



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.: General
22 December 2008

Original: English

Trade and Development Board
Trade and Development Commission
Multi-year expert meeting on commodities and development
Geneva, 3–5 March 2009
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Provisional agenda and annotations

I. Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Developments and challenges in commodity markets: current situation and outlook
4. Examination of success stories and consideration of ways of (a) integrating commodity policies into national, regional and international development and poverty reduction strategies; and (b) improving transparency and accountability at all levels and for all participants in the commodity sector
5. Review and identification of measures and support needed by (a) commodity-dependent developing countries to utilize effectively the opportunities offered by current higher commodity prices to initiate a process of sustained economic growth; and (b) commodity-importing developing countries, particularly least developed countries, to cope with the detrimental effects of the commodity price swings
6. Adoption of the report of the meeting

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

Item 1. Election of officers

1. It is recommended that the expert meeting elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2. Adoption of the agenda

2. The provisional agenda for the expert meeting is reproduced in chapter I above. The expert meeting will have three days to complete its work (3–5 March 2008). The provisional schedule of meetings for the three days is attached to this document. Detailed programmes will be available at the latest one week before the start of the meeting.

Documentation

TD/B/C.I/MEM.2/1 Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3. Developments and challenges in commodity markets: current situation and outlook

3. The Accra Accord, in paragraph 91, states, “UNCTAD should continue to play a key role, with appropriate coordination with other international and regional actors, including with relevant international commodity bodies, to address the trade and development problems associated with the commodity economy, giving due attention to all commodity sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, metals and minerals and oil and gas. In this context, it should monitor developments and challenges in commodity markets and address links between international commodity trade and national development, particularly with regard to poverty reduction.” Accordingly, the expert meeting will review and take note of salient developments and challenges in commodity markets, giving due attention to all commodity sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, metals and minerals, and oil and gas, and consider their development implications.

Expected outcome

4. The discussion on this topic, which will include presentations by experts and representatives of relevant international organizations and commodity bodies, will serve to put into sharp relief – and inform UNCTAD member States about – the salient developments in key commodity sectors and markets from the development perspective. The discussions will provide a forum for appraising the extent of the opportunities and challenges arising from the current situation and outlook in commodity markets.

Documentation

TD/B/C.I/MEM.2/2 Recent commodity market developments: trends and challenges

5. To facilitate the discussion, the UNCTAD secretariat will prepare a background note entitled “Recent commodity market developments: trends and challenges”. The document will review recent market developments in such sectors as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, and metals and minerals. It will highlight short- and medium-term price trends, factors affecting supply and demand, and trade. It will also identify some of the key challenges facing commodity-dependent developing countries in these sectors.

Item 4. Examination of success stories and consideration of ways of (a) integrating commodity policies into national, regional and international development and poverty reduction strategies; and (b) improving transparency and accountability at all levels and for all participants in the commodity sector

6. Pursuant to the mandate contained in the Accra Accord (para. 93(b)), UNCTAD should “promote intergovernmental cooperation... and consensus-building on ways of integrating commodity policies into national, regional and international development and poverty reduction strategies”. In addition, paragraph 78 provides that “efforts should be made at all levels and for all participants in the commodity sector to improve transparency and accountability”. Accordingly, based on an examination of success stories, the expert meeting will identify and discuss effective ways of incorporating commodity policies into development and poverty reduction strategies at the national, regional and international levels, as well as ways of improving transparency and accountability at all levels and for all participants in the commodity sector. In this context, the expert meeting will also provide a forum for sharing experiences with regard to successful approaches and strategies for sustained economic growth, poverty reduction and economic diversification, starting from the production and trade of commodities as the principal economic base.

Expected outcome

7. The discussion on this topic – which will include presentations by experts, international and regional actors, and representatives of the private sector and civil society – will generate lessons learnt regarding successful strategies – at the national, regional and international levels – for benefiting and assuring development gains from commodity trade (including from the boom in commodity prices), and for dealing with the long-standing challenges of commodity dependence, including overcoming difficulties in diversification. This should assist developing countries’ efforts to formulate strategies and policies to respond to the challenges and opportunities of commodity markets, including how to ensure transparency in the use of revenues and attaining poverty reduction objectives.

Documentation

TD/B/C.I/MEM.2/3 Integrating commodity policies into development and poverty reduction strategies: success stories, transparency and accountability

8. To facilitate the discussion on this topic, the UNCTAD secretariat will prepare a background note summarizing relevant experiences with regard to successful approaches and strategies for assuring economic and social development gains from commodity trade and for promoting transparency and accountability in the commodity sector.

