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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic
Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region
Seventh session
Beirut, 4-5 October 2011

INFORMATION NOTE*1. Background information*

The Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region was established under its previous name Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region, pursuant to Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) resolution 214 (XIX) of 7 May 1997, which was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1997/12 of 18 July 1997. The Committee was mandated to undertake the following tasks: (a) to contribute to the identification of concerns and priorities of ESCWA member countries with respect to multilateral trade agreements and negotiations; (b) to monitor developments in global trade negotiations and in establishing economic and trade blocs, and to coordinate the stances of member countries in that regard; (c) to cooperate with ESCWA secretariat in the formulation of programmes to assist the countries of the region in designing appropriate policies for economic development at the national and regional levels, with a view to maximizing the benefits of those countries from the trends in liberalization of foreign trade and economic globalization; and (d) to formulate programmes to be taken jointly by the countries of the region, in cooperation with other regional and international organizations, for training, exchange of expertise and research.

The Committee held its first session in Abu Dhabi in 1999, its second in Manama in 2001, its third in Muscat in 2003, and its fourth, fifth and sixth sessions in Beirut respectively in 2005, 2007 and 2009. The Committee will hold its seventh session also in Beirut, on 4 and 5 October 2011.

The Committee had decided, at its fifth session, to change its name by adding the financing for development component. Therefore, the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region became Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region.

2. Aims

The aim of the current session is to provide a forum for discussion of developments of the negotiations of the Doha Development Round since the adoption of the Doha Development Agenda in 2001. In that regard, the executive secretariat has prepared a report on the negotiations of the Doha Development Round which were conducted over the last ten years in the area of services, from a regional perspective. The services sector was selected to be the focus of the report for its effective contribution to the growth of other

sectors, creation of employment opportunities, poverty reduction and sustainable development in the countries of the ESCWA region. The report is based on the package of documents issued by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in April 2011 about the negotiations of the Doha Development Round which present a review of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Doha Development Agenda since 2001. It summarizes the part related to the negotiations on services in the WTO documents, presents the stances and priorities of member countries with regard to the services sector, and proposes actions required in order to make progress in that field. The report will be submitted to the Committee at its seventh session for discussion and for identification of the stances of member countries in the process of preparing for their participation in the Eighth WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 15 to 17 December 2011.

The current session also aims to discuss the issues related to financing for development, including the progress achieved by member countries in the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and the main issues emerging in the way of financing for development; and engage those countries in the identification of priorities for the proposed programme of work of ESCWA in the fields of liberalization of foreign trade, economic globalization and financing for development under its strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013.

3. Agenda and organization of work

The provisional agenda and annotations of the seventh session of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region are provided in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2011/IG.2/L.1. The proposed organization of work is contained in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2011/IG.2/L.2.

4. Participants

Representatives of ministries of trade and ministries of finance in member countries will participate in the meetings of this session. Relevant regional and international organizations will be invited to attend the session as observers. In accordance with United Nations practice, Governments participating in the session are responsible for the travel and subsistence expenses of their delegates. Similarly, regional and international organizations participating as observers shall cover such expenses for their representatives.

5. Date and venue

The Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region holds its seventh session in the United Nations House in Beirut, from 4 to 5 October 2011. Registration will commence at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, 4 October 2011, and the session will be opened at 9:30 a.m. on the same day. Session meetings will end at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, 5 October 2011.

6. Language of the session

Session proceedings will be in Arabic, with simultaneous interpretation into and from English and Arabic.

7. Accommodation and transportation

A list of most of the hotels in Beirut is provided at: <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=1648E>. Participants may make their reservations directly with the selected hotel and mention the name of the event while making the reservation in order to benefit from reduced prices agreed upon under special arrangements made for the session. The hotels listed may provide escorting services from and to Beirut airport as well as transportation to and from ESCWA upon arrangements made by participants with the hotel.

8. *Entry visas*

Participants may obtain entry visas through the Lebanese Embassy in their respective countries. In case of difficulty, ESCWA may be able to assist in obtaining such visas if, at least 20 days before the session, it is provided with a copy of the participant's passport, giving all the necessary details.

9. *Correspondence*

All session-related correspondence should be directed to:

Mr. Tarek Alami
Officer-in-Charge
Economic Development and Globalization Division
ESCWA
Tel.: (961)-1-978616
Fax: (961)-1-981510
E-mail: alamit@un.org

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Fathia Abdel Fadel
First Economic Affairs Officer
Economic Development and Globalization Division
ESCWA
Tel.: (961)-1-978359
Fax: (961)-1-981510
E-mail: abdelfadil@un.org
