



DTL/KTCD/Misc/2012/4
(12/118gd)

P166.2012.N2

NOTIFICATION

Twenty-fifth Regional Course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda for Western Asia

**Diplomatic Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sultanate of Oman,
3–21 November 2012**

The UNCTAD secretariat is pleased to announce that the next regional course on key issues on the international economic agenda for Western Asia will take place from **3 to 21 November** 2012 at the Diplomatic Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sultanate of Oman.

The course will focus on the links between trade, investment, finance and development, in the context of international trade negotiations. Its aims are to:

- (a) Enhance the understanding of the interrelationships among these areas and their link to countries' development strategies; and
- (b) Provide participants with knowledge and skills for the design and implementation of trade and development policies, as well as for trade negotiations corresponding to the needs and interests of their countries.

The course syllabus will draw on UNCTAD's analytical work and the lessons learned from its technical cooperation activities, with input from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCA) as well as national experts.

The course is mainly aimed at government officials in ministries and institutions dealing with trade, investment, finance and development issues, and involved in formulating and implementing national trade and development policies. As appropriate, and depending upon the availability of seats, other applicants such as academics from universities could be also considered.

The course will be given in English. The Diplomatic Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs will make available simultaneous interpretation into Arabic.

UNCTAD member States in Western Asia are invited to nominate qualified candidates, who will be examined by an UNCTAD selection committee. Nominations will be accepted until **24 August 2012**. Member States and successful candidates will be notified of the committee's decisions by **7 September 2012**.

Member States are encouraged to nominate more than one candidate per country, in which case they may wish to rank the candidates. The selection committee will take this ranking into consideration, provided that the preferred candidates meet the eligibility criteria.



UNCTAD will provide hotel accommodation for all participants, who will also receive sufficient funds to cover daily meals and miscellaneous expenses. Selected participants will be responsible for their own travel costs and for taking out adequate travel and medical insurance and obtaining a valid visa for travel to Muscat prior to their arrival in the Sultanate of Oman. Travel funds covering the least costly fare will be provided for participants from least developed countries

An outline of the course syllabus, which provides a detailed list of topics and learning objectives (P166.2012.TS. 2) is attached, along with the application guidelines (P166.2012.AG. 2) and application form (P166.2012.AF.2). Candidates will be considered only if the guidelines and application procedures are followed properly.

For additional information, please contact the Knowledge Sharing, Training and Capacity Development Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD, *e-mail*: mohan.panicker@unctad.org; *fax*: +41 (0)22 917 0050; *tel*: +41 (0)22 917 2561.

Supachai Panitchpakdi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

2 July 2012

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Course syllabus

This syllabus gives a short overview of the content of the different modules. For each module, participants selected to attend the course will be expected to gather information on a number of issues before the beginning of the course, so that they can contribute to discussions on the different modules using the experience of their countries.

Module 1: Trade, financial flows and macroeconomic policies in a globalizing economy

Objectives: This module highlights topical economic issues at the global level and explores their implications for countries' development policies. It introduces participants to UNCTAD's integrated approach, examining the interdependence between different policy areas including macroeconomic management and international trade and financial integration, in order to discuss growth and development challenges. The module's principal objectives are (a) to examine global economic dynamics and the attendant challenges faced by developing countries – in particular those related to inclusive economic growth and macroeconomic policymaking; (b) to enhance participants' understanding of the direction in which current macroeconomic policy choices are heading, especially in the major developed economies, the challenges for international coordination and what this implies for policymakers in developing countries; and (c) to help participants recognize the challenges and opportunities for development emanating from globalization, and the policy approaches for enhancing investment and growth.

Expected outcome: At the end of this module, participants will have deepened their understanding of the implications of trade and financial integration for inclusive economic growth, structural change and technological upgrading. They should also be able to understand key challenges related to macroeconomic and regulatory policies in order to prevent crises and enhance investment and growth. Participants will thus develop their capacities to pursue appropriate policies and strategies in these areas at the national, regional and international levels.

Questions:

1. What are the major macroeconomic challenges that your country is facing, and how are your country's policies addressing these challenges? What domestic and international constraints affect the choice of policies and their effectiveness?
2. How has your country used foreign trade as an instrument for economic growth? How have your country's terms of trade developed over the past few years? What have been the main changes in the composition of your country's exports and imports in the recent past, and what factors have caused these changes?

Module 2: Investment and enterprise development: trade and development implications

Objective: The objective of this module is to define and evaluate the impact of foreign investment on development, and to highlight best practices on how to create linkages between transnational corporations (TNCs) and domestic enterprises.

