



**United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development**

Distr.: Restricted
18 April 2017

Original: English

Trade and Development Board

Sixty-fifth executive session

Geneva, 27 June 2017

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**Designation of non-governmental organizations for
the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board**

Application from the World Free Zones Organization

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

Executive summary

The UNCTAD secretariat has received an application from the World Free Zones Organization requesting its inclusion by the Trade and Development Board in the list provided for in rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board.

Having reviewed the information provided, the secretariat is of the opinion that, subject to the concurrence of the Bureau of the Board, the World Free Zones Organization may be classified in the general category under the provisions of paragraph 12 (a) of Board decision 43 (VII).

The Board may wish to take action on the above-mentioned application at its sixty-fifth executive session.

Information on the World Free Zones Organization is annexed to this note.



Annex

World Free Zones Organization: Background information

History

1. In May 2014, the World Free Zones Organization launched the concept of a global free zone organization under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, and began operations with 14 founding members. Following an intensive global outreach programme, membership grew quickly, and the World Free Zones Organization entered the first quarter of 2015 with 155 free zone members from 40 different countries.
2. In November 2014, the World Free Zones Organization Observatory was launched – a research division created to build a comprehensive knowledge base and atlas of the estimated 3,500 free zones in the world. Its findings will inform international economic and trade policies and provide free zones with comparative data and relevant insights to help them devise the most effective strategies.
3. In 2015 and the first half of 2016, the focus of the World Free Zones Organization was on maintaining the momentum generated in 2014, and on developing new member services and promoting free zones to global decision makers, policy advisers and the wider business community.

Aims and objectives

4. The board of directors and executive management of the World Free Zones Organization have established a number of key objectives. The following objectives form the mandate of the association and underpin all the activities of the Organization:
 - (a) Bring together free zones; regional, national, subnational and local free zone associations; consultants and advisors to free zones; free zone users; interested governmental organizations; and international trade related organizations, for knowledge exchange, education and training, networking and business development
 - (b) Provide a forum for free zones around the world to learn, grow and prosper through access to exclusive in-depth research and insights
 - (c) Create best-in-class standards for free zones that enhance the economic ecosystem both globally and in local markets, as well as guidelines for the establishment and administration of free zones
 - (d) Gather, create, expand and disseminate knowledge of, and about, free zones internationally
 - (e) Improve the perception of free zones globally and position them as areas that make valuable contributions to the local economy and promote sustainable business
 - (f) Provide specialized operational, administrative, educational and networking services to members, partners and observers through training as well as physical and electronic resources
 - (g) Support and advise new free zones internationally as they develop.

Membership

5. The World Free Zones Organization includes all of the following countries and entities (public and private) with a proven interest in the promotion and development of free zones and multilateral organizations:

(a) Voting members: Governmentally recognized free zones and/or free zone associations (regional, national, subnational and local)

(b) Associate members: Individual or corporate users of free zones and consultants and advisors who work with, work in or advise free zones

(c) Partners and observers: Non-governmental organizations involved in the area of international trade and governmental and quasi-governmental authorities in trade or customs

(d) The Organization has received 245 applications from the following 61 economies: Argentina, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Gabon, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Paraguay, Panama, the Philippines, Poland, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Singapore, Spain, the Sudan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, Viet Nam, Curaçao, Puerto Rico, Taiwan Province of China.

Structure

6. The governing bodies of the World Free Zones Organization are the General Assembly of Voting Members, the Board of Directors and other bodies that may be established pursuant to the articles of association of the Organization, detailed as follows:

(a) The General Assembly is the supreme authority of the Organization, and is composed of all members

(b) Voting members who are juristic persons shall be represented by an individual from within that juristic person who is duly authorized to act on their behalf

(c) The Board of Directors shall inform the members in writing of the date and venue of any meeting of the General Assembly, including the proposed agenda, at least four weeks prior to the date of the meeting

(d) The Organization holds an ordinary annual general meeting once a year. It may also meet in extraordinary meetings whenever necessary, by decision of the Board of Directors or at the request of at least one fifth of the members submitted to the Board of Directors stating the proposed agenda items. The Board of Directors shall convene an extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly within six weeks following such a request

(e) The World Free Zones Organization holds its Annual International Conference and Exhibition each May. The next conference will be held from 3 to 5 May 2017 in Cartagena, Colombia, and the conference in 2018 will be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

7. The current Board of Directors includes the following directors: Mohammed Alzarooni, United Arab Emirates; Martin Ibarra, Colombia; PC Nambiar, India; Rose Hynes, Ireland; Julie Brown, United States; Kenneth Carlstedt, United States; Isidoro Hodara, Uruguay; Chris Ndibe, Nigeria; Juan Pablo Rivera, Colombia; José Luis Rodríguez, Spain; Mehdi Tazi-Riffi, Morocco; François Bost, France; Nasser Al Madani, United Arab Emirates; Jing Wang, China.

Finance

8. The World Free Zones Organization signed an agreement on 14 January 2014 with Free Zone Development FZE, a free zone establishment incorporated in the Dubai Airport Free Zone, under which the Organization shall receive an unconditional grant of up to Dh8,000,000 (\$2,178,649) on an annual basis for three years, in addition to any project

expenses, equipment costs and annual rent. In 2015, the branch was awarded a grant of \$3,861,635, used to compensate expenses and to acquire fixed assets.

9. The financial statement for the year ended 31 December 2015 is provided in the table.

World Free Zones Organization: Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2015
(United States dollars)

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Revenue (note 4) | |
| Sponsorship fees | 995 271 |
| Conference participation fees | 157 618 |
| Membership fees | 111 330 |
| | 1 264 219 |
| Grant income (note 5) | |
| Grants related to income | 3 294 261 |
| Grants related to assets | 567 374 |
| | 3 861 635 |
| Less: deferred income | (749 990) |
| | 3 111 645 |
| General and administrative expenses (note 6) | |
| Conference and seminar expenses | 1 481 971 |
| Payroll and related benefits | 848 180 |
| Legal and professional charges | 555 981 |
| Travel expenses | 440 980 |
| Office rent | 415 232 |
| Regional representative fees | 136 460 |
| Depreciation | 56 899 |
| Amortization | 19 683 |
| Pre-operating expenses | - |
| Other expenses | 363 128 |
| Total | 4 318 514 |

Relations with other international organizations

10. The World Free Zones Organization has consultative status with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

Publications

11. The World Free Zones Organization issued a quarterly bulletin in 2016 (see http://www.worldfzo.org/Publications/WorldFZO_Bulletin%20Issue7.pdf).

Liaison

12. Liaison with UNCTAD will be carried out by:

Mr. Samir Hamrouni
Chief Executive Officer
World Free Zones Organization
Tel: 9 714 204 5481
Fax: 9 714 295 2945
E-mail: samir.hamrouni@worldfzo.org

Address

13. Headquarters:
World Free Zones Organization
Office 1090, 1st Floor, 7W-B
PO Box 371113
Dubai Airport Free Zone
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Tel: 9 714 204 5473
Fax: 9 714 295 2945
E-mail: info@worldfzo.org
Website: <http://www.worldfzo.org>

14. Legal:
World Free Zones Organization
c/o Brown and Page
37–39, rue de Vermont
1202 Geneva
Switzerland

Language

15. The working language of the World Free Zones Organization is English.
-