

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.2/INF.1
2 March 2007
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic
Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region
Fifth session
Beirut, 24-26 April 2007

INFORMATION NOTE**A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region was established pursuant to Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) resolution 214 (XIX) of 7 May 1997 concerning the establishment of a technical committee on liberalization of foreign trade and economic globalization in the countries of the ESCWA region, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/12 of 18 July 1997 concerning the establishment of a technical committee on liberalization of foreign trade and economic globalization in the countries of the ESCWA region. The aims of establishing such a committee included: (a) to contribute to the identification of ESCWA member country concerns and priorities with respect to multilateral trade agreements and negotiations; (b) to monitor developments in global trade negotiations and in establishing economic and trade blocs, and to coordinate the stances of Committee member countries in that regard; (c) to cooperate with the ESCWA secretariat in formulating programmes to assist the countries of the region in designing appropriate policies for economic development at the national and regional levels, with a view to extending the benefits to those countries of trends in liberalization of foreign trade and economic globalization; (d) to formulate programmes to be taken jointly by the countries of the region, in cooperation with other regional and international organizations, for training, the exchange of expertise and research.

The Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region held its first session in the United Arab Emirates in 1999, its second in Bahrain in 2001, its third in Oman in 2003 and its fourth at ESCWA headquarters in Beirut in 2005. The Committee will hold its fifth session in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Beirut from 24 to 26 April 2007.

It should be noted that the ESCWA secretariat proposed to participants at the fourth session that the issue of the Monterrey Consensus, which was the outcome of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development should be included on the agenda of the fifth session of the Committee. One of the recommendations to Governments of ESCWA region countries was that consultations should be held with ministries of countries not represented on the Committee on the proposal made by the ESCWA secretariat to the effect that the issue of financing for development should be included on the agenda of the Technical Committee with effect from the fifth session and once participants had approved the proposal in principal.

B. AIMS

The aim of the current session is to provide a forum for discussion of developments in the new world trade system and the challenges faced by the countries of the region because of the current World Trade Organization (WTO) trade negotiations; and to allow member countries to consider the progress that has been made in respect of negotiations on Doha Development Agenda issues and discuss possible alternatives, given the breakdown in WTO negotiations. A further aim of the session is to bring to the attention of member countries the most important Monterrey Consensus-related applications in the ESCWA region, and to involve those countries in identifying programme priorities as part of the proposed strategic framework for the work of ESCWA for the biennium 2008-2009 in the field of trade and WTO-related issues and, in particular, foreign direct investment and capital markets in the ESCWA region.

C. THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

The provisional agenda of the fifth session of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region is contained in E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.2/L.1.

D. PARTICIPANTS

The meetings of this session of the Committee will be attended by the representatives of ministries of trade and ministries of finance in member countries. Governments participating in the session are responsible for the travel and accommodation expenses of their representatives. Relevant international and regional organizations will be invited to attend the session as observers, on the understanding that they are also responsible for the travel and accommodation expenses of their representatives.

E. TIME AND VENUE

The fifth session of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region will be held in the Crowne Plaza hotel in Beirut from 24 to 26 April 2007. Registration will commence at 9 a.m. on Tuesday 24 April 2007, and the session will be opened at 10 p.m. on the same day. Session meetings will end at 1 p.m. on Thursday 26 April 2007.

F. LANGUAGE OF THE SESSION

Session proceedings will be in Arabic, with simultaneous interpretation into and out of English and Arabic.

G. ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORTATION

ESCWA has obtained special prices for participants at the Crowne Plaza hotel, Hamra Street, Beirut, in which the session will take place. The price of a single room, including breakfast and State tax, is \$60 per day. Participants should contact the hotel to give details of their travel, including airline, flight number, date and time of arrival and date and time of departure. The hotel contact details are as follows:

Tel.: 00961-1-754755
Fax: 00961-1-749555
E-mail: info@cpbeirut.com

Participants must settle hotel accommodation and other expenses directly with the hotel before leaving.

H. ENTRY VISAS

Lebanese entry visas may be obtained from the Lebanese embassy in any country. In case of difficulty, ESCWA may be able to assist in obtaining such visas if, at least 20 days before the session, it is provided with a copy of the participant's passport, giving all the necessary details.

I. CORRESPONDENCE

All session-related correspondence should be sent to the following ESCWA official:

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