The module addresses issues related to international and domestic investment and trade. It begins by examining the latest trends in flows of foreign direct investment (FDI), corporate strategies, and international systems of production with an emphasis on Western Asia. This provides a basis for an assessment of the links between investment and international trade – the integration of developing countries into international systems of production (also called global production networks) as suppliers and producers. Attention is paid to linkages between small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and TNCs in order for developing countries to benefit from global trading opportunities, as well as to the need to promote entrepreneurship and strengthen the local supply capacity to sustain competitiveness in the long-term. The focus during the whole module is on the policies, institutions and strategies that can best attract FDI and “embed” it in host economies.

Expected outcome: At the end of this module, participants will be able to define and evaluate the impact of foreign investment on development. Participants will also be able to identify the policies, institutions and strategies that can be put in place to attract and enhance the impact of foreign investment through technological and financial spillovers, growth of employment and exports, TNC-SME linkages and local enterprise development. Participants will also have a firm grasp of global trends in foreign investment flows.

Questions:

1. National FDI policies: What are the perceptions of the role of FDI in your country? Does your country receive enough, too much, or too little FDI? Does it receive the right kind of FDI? Is the role of FDI positive or negative? Has your country developed a national policy on FDI? If so, what are the key objectives and instruments of this policy? What institutions are responsible for the implementation of the FDI policy in your country? What are their mandates, as regards FDI policy?
2. Regarding national enterprise development policies, are there any links between large foreign companies and local enterprises in your country? Looking at the domestic enterprise sector, is there any positive spillover in terms of technology transfer? What are the policies that the Government has put in place to support the small and medium-sized enterprise sector? Are there clusters of sectorally specialized companies that have been successful in attracting FDI and have become internationally competitive?

Module 3: The knowledge economy: harnessing science, technology and innovation for development

Objective: The objective of this module is to familiarize participants with how countries can harness science, technology and innovation (STI) to address development problems through the design and implementation of national STI policies and strategies with an emphasis on Western Asia.

The sources of economic growth and development include technological progress and innovation. Harnessing STI has contributed to economic and social progress in many countries. It has also been a key part of the development strategies in several developing countries that are developing quickly and are catching up with the most advanced economies. This module discusses what STI is, how it can contribute to growth and development, and what types of policies and strategies countries can design and implement to build STI capabilities, promote successful technology transfer and develop strong innovation systems.

There is huge diversity among countries in many respects, and national STI strategies and policies must take account of different country circumstances. But the argument will be made that all countries can harness STI in ways that support growth, development, and improved social welfare, regardless of their specific circumstances. The module is therefore relevant for economic policy analysts and policymakers from all countries.

Expected outcome: Participants will understand (a) the role that science, technology and innovation can play in stimulating economic and social development; (b) the concept of innovation systems; and (c) how national policies can be used to build STI capabilities and promote technological progress and innovation.

Questions:

1. What roles do technology and innovation play in the development process of your country? What are the main weaknesses and strengths of your country's scientific, technological and innovative development?
2. Does your country have a national policy and/or strategy on science, technology and innovation (STI)? What period does it cover? Are there any budgetary resources allocated to the implementation of the policy/strategy?

Module 4: International transport and trade facilitation

Objective: The objective of this module is to introduce participants to key issues in international trade logistics, transport, and trade facilitation, with an emphasis on Western Asia. Participants will also discuss trade facilitation measures at the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as at regional negotiations, by gathering the elements required to establish a national position in these negotiations. To this end, the module will look at the role of international transport for countries' trade competitiveness, global transport networks, trade support services, and institutional frameworks, as well as customs issues and trade facilitation measures that are presently being negotiated at WTO. In this context, the module will also elaborate on countries' needs and priorities, capacity-building, and technical assistance, as part of the modalities of a potential negotiation of new binding rules on trade facilitation at WTO.

Expected outcome: At the end of this module, participants will better understand the role of institutional and physical trade infrastructures in fostering trade competitiveness in terms of supporting productive and trading capacities; they can grasp the relevance of trade and transport facilitation and their importance in trade transactions, at national, regional and multilateral levels.

Questions:

1. Please describe one practical example from your country where insufficient or inadequate transport services are an obstacle to trade competitiveness. Please discuss the possible roles of national governments, port authorities, customs, international organizations, the private sector and neighbouring countries (e.g. for transit trade) in overcoming this obstacle.
2. From the list of trade facilitation measures that are being negotiated at WTO (see the latest revision of Draft Consolidated Negotiating Text TN/TF/W/165), select one or more measures that, in your view, are important for your country, and should therefore reasonably be accepted by your Government as measures to possibly be included in a WTO rule on trade facilitation. Please gather information from the national institutions concerned, about the extent to which the measure has already been implemented in your country. If the measure is not fully implemented, what would be required for its effective implementation?

