

**Fourth Inter-Agency Meeting on Trade Facilitation  
Geneva, 12 November 2003**

**Summary Report**

As agreed at the Third Inter-Agency Meeting (Geneva, 16 May, 2003), the fourth meeting was convened by UNIDO. The meeting took place as scheduled and dealt with the following agenda:

1. Adoption of agenda;
2. Review of work accomplished towards the coordination of cooperation actions in the area of trade facilitation since the third meeting;
3. Status of the cooperation scheme as of 12 November, 2003;
4. Coordination between the World Bank and the UN Cooperation Scheme;
5. Other issues.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the following agencies: the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Bank (WB), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As observer, a representative of the World Customs Organisation (WCO) was present and by special invitation a representative of the European Commission (EC) was also present.

**Item 1 of the agenda:** Adoption of agenda;

The agenda was adopted.

**Item 2 of the agenda:** Review of work accomplished towards the coordination of cooperation actions in the area of trade facilitation since the third meeting;

UNECE reported that the publication of papers from their International Forum on Trade Facilitation, 14 and 15 May 2003, are soon to be published. Since the third Inter-agency Meeting on Trade Facilitation in May the UNECE have undergone seminars in Capacity-building in trade facilitation and electronic business for the Mediterranean region, there will be future meetings in Alger, Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco for this programme. The UNECE highlighted that they are still working on Trade Facilitation projects in South East Europe and will be holding a meeting in Sofia to address the advancement of this project and look at the issue of trade corridors. UNECE also mentioned the Trade Facilitation Audit financed by the World Bank in Egypt and informed participants of a similar request by Algeria.

The World Bank reported that in Cancún the Managing Director of the World Bank reiterated the WBs willingness to support any country needing finance for Trade Facilitation. The World Bank reported on their accomplishments in Agenda Item 4.

The WCO representative reported that at their Annual Council in June the heads of Customs Departments adopted a “Partnership for Economic Development through Trade Facilitation” document to be used in Cancún. Post Cancún the WCO wrote to the WTO to offer their continuing support and involvement in technical assistance missions with the WTO. The WCO also reported that they have appointed a responsible person for the website.

The EC representative expressed his thanks for having been invited to participate at this meeting, he highlighted the absolute necessity of Trade Facilitation and how it needs to be encouraged. The representative addressed the 4 avenues the EC are using to provide technical assistance and capacity building. Firstly through the deliverance of Technical Assistance this is done by relying on Member States Customs Experts and through cooperation with the WCO and the WTO. The recent technical assistance delivery of the EC has been compiled and published as WTO documents. Secondly through Member States running specific programmes themselves with EC involvement. The third avenue is that of the European Investment Bank and finally the fourth avenue being the private sector. The EC representative highlighted their belief that for close cooperation and coordination with countries, the countries need to first assess themselves their needs. The EC representative then went on to give specific examples of technical assistance projects, including trade facilitation that the EC is working on.

UNCTAD reported on several events they held since the last meeting. A special event was held in Kazakhstan at the end of August with three events being coordinated with other agencies; namely Trade Facilitation (close cooperation with UNECE, WCO and WB), Private investment (WB) and Trade facilitation Coordination (UNECE). UNCTAD also reported on the cooperation with UNIDO on integrating LDCs into global trade. Two regional seminars were organized by UNCTAD and UNIDO in cooperation with WTO and ITC, the seminars in Addis Ababa and Dakar looked at integrating LDCs into global trade-challenges and opportunities for of the Doha Development Agenda.

UNIDO reported on the Informal Consultative Group on Trade Capacity Building (formerly the Consultative Group on Trade Facilitation) established by the Director-General of UNIDO and co-chaired by the Permanent Representatives of the UK and Perú to UNIDO. UNIDO also highlighted the recently signed MoU with WTO and its related Technical Assistance Framework, UNIDO and WTO agreed that they would invite other partners on a case-by-case basis. UNIDO also reported on their assistance in the first WTO trade clinics mission that was carried out in Sierra Leone, led by WTO with members from UNIDO, ITC and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The UNIDO representative also discussed regional programmes in SAARC, Central America and UEMOA. After having spent several years working as the UNIDO representative in Nigeria, Mr. Yumkella also shared some interesting experiences from Nigeria in relation to customs procedures.

Item 2 of the agenda progressed into a discussion on ongoing topics related to the agencies and/or trade facilitation. The ECA representative reported on how the situation with the USA accepting only limited imports from certain ports in Africa is affecting African Trade Areas. He stated that Africa is the weakest link in trade facilitation and will become even more so if new security measures in trade

facilitation are put in place. The ECA representative requested that a swift study take place to look at trade flows between the USA and the EU. He particularly highlighted the plight of smaller countries exporting tea, coffee and cotton.

**Item 3 of the agenda:** Status of the cooperation scheme as of 12 November, 2003; It was agreed that item 3 of the agenda was covered sufficiently within the discussions of item 2.

**Item 4 of the agenda:** Coordination between the World Bank and the UN Cooperation Scheme;

The World Bank representative reported on the progress of the GFP/UNTF Website [www.gfptt.org](http://www.gfptt.org) which came about as an outcome of Third Inter-Agency meeting. The World Bank reported that phase one of the website timeline has been completed and that the site was presented to GFP members in November. The site is open for data upload by all partners and the WB, WCO, UNCTAD and UNECE have all entered data, other participants were encouraged to do the same.

The representative then gave a detailed tour of the website, showing structure and tools and how to enter data.

The representative highlighted the fact that the core partners need to identify topics for which they want to take leadership (topic page attached).

