participate in higher value added productive activities rather than merely raw material exports.

16. A few regional groups and one delegate stressed the ongoing disruptions and uncertainties in production, trade, global value chains and maritime transport. One regional group highlighted the fragility of the global supply chain network during the pandemic and the need to scale up investment and capacity-building, for trade facilitation reform in developing countries, noting UNCTAD support in this regard. Another regional group noted that maritime logistics could have significant impacts on import and consumer prices, particularly in small island developing States. One delegate noted lingering disparities, particularly among countries in Africa, which faced the highest intraregional trade costs. Another delegate stressed that landlocked developing countries depended on transit transport, leading to high trade costs and the reduced competitiveness of exports in world markets. In addition, one delegate stated that high transit and maritime transport costs could have adverse effects on the energy transition. Some regional groups and delegates stressed

the importance of systematically strengthening the resilience of maritime transport by scaling up investment in infrastructure, capacity-building, digitalization and climate change adaptation in developing countries. One regional group and one delegate noted that regional trade agreements, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement, had the potential to increase cross-border trade among developing countries. A few regional groups and several delegates noted that the supply chain crisis due to the pandemic and the energy crisis could have significant repercussions in developing countries, particularly small island developing States and landlocked developing countries. One regional group stressed the importance of strengthening the resilience of maritime transport and seaports by investing in sustainable infrastructure, services and processes, including in terms of the digital transition. In response to queries from two delegates on the role of UNCTAD in helping mitigate the impacts of supply chain disruptions in landlocked developing countries and the least developed countries, the secretariat underscored the importance of automated customs systems and political will and trust between transit corridor coordinators. Some regional groups and several delegates noted the role of UNCTAD in the multilateral trade system; expressed appreciation for its research and analysis, technical assistance and capacity-building programmes, including trade facilitation tools and guidelines, for example with regard to ASYCUDA, port management, the train for trade programme and the electronic commerce programme, as well as UNCTAD leadership as part of the United Nations Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance; and encouraged continued work in these areas, including supporting structural transformation in developing countries, bearing in mind particularities in landlocked developing countries and the least developed countries.

#### **Presentations by the Division on International Trade and Commodities and the Division on Technology and Logistics**

17. The first presentation was on the geography of trade and supply chain reconfiguration: implications for trade, global value chains and maritime transport. The secretariat noted that all countries benefited from maritime transport, for supply chains, affordable consumer prices and the delivery of essential goods. The pandemic had stalled developments in these areas due to increased costs and decreased shipping connectivity, also affected by the economic slowdown and the war in Ukraine, and some emerging trends in maritime transport would have long-term consequences. Donor communities could pay more attention to the sector and help developing countries build resilience, and developing countries could prepare by making maritime transport and seaports more resilient; ensuring competition and options for diversification in the sector; investing in trade facilitation and digitalization; supporting regional trade and logistics cooperation, to supplement multilateral solutions; and aiming for a just and fair transition towards low-carbon shipping.

18. The secretariat, in its second presentation, on the role of trade in a development-led global energy transition, noted that the climate crisis made the need for this transition urgent and highlighted the key messages in the background document. International trade served as a catalyst for increasing the adoption of climate-resilient trade policies, practices, technologies and production methods. A one-size-fits-all set of trade policies, to enable the growth of renewables output, was not feasible, as options depended on local demands, natural endowments, fiscal and investment incentives and technological absorptive capacities.

19. During the ensuing discussion, some delegates highlighted the challenges faced in landlocked developing countries and transit countries, often negatively affected by geopolitics. One delegate provided an example from Chad, where there were difficulties in transforming energy sources to energy, and requested information about the work of UNCTAD on opportunities for the least developed countries and the role of the circular economy in the energy transition. One regional group noted the need for further analysis of the energy transition by UNCTAD. Finally, the secretariat emphasized that it was essential for various stakeholders to coordinate.

**B. Reports of expert meetings**

(Agenda item 3)

**(a) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development**

20. The Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, in presenting the report of the thirteenth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development, cited two examples of diversification from primary commodities, namely, in the Dominican Republic and in Mauritius, where the economy had been diversified through investment in tourism and services, to reduce dependence on sugar production.

