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Committee on Trade and Investment

Second session

Bangkok, 27-29 July 2011

Annotated provisional agenda

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the second session of the Committee on Trade and Investment (section I) and the annotations to the provisional agenda (section II).

I. Provisional agenda

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11. Consideration of draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-eighth session.
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13. Other matters.
14. Adoption of the report.

II. Annotations

1. Opening of the session

Documentation

Tentative programme (E/ESCAP/CTI(2)/INF/3)

Annotation

The tentative programme for the opening of the session will be announced in due course.

2. Election of the Bureau

Documentation

Provisional list of participants (E/ESCAP/CTI(2)/INF/2)

Annotation

The Committee will elect a chair and a vice-chair.

3. Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda (E/ESCAP/CTI(2)/L.1)

Annotation

The annotated provisional agenda (E/ESCAP/CTI(2)/L.1) shall be considered and adopted by the Committee, subject to such changes as may be deemed necessary. The secretariat will brief the Committee on the background, objective and role of the Committee and how the agenda supports meeting the objectives outlined in the terms of reference.

4. Capturing trade and investment opportunities in the new decade

While some parts of the world are recovering slowly from the recent global economic crisis, emerging Asian economies have managed to sustain relatively high economic growth rates. Concerns remain, however, regarding the sustainability of such growth. Many other developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly the least developed economies, continue to lag behind and have not been able to reap the benefits of the economic dynamism that exists elsewhere in the region. Bearing in mind these developments and taking into account the findings of the *Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2011*, the Committee may wish to discuss possible modalities to turn current global and regional economic challenges into opportunities for inter- and intraregional trade and investment in the decade ahead, as well as policies that governments could adopt to capture these opportunities effectively to ensure inclusive and sustainable development. The discussion under this agenda item is expected to identify various sources of trade and investment opportunities for detailed deliberation under subsequent agenda items.

5. Facilitating intraregional trade

Documentation

Facilitating intraregional trade (E/ESCAP/CTI(2)/1)

Annotation

While sustained trade liberalization over the past few decades has opened up opportunities for trade expansion, the costs associated with trading in many instances remain very high, as indicated in the ESCAP Trade Cost Database, and many non-tariff barriers to trade, in particular intraregional trade, have yet to come down. These barriers are particularly high in trade in agriculture and services. In this context, trade facilitation assumes particular importance. While some countries have taken significant measures to reduce cumbersome trade processes and procedures both at and behind the border, others are lagging behind in the adoption of such practices as paperless trade mechanisms and single windows. For that reason, the secretariat has actively promoted the adoption of these practices and, together with the Economic Commission for Europe, has established a regional network of trade facilitation experts, the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT). The Committee may wish to discuss these initiatives and programmes in the wider context of the secretariat's technical assistance in trade capacity-building, provide guidance on their future direction and focus, and adopt decisions on particular priority issues in this area.

6. Promoting trade and investment in low-carbon goods and services

Documentation

Promoting trade and investment in low-carbon goods and services
(E/ESCAP/CTI(2)/2)

Annotation

One of the major challenges now facing the world, and the Asia-Pacific region in particular, is climate change. The potential implications of climate change for the region, including trade and investment, have been well documented. As a consensus is emerging for urgent action to mitigate and adapt to climate change, it is useful to explore how this challenge could be converted into opportunities through trade and investment. The Committee may wish to discuss modalities and opportunities for promoting trade and investment in low-carbon or climate-smart goods, technologies and services and provide guidance on the role of ESCAP in this regard.

7. Transferring technology for inclusive and sustainable trade and investment

Documentation

Technology transfer for inclusive and sustainable trade and investment
(E/ESCAP/CTI(2)/3)

Annotation

The essential roles of technology in improving competitiveness and of trade and investment as the principal modalities of technology transfer are widely recognized. Not all countries, however, have the capacity to either develop their own technologies or access technologies which suit their level of development. Many countries also face obstacles as a result of stringent intellectual property rights provisions. With the expansion of value chains, the growth of foreign direct investment (FDI) and the dismantling of trade barriers, however, new opportunities for technology development and transfer have emerged, and some countries in the region have become technology suppliers. To convert challenges into opportunities, institutions at the national and

regional levels need to be created or strengthened to support technology development and transfer. At the regional level, the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) and the United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (UNAPCAEM) are ESCAP regional institutions which focus on facilitating the transfer and development of technology. The Committee may wish to review the role and activities of these two institutions, provide guidance on their future direction and focus, and adopt decisions on particular priority issues in this area.