There was a general exchange of views on the website, including a discussion on the GFP MoU that was outdated, UNTF members need to be able to enter the website without a commitment to the GFP MoU. This is to be reflected in a revised MoU.

**Item 5 of the agenda:** Other issues.

Participants agreed that if feasible, the World Bank will be host the Fifth Inter-Agency Meeting sometime in May/June 2004, the exact date will be established in consideration of the calendar of events concerning trade facilitation around that time that the World Bank will be participating in Geneva. The World Bank have since confirmed their acceptance to host the Fifth Inter-Agency meeting. The precise date and host will be communicated at a later date.

## Annex 1.

### Guidelines on the Topic Pages

A given Topic page is under the responsibility of a Core Partner, who administers it.

The page is divided in two parts.

The **upper part**, called the “introduction” is a section only administrators of the website can edit. The Core Partner responsible for this topic will take the responsibility of updating the introduction for this page based on the feedback received by GFP partners, using the template below. This section gets edited by clicking on the link edit page content, after proper log-in.

The **lower part** includes news, events, recommendations, work groups, discussion groups, activities, training, reference readings, links and newsletters. All GFP Partners can post their information for these categories either specifically for this topic or for several topics at a time. The Core Partner responsible for the page will regularly review the inputs to ensure that they are appropriate for the topic in question.

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#### Upper Part Update

**Introduction.** The introductory includes five sections:

**1<sup>st</sup> section:** definition of the topic (a draft definition exists for most topics) in one or two lines:

For example for Trade Facilitation Audits: systematic review and analysis of all elements of the trade and transport chain to identify weaknesses and define remedial actions.

**2<sup>nd</sup> section:** Overview/description of the topic and of the related problematic (critical 3 to 5 points) in one paragraph.

For example : An increasing number of practitioners from various institutions conduct reviews of the trade and transport environment, of access to trade logistics services and of business environment. Some of these reviews are all encompassing, while others are very focused. Most of these analysis are carried out using local/global surveys, interviews, forums and desk reviews of existing literature and sometimes include references to global trade and transport facilitation indicators. There is a strong need to standardize the auditing tools available to conduct these analytical reviews. These standardized audit methods should: (i) enable more systematic cross-country and historical benchmarking; (ii) be readily reusable by multiple institutions (through an integration of their requirements in surveys/instruments); (iii) improve effectiveness of reviews; (iv) reduce the present duplication of efforts; and (v) enable countries to conduct their self assessment.

**3<sup>rd</sup> section :** The activities undertaken by the GFP or its members to address the issue.

For example : The GFP developed in 2000 an audit methodology to facilitate the preparation of reviews of the trade and transport facilitation environment. The latest edition was released electronically in 2003 (see [Trade and Transport Facilitation: a Toolkit for Audit, Analysis, and Remedial Actions](#)). A first application of this tool took place [in the Caucasus](#) in 2000. The World Bank has scheduled a number of audits in 2004 using the updated version of the document. The UNECE, UNECA and ESCWA will also launch such review under the [e-med](#) initiative. A list of countries where the audit is scheduled will be posted by December 2003 on this page.

**4<sup>th</sup> section: Others' activities** (based on feedback –one or two paragraphs)

**5<sup>th</sup> section: Main references.** Identify out of the various resources in the lower part of the page the ones, which are the most essential to consult. 1 paragraph with links.

**At the end of this introduction a template sentence:**

The GFP welcomes feedback/additions/new tools from practitioners, that would respond to this topic. The GFP web team is particularly interested in collecting and assembling all the methods, survey instruments and results developed and used by its Partners. Please post relevant documents under your partner profile and assign them to this topic.

This topic is maintained by “Mr.xx (link to his profile)” from the “Core Partner Name” (linked to the partner profile).

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While the page is under the responsibility of a Core Partner, the Partner in question should not aim at presenting only itself or its activities but rather to present what the GFP/UNTF community does, based on feedback from GFP users.

One alternative **To this end, it will research the existing work, build a core knowledge base on available materials and activities related to the topic and available in the GFP/UNTF community and ideally also build up a competence center providing Q&A, support etc. and promoted by all partners involved in the topic.**

The Partners present their activities under their respective profile.

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**Lower Part of the Topic Page.**

**Other content on the page comes from databases.** The content can be entered directly in each sub section of the page by selecting “add...” once logged in as an administrator. Content from databases can be linked to multiple topics at once (no need for data re-entry), but should be as targeted as possible. Only content classified as global will appear on this page. Country specific content will appear under activities.

**Events.** The event in question should offer sufficient details for visitors to understand aspects covered by the event, and how to register (potentially through a link to the event website if applicable).

**Recommendations** should be of global relevance, although in some case regional examples of global significance can be entered.

**Working groups** should list the main contact person and preferably give an option to enroll.

**GFP Activities and Partners' activities** include: capacity building, cooperation, GFP Activities, software, tools, TTF analysis. An activity is typically a project or a policy formulation effort by one of the partners.

**Training** should be a training offering corresponding to the topic. Listing of your training programs reduces the risk of duplication and encourages the creation of training/knowledge modules, which can be shared. Training modules will be progressively entered with the aim in turn to include some of those in the GFP-DLI.

**Direct link to Core Partner website** should be targeted to the sub section of the partner site related to the topic (not to the main page of the site). Please note that finding specific information on vast web pages is sometimes difficult despite the good search engines so providing a direct link is the best value added you can offer the user.

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### **Topics vs Sub Topics**

For subtopic the Responsible Partner is given two choices : use the topic template for the subtopic in question or use a simplified version including a longer definition and Main references only.

## Annex 2.

Participants  
Fourth Inter-Agency Meeting on Trade Facilitation

Geneva, 12 November 2003

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