**(b) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development**

21. The Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, in presenting the report of the ninth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development, noted that the creation of an informal working group on services data had been suggested. The secretariat would issue a note verbale for member States to respond with expressions of interest and nominations of experts prior to the first meeting of the informal group, to be held in the first quarter of 2023.

**(c) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Enhancing the Enabling Economic Environment at All Levels in Support of Inclusive and Sustainable Development, and the Promotion of Economic Integration and Cooperation**

22. One delegate stressed the usefulness of the multi-year expert meeting process for developing countries and in creating opportunities for developing countries to exchange experiences regarding the advantages and benefits of regionalization, for diversification and participation in regional value chains. Another delegate stated that the findings in the report of the meeting were helpful for developing countries, as they contributed to the process of the consolidation of issues by the Commissions and the Trade and Development Board; and that, as part of the revitalization efforts noted in the Bridgetown Covenant, it was important to discuss the mechanisms to be put in place to ensure that the findings and recommendations in the report were translated into broader policy discussions.

**(d) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation**

23. Two delegates highlighted the logistical challenges and difficulties in landlocked developing countries and transit countries and the need to create corridors to facilitate transport from the nearest ports. One delegate emphasized the need for stronger cooperation between donors and developing countries, to set up logistical and transport infrastructure along inter-State corridors. Another delegate suggested establishing a forum for the negotiation and exchange of views, to find practical and holistic solutions for the trade facilitation of transit transport. One delegate highlighted the importance of UNCTAD technical assistance and capacity-building.

**C. Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy**

(Agenda item 4)

**D. Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy**

(Agenda item 5)

24. One delegate noted that peer reviews could provide, in addition to recommendations, procedures for their implementation, including with capacity-building from UNCTAD.

## **E. The role of trade in a development-led global energy transition**

(Agenda item 6)

25. The Commission held two panel discussions to discuss the agenda item. The first panel featured experts from the following entities: Permanent Mission of Chile to the World Trade Organization; International Renewable Energy Agency; HDF Energy; and Consumers International. The secretariat, in its introduction, noted that, to achieve net zero emissions, energy from renewable sources needed to cover 90 per cent of electricity generated by 2050. Trade provided opportunities in the rapidly growing renewables market and access to the goods and services needed for renewables production. Trade policy could drive the energy transition by helping to lower tariff and non-tariff barriers, and regional trade agreements could facilitate renewables production and consumption networks. The key questions were as follows: How are developing countries promoting renewables access and production? How do cross-border dimensions help in this regard? How do trade negotiations contribute to a just and equitable transition?

26. The first panellist shared the experience of Chile in renewables production and trade. She noted that the national energy policy had evolved over the past 25 years, involving significant institutional and political reforms. There was potential for energy from solar, wind, hydro and other sources, and investment was required in the energy network, to integrate renewables and build an intelligent energy system. In addition, more infrastructure was required for transmission, storage, response to demand and diversification of sources. A focus on renewables could also lead to social gains, such as economic growth and the possibility of moving towards a more comprehensive production matrix. The panellist concluded by highlighting that a fair energy transition could help societies become more resilient, increase productivity, develop more sustainable economic sectors and create more jobs and opportunities. Financing the transition required environmental taxes, environmentally sustainable policies and the expansion of innovative financial instruments.

27. The second panellist discussed the contribution of developing countries in building global capacity for renewables. In 2021, 80 per cent of new global energy capacity had been from renewables, with the majority from solar and wind power, and 70 per cent of new capacities had been concentrated in a few countries and regions. In Africa, investment in renewables was low, despite the significant potential and energy needs on the continent, and in Latin America, there was a reliance on hydropower, which could be affected by climate change. Countries could use renewables to decrease energy dependence. The panellist highlighted three factors to be considered: cross-border renewables trade would become increasingly important; hydrogen was a significant source and domestic uses would likely increase; and there was potential for the diversification of economic output through the production of green commodities. The panellist concluded by noting that the International Renewable Energy Agency supported a holistic approach to changing the entire energy system, which would impact other economic sectors, and that the circular economy needed to be embedded, to make a business case for the energy transition.

