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**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 March 2007

Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda

**REVIEW OF ACTION TAKEN IN THE FIELD OF LIBERALIZATION  
OF FOREIGN TRADE AND ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION  
SINCE THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**FOLLOW-UP OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE  
BY THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Summary**

This document, which is submitted to the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region at its fifth session, reviews the action taken as part of the follow-up of implementation of the recommendations made by the fourth session and, in particular, those addressed to the ESCWA secretariat.

## **Introduction**

1. The report of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region on its fourth session, which was held in Beirut on 7 and 8 March 2005, (E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.2/5), included a set of recommendations addressed to Governments and ESCWA. The recommendations addressed to Governments concerned a number of fields and aimed to clarify the scope of relations between member countries and ESCWA regarding the work of the Technical Committee. Governments should, in particular, regularly inform ESCWA of developments relating to the implementation of recommendations and specialist-level focal points for the Technical Committee should be identified in member countries, as set out below. The recommendations addressed to the secretariat of ESCWA included the holding of regular meetings in order to coordinate Arab country negotiating positions on the Doha Round, ensuring that the ESCWA programme of work included training and research activities, and the continued provision of technical assistance to member countries in various relevant fields.

2. The following paragraphs contain the recommendations made to Governments and ESCWA and the relevant follow-up measures taken.

### **I. RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENTS**

3. The recommendations to Governments were as follows:

(a) Member countries should be requested to regularly inform ESCWA of developments relating to the implementation of recommendations and the amendment of legislation pertinent to the regional and international integration of ESCWA member countries;

(b) The need should be emphasized of identifying specialist-level focal points for the Committee in member countries and informing the ESCWA secretariat accordingly;

(c) Governments should be invited to consider the activities proposed in the ESCWA programme of work for the 2006-2007 biennium in the field of liberalization of foreign trade and economic globalization and notify ESCWA of their approval or comments thereon by 31 March 2005 at the latest;

(d) Member countries should be urged to cooperate with the ESCWA secretariat in ensuring that additional resources are available to finance specific activities that those countries consider important;

(e) Member countries should be called upon to follow up and comment on the studies on the multilateral trading system which ESCWA makes available on its Internet site;

(f) Consultations should be held with ministries that are not represented at Committee sessions on the ESCWA secretariat proposal to include the issue of finance for development on the Committee agenda with effect from its fifth session, once participants have given their preliminary approval.

4. At the conclusion of the meetings of the fourth session of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region, ESCWA sent the final report of the meeting to member countries for consideration and the taking of appropriate measures for the implementation of the recommendations contained therein and, in particular, those addressed to Governments. As is clear from the above, some of those recommendations, particularly the first three and the last, required the member countries to implement them and inform ESCWA of the relevant action taken. Because the ESCWA secretariat received no information from member countries on those recommendations, a reminder was sent to member countries, dated 4 May 2005, of the need to inform ESCWA of the action taken in implementation of the recommendations and, in particular, amendments to legislation relevant to trade, globalization and the identification of specialist-level focal points for the Technical Committee. The

ESCWA secretariat asked member countries to inform it of any measures taken to implement the recommendations before the fifth session of the Technical Committee.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ESCWA

5. The table below contains the recommendations addressed to ESCWA by the fourth session of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region and the measures taken to follow them up.

TABLE. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ESCWA AND FOLLOW-UP MEASURES

| Recommendation  | Follow-up measures   |
|---|--|
| <p>(a) As resources permit, regular ESCWA member country meetings should be held in order to coordinate Arab country negotiating positions on the Doha Round;</p> | <p>ESCWA has held a number of preparatory expert meetings and follow-up meetings as part of its implementation of this recommendation, as follows:</p> <p>(1) <b>Expert group meeting on preparation for the sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO):</b><br/>This meeting was held in order to prepare for the sixth WTO Ministerial Conference, discuss all the subjects likely to arise at the Conference, and prepare recommendations to be submitted to the Arab ministerial meeting to prepare the Arab countries for the Conference. The meeting was held on 28 and 29 November 2005 at ESCWA headquarters in Beirut. ESCWA prepared 15 technical working documents for consideration at the meeting on the most important issues of interest to the Arab countries on the negotiations agenda.</p> <p>(2) <b>Arab ministerial meeting to prepare for the sixth WTO Ministerial Conference:</b><br/>This meeting was held in order to discuss the recommendations prepared by the experts and prepare a statement containing the viewpoint of the Arab ministers. The meeting was held on 30 November and 1 December 2005 at ESCWA headquarters in Beirut. It issued a report on the work of both meetings (the expert group meeting and the ministerial meeting) and the signed ministerial statement on the trade ministers meeting, which contained the joint position of the Arab countries. The meeting adopted a joint declaration by those countries on the issues of interest to the countries of the region, which included high-level coordination of the negotiating positions of the Arab countries.</p> |

| Recommendation  | Follow-up measures  |
|---|---|
|   | <p>(3) <b>Expert group meeting on follow-up of the outcomes of the sixth WTO Ministerial Conference:</b> This meeting was held at United Nations House in Beirut on 4 and 5 April 2006. The meeting report is contained in E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/WG.1/3.</p>  |
| <p>(b) The current ESCWA programme of work should, if possible, include training for the media;</p>   | <p>ESCWA has been unable to hold training sessions for the media on WTO-related issues because of budgetary restrictions, but has invited the media to all the relevant meetings, including the expert group meetings and ministerial conferences mentioned above.</p>  |
| <p>(c) ESCWA should continue to update the mailing list for its publications on trade and WTO-related issues, and member countries should take note of the names of parties on that list;</p>               | <p>ESCWA continually updates the mailing list for its publications. In 2005 and 2006 it added a number of public and private sector institutions and universities, as well as ministries of trade, economy and finance and customs authorities in the Arab countries; because of their connection with trade negotiation issues and, in particular, trade facilitation.</p>   |
| <p>(d) ESCWA should continue to prepare studies on world trade issues of interest to the Arab countries and should also continue to provide technical assistance to member countries in various fields.</p> | <p>In 2005-2006 ESCWA prepared four studies on multilateral trading system issues that dealt with negotiations on agriculture, trade facilitation, intellectual property rights and regional trade agreements. ESCWA also prepared, circulated and made available on its web site 15 technical working papers in Arabic on multilateral trading system issues for discussion at the expert group meetings referred to above. ESCWA also prepared follow-up reports on the progress of the negotiations, which are available on the following web page: <a href="http://www.escwa.org.lb/arabic/wto/index.asp">http://www.escwa.org.lb/arabic/wto/index.asp</a>.</p> <p>With regard to the provision of technical assistance to member countries in the fields of trade and WTO-related issues, document E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.2/3 concerning consultancy services, which has been submitted to the Committee, contains a summary of the consultancy services provided to ESCWA member countries in the fields of trade, WTO-related issues and WTO agreements and accession thereto. ESCWA has also provided consultancy services on accession to WTO to the Sudan, in the course of which it prepared a report on requirements for restructuring the Ministry of Foreign Trade in order to bring it into line with the country's expected accession to WTO.</p> |