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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
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DESIGNATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE PURPOSES OF RULE 77 OF THE
RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE BOARD

Application by the International South Group Network

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

1. The UNCTAD secretariat has received an application from the Director of the International South Group Network (ISGN) requesting the inclusion of that organization by the Trade and Development Board in the list provided for in rule 77 of the Board's rules of procedure.
2. Having reviewed the information provided, the secretariat is of the opinion that, subject to the concurrence of the Bureau of the Trade and Development Board, ISGN may be classified in the General Category under the provision of paragraph 12 (a) of Board decision 43 (VII).
3. The Board may wish to take action on the above-mentioned application at its current session in the light of the recommendation of the Bureau.
4. Some information regarding ISGN is annexed hereto.

This document is at this stage intended for the information of States members of UNCTAD and its distribution is, therefore, restricted for their exclusive use. It is proposed to de-restrict the document in due course.

Annex

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SOUTH GROUP NETWORK

History

1. The International South Group Network was founded in June 1994 at a conference at the University of Fort Hare in South Africa. The inaugural meeting was called by the South African Minister of Education, then Vice Chancellor of the University. It was supported by a network of people working on matters related to African development. Participants from non-governmental organizations and workers' movements worldwide discussed the implications of the historical transformations which have taken place in the "new world order". ISGN was formed as a result of these deliberations.

Aims and objectives

2. The organization was established with the following mission: to promote a value system that places people above profit in the development process; to promote the principle of the rights of peoples to self-determination in all its dimensions; to promote a systematic and structural approach to development, human and democratic rights, environment and peace, and their understanding as indivisible and interdependent; to promote direct access and equal participation of organizations of affected peoples from the South in decision-making at the international level in an ongoing, structured and systematic manner and through the democratization of international structures; to promote a people-centred development as an alternative to capitalist-led globalization. The main activities of the Network focus on: land and food security; changing production and consumption patterns; trade and investments in the relations between North and South. Of particular concern are small and medium enterprises and the opportunities and risks that the new post-Uruguay Round trading regime and the liberalization of the market have opened to them.

Members

3. There are two categories of membership, namely members and affiliate members. Members have the right to participate in the General Conference. Affiliate members may participate in the Network's activities and consultative meetings. Membership is broad-based and comprises NGOs, research institutions, academics, private sector enterprises, and government officials in their individual capacity. There are currently 95 members worldwide.

Structure

4. According to its Constitution, the highest policy-making body of ISGN is the General Conference, consisting of all members and meeting every four years. The General Conference elects an International Coordinating Committee (ICC) which is responsible, inter alia, for drawing up the organization's programme of action, appointing an editorial board, the Director and members of the secretariat, setting up ad hoc organizational

structures for the effective implementation of its programmes, allocating and approving the budget and convening the regular and special General Conference. The ICC also elects a Chairman from among its members.

Financial resources

5. ISGN's financial resources are derived mainly from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). Funds are also received from the Karibu Foundation, Danchurch Aid and Swedish Church Aid.

Relations with other international organizations

6. ISGN has applied for status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and has participated in UNCED and United Nations General Assembly special session processes. ISGN received WTO accreditation to attend the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Singapore in 1996, and it maintains close working relations with the United Nations Development Programme in Harare and in New York.

Publications

7. ISGN has produced four publications. Two of them deal with the functioning and philosophy of the organization, the third, entitled "Universal Mission, Particular Perspectives", addresses the topic of changing systems of consumption and production, and the fourth, entitled "African Conception of Democracy and Good Governance", resulted from the Network's participation in the Maastricht conference in 1995 on the same theme. ISGN also brings out short briefing papers on specific issues related to advocacy work.

Liaison

8. Liaison with UNCTAD will be maintained by the Director, Dr. Yash Tandon.

Address

9. International South Group Network
7 Dougal Avenue, The Grange,
Harare, Zimbabwe
Telephone: (2634) 499 876
FAX: (2634) 499 079
e mail: ytandon@harare.iafrica.com

10. The main working language of ISGN is English. French is also used occasionally.