28. The third panellist discussed how to provide access to the technology and finance required to achieve the energy transition, noting green hydrogen as one of the key drivers, to decarbonize human activities, industries and mobility. Many new renewables projects had been announced, but only 10 per cent were being implemented and had reached the feasibility stage. With regard to international trade, renewables exports presented an opportunity for Africa to take part in the global energy transition, for example via exports to Europe, and the panellist noted that such a longer-term vision required affordable national projects, which needed to be facilitated. For example, the main challenges in Eastern and Southern Africa were affordability, high interest rates and the significant subsidization of energy.

29. The fourth panellist addressed the role of consumers in the future of renewables production, trade and prices. Small and medium-sized enterprises depended on consumer trust and consumers needed to be empowered in the energy transition. Good practices and successful interventions differed by country and included energy efficiency awards, dialogues about the transition, the provision of switching services and support for renewables collectives. Consumers could make different choices, yet the cost-of-living

crisis and the climate crisis were leading to changes and consumers needed a fast, fair and accountable transition. Policymakers needed to consider not only the supply side but also the demand side, and needed to increase awareness, affordability, availability, reliability and safety and to provide support for consumers in making changes at home. The panellist concluded by noting that the increasing recognition of the importance of protecting consumers was encouraging and that the aim needed to be to make sustainability an easy choice for consumers.

30. During the panel discussion, the panellists discussed how to leverage local capabilities. North–South capacity-building was important in terms of access to technology and know-how, but South–South cooperation was also crucial. A new approach needed to come from the private sector and banks, for a transformative change. The production of green energy needed a market and consumers needed such energy to be readily available. Demonstrational projects were a feasible option and affordability was crucial. In rapidly changing sectors, consumers needed to be involved in discussions with regulators from the start, following which civil society groups could exchange international best practices, and consumers also required transparency about changes and which technologies could be trusted; vulnerable communities needed to be supported in a tailored way. Finally, the panellists noted that data governance was crucial and that regulators needed to build in appropriate data protection measures.

31. During the ensuing discussion, one regional group and some delegates reiterated the importance of capacity-building and training in developing countries and the role of multilateral banks and development partners in financing the energy transition in developing countries. One regional group and one delegate noted challenges in Africa, including with regard to ensuring affordability, meeting demand and striking a balance between environmental sustainability and energy transition needs. Two delegates stressed the need to consider the full costs and benefits of the transition and how some markets were significantly affected by geopolitical tensions. One regional group and two delegates highlighted national and regional commitments, efforts and policy measures related to the transition. One regional group cited examples of bilateral and regional initiatives for financing the transition in developing countries. One delegate highlighted the main outcomes of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties with regard to the energy transition. One regional group stressed that there was a need to develop domestic policies, which required capacity and investment; that trade could provide incentives; and that there was a need to incorporate the broader economy of countries, to integrate economies into green value chains. Finally, the panellists stressed that international trade governance could contribute to meeting climate and energy commitments; that there was a need to intensify discussions on technology transfer in trade forums and for better national technological capacities; and that domestic projects that attracted investment for production and maximized local employment needed to come first.

32. The second panel featured experts from the following entities: Economic Commission for Europe; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. The secretariat, in its introduction, detailed three scenarios of energy consumption depending on the shares of fuel type and associated carbon emissions.

33. The first panellist noted the divergent levels of energy consumption in Europe. In 17 economies in transition, the share of renewables in consumption ranged from 0.1 to 40 per cent; the overall average share of renewables in the region had remained unchanged at 20 per cent since 2014 despite continuing growth in wind power and photovoltaic capacity. The panellist noted a set of initiatives in the region and the need to develop new regulatory tools to facilitate the increased use of renewables. She highlighted the increase in trade in energy-related goods, which was growing faster than trade in manufacturing products, electricity and renewables. Questions remained with regard to green hydrogen, such as in terms of transportation, the unequal distribution of critical raw materials worldwide and the storage of excess energy. The panellist concluded by stating that trade policies on tariff and non-tariff barriers, the harmonization of technical requirements, the development of international standards and the promotion of trade agreements that included provisions on sustainable development could help in finding solutions.

