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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Commission on Trade in Goods and Services,
and Commodities
Tenth session
Geneva, 6–10 February 2006
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

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II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Introduction

1. At its nineteenth special session, held in April 2002 within the context of the UNCTAD Mid-term Review, the Trade and Development Board reviewed the functioning of its intergovernmental machinery and adopted guidelines to improve the machinery's efficiency (TD/B(S-XIX)/7). These guidelines state that the Commissions should conduct a policy discussion on the basis of secretariat research, reports of expert meetings and other relevant inputs, including from panellists and from other intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It should also place the outcome of the discussions within the appropriate policy context and framework. While considering the outcome of expert meetings, the Commissions should complement the issues dealt with by expert meetings, and avoid duplicating their debates as much as possible.

2. When deciding on the nature of the outcome, a main objective should be to maximize the time devoted to substantive dialogue among government representatives so as to build consensus on issues within UNCTAD's competence and reduce to the necessary minimum the time devoted to drafting exercises. The Bureau and the regional coordinators will indicate the nature of the outcome they seek from the Commissions. Whenever possible the outcome should be a Chairman's summary reflecting substantive dialogue and separate concise recommendations to the UNCTAD secretariat. Further options for the outcome may include: principles, guidelines, best practices, agreed conclusions, etc.

3. To this end, the Commission will have before it the reports of the expert meetings held during the previous months, as well as background documentation and other relevant documentation prepared by the secretariat identifying policy issues for discussion by the Commission.

Item 1: Election of officers

4. In accordance with rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the main Commissions of the Trade and Development Board, the Commission is to elect a Chairperson, five Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur from among the representatives of its members, taking into account the need to ensure equitable geographical distribution. Moreover, rule 19 of the rules of procedure states that the Bureau of the Commission is to consist of seven members (i.e. four members from Lists A and C combined, two members from List B and one member from List D, referred to in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX) as amended).

5. Accordingly, following the cycle of rotation established after UNCTAD IX, the bureau for the tenth session of the Commission will be as follows: Chairperson from List A (Africa); Rapporteur from List B; and five Vice-Chairpersons (3 from Lists A and C combined, 1 from List B and 1 from List D).

Item 2: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

6. The tenth session of the Commission is scheduled for 6–10 February 2006. At the closing plenary of its ninth session (14–18 March 2005), the Commission approved the provisional agenda for its tenth session and topics for the related expert meetings.

7. With regard to the organization of the work of the session, the Commission has five days available to it. It is suggested that the agenda items be taken up sequentially, with the first plenary meeting, on Monday, 6 February, being devoted to procedural matters and introductory statements. This inaugural meeting would be followed by a high-level event on “Trade and Development Index: Follow-up to the World Summit”.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/74	Provisional agenda and annotations
UNCTAD/DITC/TAB/2005/1	Developing countries in international trade 2005: Trade and Development Index

Item 3: Commodities and development

8. This agenda item was first introduced into the agenda of the Commission at the ninth session in view of the importance of the subject to developing countries and the priority given to it by the São Paulo Consensus. Under this agenda item, the Commission will examine the relationship between development and commodity production and trade, focusing particularly on how projects and programmes to enhance the capacity to trade in commodities can contribute to poverty reduction. Institutional and other constraints and bottlenecks in several aspects of the commodity economy will be considered, and the relevance of remedying such constraints and bottlenecks in ensuring that broad segments of the population benefit from commodities trade will be analysed. The discussion will cover possible actions for the improvement of supply capacity, the reduction of transaction costs, improved integration of developing country producers into international supply chains, and better management of commodity sector revenues. International cooperation to support commodity sector development will also be discussed, including cooperation through the International Task Force on Commodities.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/75	“Commodity policies for development: A new framework for the fight against poverty” – Note by the UNCTAD secretariat
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Item 4: Market access, market entry and competitiveness

9. A key and new area of work mandated by the Commission and subsequently by UNCTAD XI relates to sectoral reviews on dynamic sections of world trade. Under this agenda item, the Commission will examine the market access, market entry and competitiveness of selected dynamic and new sectors of world trade. It will also take up non-tariff barriers.

