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ACTIVITIES DIRECTLY UNDER THE COMMITTEE

Report submitted by the secretariat for discussion and information

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report covers the activities that were carried out directly under the Committee (i.e. as opposed to those carried out by its subsidiary bodies) since the 2005 session of the Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development as part of its programme of work.

II. TRADE-POLICY-RELATED WORK

2. Activities and events in support of the Committee's trade-policy discussions, which took place in the reported period, include:

- Participation in the activities of the 'United Nations Trade Cluster and Working Group'
- Participation in the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong
- Preparation of one chapter of a report by the United Nations University Centre for Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS) on "Regional integration"
- Publication on "Competing in a Changing Europe"
- Publication of promotional literature on the Committee on Trade

A. Participation in the activities of the “United Nations Trade Cluster and Working Group”

3. The Trade Cluster is a working group under the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (EC-ESA). It was established to facilitate joint strategic planning and decision-making among the UN agencies that are active in trade. In particular, it fosters joint activities between the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the regional commissions. In 2005 the Group published a document on “Programme outputs for interdepartmental consultation and collaboration”, which reviewed areas for current and future joint activities.

B. Participation in the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong SAR, China

4. The secretariat actively participated in the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong SAR, China. In particular, it organized a meeting of all the UN agencies present where it was agreed that they would work together during the biennium to organize a joint meeting as a parallel event to the next Ministerial. This joint meeting will highlight for Member States how the UN family of organizations, as a whole, can help them to prepare for WTO negotiations and to implement any resulting obligations.

C. Preparation of one chapter of a report by the UNU/CRIS on “Regional integration”

5. The secretariat has prepared one chapter of the forthcoming report of UNU-CRIS on “Regional Integration” (see document ECE/TRADE/C/NONE/2006/2). This will be the first in a series of annual reports on the subject. In the report each of the five regional commissions provides information on recent developments in their region.

D. Publication on “Competing in a Changing Europe”

6. This short publication addresses recent developments in the trading environment of the European region, including the enlargement of the European Union and the preferential trade agreements among the countries of the region. It contains policy papers written by the secretariat and by independent researchers. It also contains the edited and updated versions of papers presented at the Executive Forum on “Competing in a Changing Europe: Opportunities and Challenges for Trade and Enterprise Development Following EU Enlargement” in May 2004.

E. Publication of promotional literature on the Committee on Trade

7. The secretariat has published promotional brochures on the Committee on Trade and its subsidiary bodies. The brochures will be distributed at forums, workshops and capacity-building events, as well as on field missions.

III. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION PROGRAMME: MULTIPLIER POINT NETWORK

8. UNECE’s “Multiplier Point” information dissemination programme is aimed at facilitating trade within the UNECE region. It distributes information on UNECE activities to enterprises and organizations in the private and public sectors. The areas it covers include: trade

facilitation, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development, information and communication technologies, corporate governance in the UNECE region, and gender.

9. The purpose of the programme is to reach out to a wider audience, particularly in countries in transition, to support and promote practices and methods that help member States diversify and expand trade and investments.

10. The network of Multiplier Points consists of private and governmental organizations, as well as not-for-profit organizations at national, regional and local levels that specialize in trade, industry and enterprise development. The secretariat sends these organizations information on the Committee's work. The Multiplier Points are expected to translate into local and national languages UNECE publications, recommendations, norms, guidelines, documents and other sources of information, and distribute them to potential users.

11. In 2005, the programme developed stronger ties with other United Nations bodies and international organizations. Recent developments in the Multiplier Point programme, which are described in greater detail below, included:

- Expansion of the network in the Commonwealth of Independent States with a focus on the Caucasus and Central Asia
- Evaluation of the program's implementation through contacts with the diplomatic missions in Geneva and a visit to the Multiplier Points in Uzbekistan.

12. The Multiplier Point programme web pages were updated on a continuous basis to include the latest developments. The website can be found at: <http://www.unece.org/trade/ctied/multiplier/welcome.htm>

13. Two new organizations in the Commonwealth of Independent States joined the Multiplier Point network, greatly enhancing the programme's outreach in that region:

- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan, whose objective is to offer activities and services to facilitate business in Uzbekistan.
- Centre of Economic Research in Uzbekistan: an independent non-profit research institution established in April 1999 with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Its aim is to provide policy advice to the Government and conduct research for other development institutions on key development issues.

14. Other organizations that have expressed interest in joining the Multiplier Point programme are:

- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kostanay, Kazakhstan
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Northern-Kazakhstan Region

15. The programme cooperated closely with UNDP, inviting its local offices to participate in the information dissemination activities in their country and to recommend local organizations as potential new Multiplier Points. As an example, the local UNDP office in Uzbekistan was recently added to the Multiplier Point electronic mailing list.

16. In 2005, the programme Coordinator visited Uzbekistan to assess how the programme was being implemented and to involve more organizations. He organized round tables, meetings and discussions to introduce the programme to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Centre for Economic Research. The business community showed particular interest in trade standardization, energy, agricultural quality standards and SME-related work.

IV. PUBLICATION OF THE NEW EDITION OF THE CD-ROM ON “NORMS, STANDARDS AND PRACTICES FOR TRADE FACILITATION AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS”

17. In 2006, the Committee will publish the third edition of the UNECE CD-ROM electronic library, “Norms, Standards and Practices for Trade Facilitation and International Business”.

18. The CD-ROM is intended to serve as a reference tool for a wide audience from both the public and the private sector. It provides an overview of the activities, best practice recommendations, norms and standards drawn up under the Committee in the following areas:

- Trade promotion and trade finance
- Trade facilitation recommendations
- Industry and enterprise development
- International legal and commercial practice
- Arbitration
- Technical harmonization and standardization policy
- Agricultural standards

19. The new edition contains close to 700 documents in English, French and Russian. It features a new visual interface that allows the content of future revisions to be transferred directly to the UNECE website. The CD-ROM is a valuable tool for distributing and promoting the Committee's work and is also distributed as a reference source to participants in capacity-building workshops.