34. The second panellist highlighted the differences across countries among the 33 member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. He detailed various initiatives in the region, including cooperation with stakeholders in organizing subregional and regional platforms, as well as national initiatives such as efforts in Bhutan to produce and sell hydropower and efforts in the Lao People's Democratic Republic to sell electricity to neighbouring States. The panellist noted findings from a recent report indicating that higher tariffs and more non-tariff measures were applied to green products compared with carbon-intensive products and that many new regional trade agreements contained one or more provisions on the environment but that this had not led to decreases in imports of carbon-intensive products.

35. The third panellist highlighted the high potential in Western Asia for energy generation through solar and hydropower. Many member States had a good energy mix while continuing to produce and export oil. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia aimed to facilitate trade agreement discussions, including on the energy transition and emissions reduction goals. The panellist noted with concern that the introduction of trade barriers would negatively affect developing countries and slow progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. At present, free trade agreements in Western Asia did not include provisions on the energy transition and incentives were lacking, despite the potential for developing renewables in the region.

36. The fourth panellist emphasized advances in capacity to produce and utilize renewables in Latin America and the Caribbean. The share of energy from renewables had risen from 25 per cent in 1971 to 34 per cent in 2020, and 61 per cent of the region's electricity came from renewable sources. Hydrogen production could transform the energy landscape; the main producers in the region were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago. The panellist highlighted the potential of green hydrogen and noted that, while over half of the world's lithium reserves were in the region, countries needed to focus on exporting processed mineral products rather than only raw minerals. The panellist suggested imposing higher tariffs on fossil fuels, lowering tariffs on renewables products and using government procurement tools to discourage the production of fossil fuels and stimulate the use of renewables. In this regard, multilateral agreements were the most efficient tool with which to explore new rules and cooperative approaches.

37. During the ensuing discussion, in response to a query on a mechanism to ensure the sustainable mining of critical minerals, one panellist suggested that minerals could be traced through supply chains, which could contribute to encouraging sustainable mining. One delegate queried whether non-tariff measures were sufficient as a tool for curbing the use of fossil fuels. One panellist noted that power plants required significant investment and could not be shut down quickly; therefore, a gradual move to other solutions was needed, such as importing hydrogen, and incentives needed to be created for countries to shift away from fossil fuels. In response to a query from one delegate, citing the example of high import taxes on solar panels in India, on whether this was a good strategy for promoting the domestic production of solar panels, one panellist noted that it might not be the best approach as it harmed consumers and did not provide support for local production; Governments could consider trade and investment, in particular foreign direct investment, in supporting companies in building solar panels. Another panellist noted that Governments could also match energy transition policies with innovation policies. One delegate emphasized concerns with regard to the environmental impact of the large-scale production and exportation of hydrogen. One panellist noted in this regard that precautionary principles were fundamental. Another panellist noted that the choice of producing hydrogen was a strategic national decision and that countries needed to ensure they had World Trade Organization-compliant trade incentives for achieving a good energy mix. One panellist highlighted that there were various types of hydrogen with varying impacts and that countries needed a gradual process of investing in technology and regulation in order to ensure the protection of the environment. One delegate expressed concern that the State of Palestine remained behind in achieving targets under the Sustainable Development Goals and proposed a joint working group of various United Nations entities, to help countries achieve their goals. Another delegate highlighted challenges faced in developing countries, including the lack of finance, technology and capacity to commence green projects. One panellist suggested that transitional finance, focused on solutions that might not be

fully green but “greener” could be useful. Another panellist noted that countries needed to design regional trade agreements with preferential treatment for the least developed countries, to protect fragile countries. In response to a query from one delegate on how to initiate and advance hydrogen production, one panellist highlighted the importance of foreign direct investment and of government assistance with financing and supportive policies.

## **F. The geography of trade and supply chain reconfiguration: Implications for trade, global value chains and maritime transport**

(Agenda item 7)

38. The Commission held two panel discussions to discuss the agenda item. The first panel featured experts from the following entities: International Association of Ports and Harbours; East African Community; Guinea Shippers’ Council; and Gyeongsang National University, Republic of Korea. The secretariat, in its introduction, discussed long-term trends in maritime transport and implications of the supply chain crisis. In recent decades, the global shipping network had improved in some areas; at the same time, a more monopolistic or oligopolistic market structure had emerged. Since the pandemic, these trends had not continued, and it remained to be seen whether the change was temporary or indicated a long-term shift towards nearshoring rather than market consolidation.