8. Integrating small and medium-sized enterprises into the regional economy

Documentation

Integrating small and medium-sized enterprises into the regional economy (E/ESCAP/CTI(2)/4)

Annotation

In any given economy, most enterprises are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which face many hurdles in strengthening their supply-side capacities and deriving any benefit from regional economic dynamism. At the same time, they are important suppliers of parts and components and are therefore important players in regional and global value chains, which are driven by foreign direct investment. Both FDI and the expansion of value chains triggered by it are major driving forces of regional integration that open opportunities for SME development. The secretariat has implemented various programmes to support the development of SMEs and their integration into global and regional value chains, and it actively promotes public-private sector dialogue through the Asia-Pacific Business Forum. The secretariat plans to launch new initiatives on promoting and facilitating FDI, in particular intraregional FDI. In addition, it is implementing a project to promote responsible business practices by providing training on and advocating the principles of the Global Compact and corporate social responsibility. The Committee may wish to review these initiatives and activities, provide guidance on their future direction and focus, and adopt decisions on particular priority issues in this area.

9. Moving multilateral and regional trade and investment cooperation forward

Documentation

Moving multilateral and regional trade and investment cooperation forward (E/ESCAP/CTI(2)/5)

Annotation

Over the past few decades, trade liberalization has progressed significantly, both through the multilateral trading system and through regional and bilateral trade agreements. At the same time, the number of regional and bilateral investment agreements and treaties has also risen rapidly. Such agreements constitute systems of rules which have contributed to the sustained growth of international trade and investment. As the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Round negotiations have stalled, the proliferation of regional and bilateral trade agreements has provided both challenges and opportunities to enhance intraregional trade. ESCAP has long advocated a successful and early conclusion of the Doha Round and consolidation and strengthening of regional and bilateral trade agreements to evolve them into building blocks of the multilateral trading system. The secretariat is tracking the performance of

regional and bilateral trade agreements through its Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Agreements Database (APTIAD). One of these agreements is the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), for which the Trade and Investment Division of ESCAP serves as the secretariat. The ESCAP secretariat has provided technical assistance to its members through the WTO/ESCAP Technical Assistance Programme and capacity-building for trade research institutions through the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT). The Committee may wish to discuss these initiatives and programmes, provide guidance on their future direction and focus, and adopt decisions on particular priority issues in this area. In particular, the Committee may wish to review the role of ESCAP in identifying modalities to move the multilateral and regional trade and investment regimes forward and in promoting their convergence towards an effective set of mutually complementary multilateral and regional trade and investment rules.

10. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme

Under this agenda item, the Committee may wish to provide guidance on the focus of the short- and longer-term work of the secretariat in the area of trade and investment, taking into account the programme direction and priorities outlined in the strategic framework for 2012-2013, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/244, and on how the outcome of the Committee's deliberations can be integrated into the planning of the strategic framework and programme of work for 2014-2015.

11. Consideration of draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-eighth session

Under this agenda item, member States are invited to circulate, in advance, proposals and/or texts of draft resolutions on priority issues relating to trade and investment for the consideration of the Commission at its sixty-eighth session.

12. Dates, venue and provisional agenda for the third session of the Committee

The Committee may wish to deliberate on the tentative dates, venue and provisional agenda for its third session, to be held in 2013.

13. Other matters

The Committee may raise any matter not covered under the items mentioned above.

14. Adoption of the report

Documentation

Draft report (E/ESCAP/CTI(2)/L.2)

Annotation

The Committee shall adopt the report on its second session for submission to the Commission at its sixty-eighth session.