

Inter-Agency Consultation on Trade Facilitation

Geneva, 5 April 2002

Agenda

1. Review of substantive work in the area of trade facilitation, on-going and pipeline technical assistance projects carried out by various agencies.
2. Review of existing cooperation arrangements and proposal for an enhanced cooperation scheme among participating agencies to address trade facilitation issues and assist developing countries in this regard.

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Annotated Agenda

1. Review of substantive work in the area of trade facilitation, on-going and pipeline technical assistance projects carried out by various agencies

Under this agenda item the meeting will review: (i) analytical work, technical assistance, training and capacity building activities in the area of trade facilitation; (ii) examine the target population for such activities; (iii) the national counterparts of each organization on issues relating to trade facilitation as they are different from an organization to another.

Such a review would be approached from two major perspectives: (i) their practical implementation at national and regional levels by the concerned UN agencies within their respective mandates; and (ii) future multilateral negotiations arising from the Doha Ministerial Declaration.

Both require attention in the context of the increasing participation of developing economies in a global trade. Contributions from participants should pave the way for identifying needs, priorities and action plans for developing countries.

For the discussions on this item participants might take advantage of the compilation prepared by WTO on "Trade Facilitation work undertaken by Intergovernmental organizations" (G/C/W/80/Rev.1, September 2000), to which many agencies contributed. An update from participants is expected on the matter. Furthermore, participants may wish to refer to the conclusions of the WTO Trade Facilitation Symposium held in March 1998 (G/C/W115, May 1998).

On technical assistance, the review might take advantage of the report of the WTO Workshop on Technical Assistance and Capacity Building in Trade Facilitation held in May 2001 (G/C/W297, September 2000). An update from participants is also expected on the matter.

2. **Review of existing cooperation arrangements and proposal for an enhanced cooperation scheme among participating agencies to address trade facilitation issues and assist developing countries in this regard**

In a situation where available information technologies make possible to easily establish and operate cooperative networks, it seems appropriate to consider the establishment of a framework/network, which would ensure exchange of information, sharing of knowledge, best use of UN system competencies and joint initiatives.

A possible cooperation scheme could be envisaged aimed at information sharing on substantive work and technical assistance activities in the area of trade facilitation. This would involve provision of information regarding substantive outputs derived from the mandate of each organization through an **open-access** web site that each agency could feed with pertinent Internet links to its official documents. Similarly, it could be envisaged provision of access to the database on field activities of each agency. This would be realized through a **restricted-access** web site that each agency would be responsible to feed with pertinent information, on a country basis, regarding its implementation/execution of technical assistance projects. Such information would include a brief description of the projects, national counterparts, contact information of project officers, etc.

The views of the participants on modalities and content of the trade facilitation framework/network are expected, together with information on their respective experiences on this matter.

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Proposed Timetable

Morning 10:00-13:00

Item 1: Review of substantive work in the area of trade facilitation, on-going and pipeline technical assistance projects carried out by various agencies.

Afternoon 14:30-17:00

Item 2: Review of existing cooperation arrangements and proposal for an enhanced cooperation scheme among participating agencies to address trade facilitation issues and assist developing countries in this regard.

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