39. During the panel discussion, the first two panellists indicated key action areas, to prepare for future crises and the energy transition including, among other elements, infrastructure upgrades, trade facilitation reforms, harmonized and transparent regulations and guidelines, capacity-building, digitalization, coordination and information exchanges. The third panellist stressed the need to account for region-specific contexts and highlighted challenges in landlocked developing countries, noting the need for assistance from UNCTAD and development partners in establishing trade facilitation mechanisms and port and hinterland infrastructure. The fourth panellist detailed a project on developing a port infrastructure sufficiency index, which compared the leading 50 ports by container throughput, including with regard to punctuality, safety and security and digitalization, and noted that the index could be expanded to include developing countries.

40. During the ensuing discussion, several delegates stressed the logistical challenges in developing countries. One regional group and one delegate noted challenges regarding adopting the latest technologies, training the workforce and standardizing the regulatory framework. Two delegates emphasized the adverse impacts of the global supply chain crisis and the food and energy crisis on small island developing States, noting that mitigation required further technical and financial assistance. One delegate highlighted the logistical challenges in landlocked developing countries and one panellist stressed the importance of technology in connecting such countries. Another delegate stressed that the energy transition and climate change could lead to increased shipping costs, and shared initiatives regarding alternative transport routes. One delegate detailed emerging challenges regarding exploration for deep-sea minerals. Another delegate noted concerns with regard to the security of maritime transport and port infrastructure. One delegate welcomed further discussions on planning the Global Supply Chains Forum; another delegate proposed the creation of a working group on maritime shipping costs; and yet another delegate proposed that at future sessions, the Commission could discuss the supply chain management of agricultural commodities. In response to a query from one delegate on the impact of nearshoring, one panellist noted the importance of continued support from the industry, to address underlying issues. In response to a query from two delegates on the role of UNCTAD, the secretariat highlighted the three pillars of the work of UNCTAD and cited the example of a recent assessment of the short-term greenhouse gas mitigation measure under the International Maritime Organization, which had found that there would be more adverse impacts on developing and small island economies and recommended that revenues from a future market-based measure should be invested in delivering technical assistance to countries affected by mitigation measures.

41. The second panel featured experts from the following entities: Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry, Timor-Leste; Revenue Authority, Gambia; General Customs

Commission, Iraq; and Revenue Authority, Rwanda. The secretariat, in its introduction, emphasized that in order for trade to become a driver of growth and to maintain competitiveness in the world economy, developing countries needed efficient trade logistics systems, digitalization and change management, cooperation among government agencies and the private sector and to learn from experiences in other countries.

42. The first panellist detailed the experience of Timor-Leste in implementing the Agreement on Trade Facilitation and noted work with UNCTAD in the development of customs legislation and modernization, detailing benefits such as increases in revenue, predictability and productivity. He stressed that the weak network infrastructure and capabilities gap were the key challenges faced in advancing on trade facilitation reforms.

43. The second panellist presented the experience of the Gambia in upgrading ASYCUDA and highlighted the key benefits of the use of ASYCUDA, including flexibility, accessibility and fully integrated processes. Key results included reductions in the time and of the costs needed to clear goods and an increase in customs revenues. The panellist noted challenges faced due to funding issues and the impacts of the pandemic.

44. The third panellist detailed efforts in Iraq, in cooperation with UNCTAD, to automate national customs procedures through the implementation of ASYCUDA. The panellist highlighted the progress achieved to date and the support provided by UNCTAD to customs authorities, including through a series of capacity-building workshops.

45. The fourth panellist detailed trade facilitation reforms in Rwanda. She noted the challenges addressed through the use of ASYCUDA and the benefits, including significant reductions in trade costs and time spent on clearance procedures and improved trader compliance, data security, integrity and transparency. The panellist indicated the following key elements in the success of the implementation: political will and commitment; involvement of the private sector; appropriate information technology infrastructure; staff capacity-building; and digitalized processes. She stressed the importance of private sector involvement and automated procedures in speeding up the clearance process.