10. UNCTAD's sectoral trade reviews constitute a concrete and practical initiative that will play a useful role in assisting policy makers and other stakeholders in identifying opportunities in particular sectors and articulating policy options and instruments to take advantage of these opportunities. The Commission will be briefed on the relevant results of the Expert Meeting on Dynamic and New Sectors of World Trade, held on 24–26 October 2005, on three sectors: (i) electronics, (ii) marine products, and (iii) steel and related specialty products. In addition, since non-tariff measures can act as important market entry barriers to developing country exports, the Commission may wish to consider how to take forward international policy dialogue, research and analysis and disciplining of non-tariff barriers that affect developing countries' exports. These deliberations will benefit from the report and outcome of the Expert Meeting on Methodologies, Classifications, Quantification and Development Impacts of Non-Tariff Barriers.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/76	"Market access, market entry and competitiveness" – Note by the UNCTAD secretariat
TD/B/COM.1/EM.28/5	Report of the Expert Meeting on Dynamic and New Sectors of World Trade
TD/B/COM.1/EM.27/3	Report of the Expert Meeting on Methodologies, Classifications, Quantification and Development Impacts of Non-Tariff Barriers

Item 5: Trade in services and development implications

11. Under this agenda item, the Commission will examine the increasing role of developing countries in international trade in services, as well as their experiences, challenges and opportunities in the ongoing negotiations on services. Most developing countries have embarked on reform processes, recognizing the positive effects that can accrue from progressive liberalization of trade in services in terms of generating jobs, technology and investment. Trade liberalization by itself, however, may not produce the expected results without necessary complementary policies. Thus, the Commission will address the importance of establishing adequate policy and regulatory frameworks as necessary conditions for trade liberalization in order to generate beneficial results.

12. Developing countries are facing challenges with regard to how to strengthen domestic supply capacity in services and reconcile trade, development, social and equity considerations. The Commission's session will provide an opportunity to look into the results of assessments of services in their developmental and trade dimensions in selected developing countries. The issues raised during the session should provide a better understanding of the underlying characteristics of services markets in developing countries and help developing countries assess the possible impact of alternative policies on growth and sustainable development, as well as their impact on different stakeholders and in particular on poverty alleviation. This will also provide direct inputs to efforts to strengthen the positions of developing countries in their negotiations on trade in services. The Commission will be briefed on the outcome of the Expert Meeting on Distribution Services,

held from 16 to 18 November 2005, as well as the ad hoc expert meeting on insurance services on 24 November 2005.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/77	“Trade in services and development implications” – Note by the UNCTAD secretariat
TD/B/COM.1/EM.29/3	Report of the Expert Meeting on Distribution Services

Item 6: Trade, environment and development

13. Under this item, the Commission will address selected trade and environment issues that have received considerable attention in recent international debates, as well as in UNCTAD activities. These will include considerations in the field of environmental requirements and market access for developing countries, trade liberalization in environmental goods and services, the promotion of production and use of renewable energy, and the protection, preservation and sustainable use of traditional knowledge. Other relevant issues include ongoing and future work on standards and related issues concerning organic agriculture, in particular recent activities of the International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture (ITF) created by FAO, the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM), and UNCTAD, and planned activities of the UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity-Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (CBTF).

14. A distinct area of consideration includes opportunities for promoting trade in products derived from the sustainable use of biodiversity, in particular through the BioTrade Initiative, as well as the BioFuels Initiative. The economic relevance for developing countries of the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will also be analysed. Likewise, the trade and investment implications for developing countries stemming from the Framework Convention on Climate Change will be discussed.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/70	“Trade, environment and development – Note by the UNCTAD secretariat
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Item 7: Implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Commission, including post-Doha follow-up

15. The guidelines adopted by the Trade and Development Board in carrying out the Mid-term Review at its nineteenth special session, held in Bangkok from 29 April to 2 May 2002 (TD/B(S-XIX)/7), state that: “Commissions’ agendas will continue to include an item on follow-up and implementation of past recommendations. The secretariat will report on its implementation of recommendations addressed to it, and member States will be invited to report on their own implementation in statements to the Commission”.

16. In this context, the UNCTAD secretariat will prepare a progress report on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations adopted at the ninth session of the Commission addressed to UNCTAD. Member States wishing to report on their own implementation of recommendations will have an opportunity to present their experiences in this regard to the Commission. The UNCTAD secretariat will also provide an activity report on major outputs in 2005 of the Division on International Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities for review by the Commission.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/78

“Progress report on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Commission, including post-Doha follow-up” – Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

UNCTAD/DITC/MISC/2005/21

“DITC Activity Report 2005” – Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

Item 8: Provisional agenda for the eleventh session of the Commission

17. A draft provisional agenda for the eleventh session of the Commission will be submitted for consideration and approval.

Item 9: Other business

Item 10: Adoption of the report of the Commission to the Trade and Development Board

18. The report of the Commission on its ninth session will be submitted to the Trade and Development Board.

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