Item 5. Review and identification of measures and support needed by (a) commodity-dependent developing countries to utilize effectively the opportunities offered by current higher commodity prices to initiate a process of sustained economic growth; and (b) commodity-importing developing countries, particularly least developed countries, to cope with the detrimental effects of the commodity price swings

9. The Accra Accord, in paragraph 79, states that “Actions are needed to support the effective utilization by commodity-dependent developing countries of the

opportunities offered by current higher commodity prices to initiate a process of sustained economic growth towards the goal of poverty eradication”. Paragraph 79 also notes that “the current commodity boom is also having serious detrimental effects on the commodity-importing developing countries, particularly LDCs. These detrimental effects range from balance-of-payments problems to reduced development expenditures and to food insecurity. Concerns have also been expressed by some developing countries about market failures, the efficient functioning of markets and the need to improve dialogue between the food-importing and food-exporting countries to reduce and stabilize world food prices.” Pursuant to the mandate of the Accra Accord, in paragraph 92, that “UNCTAD should enhance its efforts... to help commodity-dependent developing countries to harness development gains from the current boom in commodity prices, as well as to deal with trade and development problems related to commodity dependence”, the expert meeting will review and identify measures and support needed by both commodity export-dependent developing countries and commodity-importing developing countries. In this context, the expert meeting will also provide a forum for sharing experiences with regard to measures and support that have been successful in helping, on the one hand, commodity-exporting developing countries, and on the other, commodity-importing developing countries.

Expected outcome

10. The discussion on this topic, which will include presentations by experts, international and regional actors – as well as representatives of the private sector and civil society – will identify practical options and actionable ways to facilitate the effective utilization by commodity-dependent developing countries of the opportunities offered by current higher commodity prices, as well as to mitigate the detrimental effects of higher energy and food prices on the commodity-importing developing countries.

Documentation

TD/B/C.I/MEM.2/4 Coping with changing commodity prices: facilitation of efforts by developing countries to address challenges and take advantage of opportunities

11. To facilitate the discussion on this topic, the UNCTAD secretariat will prepare a background note summarizing relevant experiences with regard to measures and support that have been deployed to assist commodity-exporting developing countries to utilize effectively the opportunities offered by current higher commodity prices. The aim is to initiate a process of sustained economic growth towards the goal of poverty eradication, as well as to assist commodity-importing developing countries to cope with the detrimental effects of soaring energy and food prices.

Item 6. Adoption of the report of the meeting

12. The report of the expert meeting will be submitted to the Trade and Development Commission on at its next session. The expert meeting may wish to authorize the Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chair, to prepare the final report after the conclusion of the meeting.

Input from experts: trade and development implications of developments in commodity markets

Experts nominated by member States are encouraged to submit brief papers (approximately five pages) as contributions to the work of the meeting. The papers should be submitted to the UNCTAD secretariat in advance of the meeting and will be made available at the meeting in the form and language in which they are received. Papers, which should draw on the expert's experience, may address one or more of the following issues:

- What have been the drivers of price trends in recent years in commodity markets and what are the opportunities and challenges faced by commodity-dependent developing countries stemming from these trends?
- What are effective ways of integrating commodity policies into national, regional and international development and poverty reduction strategies based on successful experiences?
- What are effective ways of improving transparency and accountability at all levels (national, regional and international) and for all participants in the commodity sector?
- How could commodity export-dependent developing countries be supported to utilize effectively the opportunities offered by current higher commodity prices to initiate a process of sustained economic growth?
- How could commodity-importing developing countries be supported to cope with the detrimental effects of extremely volatile energy and food prices?

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Provisional meeting schedule

Tuesday 3 March 2009	Wednesday 4 March 2009	Thursday 5 March 2009
<p><i>(10 a.m.–1 p.m.)</i></p> <p>Plenary</p> <p>Opening statement</p> <p>Item 1: Election of officers</p> <p>Item 2: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work</p> <p>Item 3: Developments and challenges in commodity markets: current situation and outlook</p> <p>Informals</p>	<p><i>(10 a.m.–1 p.m.)</i></p> <p>Informals</p> <p>Item 4: (continued)</p>	<p><i>(10 a.m.–1 p.m.)</i></p> <p>Informals</p> <p>Item 5: (continued)</p>
<p><i>(3 p.m.–6 p.m.)</i></p> <p>Item 4: Examination of success stories and consideration of ways of (a) integrating commodity policies into national, regional and international development and poverty reduction strategies; and (b) improving transparency and accountability at all levels and for all participants in the commodity sector</p> <p>Informals</p>	<p><i>(3 p.m.–6 p.m.)</i></p> <p>Item 5: Review and identification of measures and support needed by (a) commodity-dependent developing countries to utilize effectively the opportunities offered by current higher commodity prices to initiate a process of sustained economic growth; and (b) commodity-importing developing countries, particularly least developed countries, to cope with the detrimental effects of the commodity price swings</p> <p>Informals</p>	<p><i>(3 p.m.–6 p.m.)</i></p> <p>Informals</p> <p>Consideration of the outcome of the meeting</p> <p>Plenary (closing)</p> <p>Item 6: Adoption of the report of the meeting</p>