46. During the ensuing discussion, one delegate expressed appreciation for support provided by UNCTAD for the Gambia Revenue Authority, highlighting implemented trade facilitation reforms and positive effects, and suggested the further sharing of policy strategies, to ensure that transport and trade facilitation remained cost effective in the delivery of goods and services. One delegate highlighted the supply chain challenges in the State of Palestine and barriers to the movement of goods across the border, noting that technology transfer was essential to logistics facilities and the need for concrete solutions to transit challenges faced in landlocked developing countries. One delegate shared the experience of Tajikistan in trade facilitation reforms and collaboration with UNCTAD in strengthening various trade capacities, including the implementation of ASYCUDA. With regard to a query from one delegate on projects in Iraq, one panellist stated that assessments would be conducted at the end of each of the three ASYCUDA implementation stages. One delegate highlighted the benefits of the use of ASYCUDA in Zimbabwe and expressed support for UNCTAD capacity-building in trade and transport facilitation.

## **G. Progress report on promoting and strengthening synergies among the three pillars**

(Agenda item 8)

47. The UNCTAD secretariat presented overviews of work conducted under the three pillars of work of research and analysis, consensus-building and technical cooperation.

### **Presentation of the activity report of the Division on Technology and Logistics**

48. The Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics presented the work of the division under the three pillars. She noted research conducted by the Division in various areas and highlighted the flagship publication *Review of Maritime Transport*, which addressed issues related to recovery from the pandemic, shifts in trade patterns, digitalization, decarbonization and market consolidation. The Director stated that technical

cooperation work was mainly demand driven and noted the positive impacts of ASYCUDA through greater revenue and increased transparency and accountability. For example, significant impacts included, in Bangladesh, a 50 per cent increase in customs revenue in 2017–2021 and, in Burundi, a reduction in customs processing to less than 24 hours with regard to 71 per cent of medical imports. With regard to consensus-building, among other activities, work on maritime connectivity, conducted jointly with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, had not only been normative but also helped to build capabilities with regard to policies for improving maritime transport activities; participating countries in this initiative included Cambodia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Thailand and Viet Nam. In 2021–2022, the train for trade port management programme had trained 3,791 operators, 37 per cent of whom were women. Finally, as an example of a good practice, the Director noted the project on transport and trade connectivity during the pandemic, conducted in collaboration with the regional commissions.

49. During the ensuing discussion, one delegate indicated support for the work of the Division related to *Review of Maritime Transport* and the implementation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation. Several delegates detailed the benefits of the deployment of ASYCUDA in national trade systems. With regard to a query from one delegate on analytical studies on the correlation between the implementation of ASYCUDA and the increase in revenue, the Director noted that econometric studies had not been conducted but that observations showed an increase in revenue across countries and that this could be explained through the greater levels of transparency, efficiency and accountability brought by the use of ASYCUDA.

#### **Presentation of the activity report of the Division on International Trade and Commodities**

50. The Director of the Division on International Trade and Commodities presented the work of the division under the three pillars. In line with the Bridgetown Covenant, the Division aimed to ensure a competitive business environment in which markets worked for consumers, including with regard to removing barriers to trade, ensuring post-pandemic recovery, reducing commodity dependence, capitalizing on the digital transformation in services trade and measuring the impacts of illicit trade. For example, the Division had provided support for the development and implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area online mechanism for monitoring, reporting and eliminating non-tariff barriers, including the provision of training for 2,500 officials in collaboration with the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat. The Director provided examples of the work of the Division, including the following: support for about 300 small-scale cross-border traders in Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, with a focus on women; projects on economic diversification in Malawi and Togo; a project on the oceans economy and trade strategies in the Eastern Caribbean and Central America; projects on reducing commodity dependence in Ethiopia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia and Uzbekistan; hosting of the second illicit trade forum, held in September 2022; participation in the fourth Oceans Forum on trade-related aspects of Goal 14, held in April 2022; a project on blue biotrade in the Eastern Caribbean; and a project on the oceans economy and trade strategies in Barbados, Belize and Costa Rica.