Module 5: Development gains from the international trading system: the perspective of developing countries in Western Asia

Objectives: This module will (a) examine developments in the international trading system, especially in view of the global financial and economic crisis and its impact on development and the Millennium Development Goals; (b) review the state of play in multilateral trade negotiations under the Doha Round of international trade negotiations, as well as issues of particular relevance for Western Asian countries and policy options in that regard; (c) consider broader trade and trade-related policy reform issues to achieve structural transformation and to draw maximum development gains from the international trading system; and (d) investigate ways and means to

maximize the beneficial effects of regional trade agreements, for instance by adopting coherent national approaches to regional and multilateral negotiating processes, mitigating adjustment costs, and exploring export opportunities in regional partners for diversification of their economies.

This module is expected to provide a set of policy recommendations on ways and means to improve engagement in the multilateral, regional and bilateral integration processes for Western Asian countries to benefit development and to take into account today's rapidly evolving economic and development environment, especially the financial and economic crisis.

Expected outcome: At the end of this module, participants will be able to identify and understand key challenges and opportunities in the international trading system. They will also be cognizant of important factors affecting the design of appropriate national policies and strategies, to maximize gains from their integration into the global economy and to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis.

Questions:

1. Could you list the constraints facing your country in drawing gains from international trade and the international trading system, and explain why?
2. What are the elements of the new development path, in view of the economic and financial crisis and reforms of trade policy?
3. In your opinion, what could be a way forward in the multilateral negotiations to overcome the current deadlock?
4. Explain how the multilateral negotiations can deliver development gains to transition economies in the current context.

Module 6: Simulation exercise on national policy objectives and the multilateral trade negotiations

Objective: Simulation of the dynamics of a multilateral trade negotiation. Participants will be exposed to different negotiating positions of both developed and developing countries. The exercise will be based on a negotiation issue raised at WTO. Participants will draft proposals and attempt to achieve national consensus on a specific multilateral trade provision.

Expected outcome: At the end of the simulation exercise, participants will be able to understand the dynamics and challenges of the international trading system and of international trade negotiations, and will thereby develop their negotiating skills and be able to propose policy reforms on trade.

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Application guidelines

Applicant profile

The course is aimed mainly at mid-level government officials dealing with international economic issues, including the formulation and implementation of policies in one or more fields covered in the attached training syllabus.

Participants should:

- (a) Have an advanced degree in economics, business, international relations, international law or public administration. A first degree with proven relevant work experience may also be accepted if places on the course are available;
- (b) Have between 4 and 10 years of relevant professional experience in a national public administration, an international or regional development organization, a research institute or university dealing with the above-mentioned areas;
- (c) Be in a position to use and disseminate the information and knowledge acquired during the course. In this context, it is highly desirable for participants to remain in relevant positions for a sufficient time after the course, so that the skills and knowledge gained are disseminated to the fullest at their workplace;
- (d) Have a full working knowledge of English, the official language of the course, with proven drafting and oral communication abilities in this language.

Instructions on completing and submitting applications

Candidates are required to submit their applications in English. Applications must include the following four documents:

- (a) An application form (P166.2012.AF.2);
- (b) A detailed curriculum vitae;
- (c) A motivation letter stating (i) how the applicant in the discharge of his/her professional duties contributes to policy design and implementation in the areas of trade, investment or finance; (ii) how the course will contribute to enhancing his/her professional and personal development; and (iii) why the applicant feels he/she should be chosen to attend this course; and
- (d) A short paper answering any two questions in the training syllabus (one paragraph only per question) relevant to his/her national context.

Applications should:

- (a) Be submitted to UNCTAD through the candidates' permanent mission accredited to the United Nations Office at Geneva;
- (b) Contain **all** the requested documents;
- (c) Be addressed to:
Mr. Mohan Panicker, Project Coordinator,
Knowledge-sharing, Training and Capacity Development Branch,
Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Fax: +41 22 917 0050
E-mail: mohan.panicker@unctad.org; and
- (d) Reach the UNCTAD secretariat by **24 August 2012**.

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Application form (please print or type)

Last name: _____ First name: _____

Middle initial: _____ Maiden name: _____ Gender (F/M): _____

Job title: _____

Ministry/institution: _____

Postal address: _____

Tel. No.: _____ Fax No.: _____

E-mail address: _____

Date of birth: _____ Place of birth: _____

Nationality: _____ Passport No.: _____

Signature of candidate: _____ Place and date: _____

Name and title of supervisor: _____

E-mail and/or fax of supervisor: _____

I am submitting my application to UNCTAD through the Permanent Mission of _____ accredited to the United Nations Office at Geneva, together with the following documentation (please check boxes):

- A detailed curriculum vitae
- A motivation letter stating my competencies and motivation for this course
- A short paper answering any two questions in the course syllabus (one paragraph only per question) relevant to the national context of my country

Applications must reach the UNCTAD secretariat by 24 August 2012.