51. During the ensuing discussion, one delegate highlighted the importance of the work of the Division. Another delegate emphasized the success of training delivered by the Division to senior public officials in the State of Palestine.

### **III. Organizational matters**

#### **A. Opening of the session**

52. The thirteenth session of the Trade and Development Commission was opened at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 21 November 2022, by Mr. Enkhtaivan Dashnyam (Mongolia), Vice-Chair of the twelfth session.

**B. Election of officers**

(Agenda item 1)

53. At its opening plenary meeting, on 21 November 2022, the Trade and Development Commission elected the following officers to serve on its Bureau:

Chair: Ms. Usha Chandnee Dwarka-Canabady (Mauritius)

Rapporteur: Mr. Seçkin Özbek (Türkiye)

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Devabrata Chakraborty (Bangladesh)

Ms. Maira Mariela Macdonal Álvarez (Plurinational State of Bolivia)

Mr. Prasith Suon (Cambodia)

**C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

(Agenda item 2)

54. At its opening plenary meeting, on 21 November 2022, the Trade and Development Commission adopted the provisional agenda for the session (TD/B/C.I/52). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Reports of expert meetings:
  - (a) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development;
  - (b) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development;
  - (c) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Enhancing the Enabling Economic Environment at All Levels in Support of Inclusive and Sustainable Development, and the Promotion of Economic Integration and Cooperation;
  - (d) Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation.
4. Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy.
5. Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy.
6. The role of trade in a development-led global energy transition.
7. The geography of trade and supply chain reconfiguration: Implications for trade, global value chains and maritime transport.
8. Progress report on promoting and strengthening synergies among the three pillars.
9. Other business.
10. Adoption of the report of the Commission to the Trade and Development Board

**D. Other business**

(Agenda item 9)

**Draft provisional agenda of the fourteenth session**

55. At its closing plenary meeting, on 25 November 2022, the Trade and Development Commission agreed that the Trade and Development Board, upon the recommendation of the Bureau of the Board, would decide on the agenda.

**E. Adoption of the report of the Commission to the Trade and Development Board**

(Agenda item 10)

56. At its closing plenary meeting, on 25 November 2022, the Trade and Development Commission authorized the Chair to finalize the report after the conclusion of the meeting. The report would be submitted to the Trade and Development Board for consideration.

## Annex

### Attendance\*

1. Representatives of the following States members of the Conference attended the session:

Afghanistan	Kuwait
Albania	Lebanon
Algeria	Madagascar
Angola	Mauritius
Argentina	Mexico
Bangladesh	Mongolia
Barbados	Morocco
Belgium	Mozambique
Benin	Nepal
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Niger
Botswana	Nigeria
Brazil	Pakistan
Burkina Faso	Peru
Cabo Verde	Philippines
Cambodia	Qatar
Chile	Russian Federation
China	Rwanda
Congo	Saudi Arabia
Cuba	Senegal
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Serbia
Dominican Republic	Seychelles
Egypt	Sri Lanka
El Salvador	State of Palestine
Eswatini	Sudan
Ethiopia	Thailand
Gambia	Timor-Leste
Georgia	Trinidad and Tobago
Germany	Tunisia
Guatemala	Türkiye
Guinea	Uganda
Guyana	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Haiti	United Republic of Tanzania
Honduras	United States of America
India	Uruguay
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Iraq	Viet Nam
Jamaica	Yemen
Jordan	Zambia
Kenya	Zimbabwe

2. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

Common Fund for Commodities  
European Union  
Islamic Development Bank  
Organization of Islamic Cooperation  
Union of African Shippers' Councils

\* This attendance list contains registered participants. For the list of participants, see TD/B/C.I/INF.13.

3. The following specialized agencies and related organizations were represented at the session:

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia  
Economic Commission for Africa  
Economic Commission for Europe  
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
United Nations Children's Fund  
United Nations Development Programme  
United Nations Institute for Training and Research  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  
Universal Postal Union  
World Trade Organization

4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the session:

*General category*

Consumers International  
Global Traders Conference  
International Network for Standardization of Higher Education Degrees

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