

Committee on Trade and Development

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report covers the activities of the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) in Regular Session, since its 2002 Annual Report.¹ The activities of the CTD in Dedicated Session (small economies) and the Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries will be covered in separate reports.

2. The CTD held two formal sessions in 2003. The 44th Session was held on 7 March 2003 and the 45th Session was held on 22 May and 12 June 2003. The minutes of these meetings are contained in documents WT/COMTD/M/44 and WT/COMTD/M/45. One informal meeting was held on 3 July.

3. The 44th Session was chaired by Ambassador Toufiq Ali (Bangladesh). Ambassador Habib Mansour (Tunisia) was elected Chairperson of the CTD in regular and dedicated sessions at the beginning of the 45th Session and chaired the remainder of that meeting and the subsequent sessions of the Committee.

II. WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT IN REGULAR SESSION

4. The principal themes addressed by the Committee during the period covered in this report were the following:

- A. Technical cooperation and training;
- B. Notifications regarding market access for developing and least-developed countries;
- C. Report of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO;
- D. Development dimension of electronic commerce;
- E. Declining terms of trade for primary commodities, and its implication to trade and development of primary commodity exporting countries;
- F. Notification procedures for regional trade agreements among developing countries, and;
- G. Paragraph 51 of the Doha Declaration on identifying and debating developmental and environmental aspects of the negotiations, in order to help achieve the objective of having sustainable development appropriately reflected.

A. TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND TRAINING

5. The issue of technical assistance and training was discussed at both the 44th and the 45th Sessions. At the 44th Session, the Secretariat informed Members about its work with respect to

¹ WT/COMTD/44

the seven commitments it made when action was taken on the 2003 Technical Assistance Plan.² Document WT/COMTD/W/101/Add.4 which contains detailed information on activities carried out in 2002 was also before Members at the 44th Session. Three official documents were before the 45th Session: the Technical Cooperation Audit Report of 2002 (WT/COMTD/W/111 and Corr.1), the report on the implementation of the 2003 Technical Assistance Plan (WT/COMTD/W/112), and the report on training activities (WT/COMTD/W/115). The Secretariat responded orally to questions raised with respect to these documents.³ The Secretariat also informed Members of the situation with respect to pledges announced and payments received to the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (JOB(03)/97). In addition, the Secretariat had prepared preliminary documents on outsourcing and trade policy clinics. Members views were taken into account and the draft documents on outsourcing and trade policy clinics were subsequently revised and issued as documents WT/COMTD/W/116 and WT/COMTD/W/117 respectively.

B. NOTIFICATIONS REGARDING MARKET ACCESS FOR DEVELOPING AND LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

6. The Government of Canada notified its increased market access for least-developed countries (LDCs) at the 44th Session (WT/COMTD/N/15/Add.1) and the Government of Japan notified the Committee of improvements to its GSP scheme at the 45th Session (WT/COMTD/N/2/Add.12). These notifications were, as far as they relate to LDCs, referred to the Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries for consideration and reporting back in accordance with the reporting procedures agreed to at the 32nd Session of the Committee.

C. REPORT OF THE JOINT ADVISORY GROUP ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE UNCTAD/WTO

7. The Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (JAG) held its 36th Session on 28 April to 2 May 2003. The report on that meeting (ITC document ITC/AG/(XXXVI)/195 of 15 May 2003) was presented by the Chairman of the JAG, Mr. Faizel Ismail, Head of the South African Delegation to the WTO at the 45th Session of the CTD. ITC's Executive Director, Mr. Denis Bélisle was also present. Members took note of the JAG report and agreed to forward it to the General Council for adoption.

D. DEVELOPMENT DIMENSION OF ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

8. The issue of electronic commerce is a standing item on the agenda of the CTD in Regular Session. Following a request by the Committee, the Secretariat prepared a note for the 44th Session on the work the CTD has carried out with respect to electronic commerce (WT/COMTD/W/110). A few delegations mentioned the importance of e-commerce for developing countries. However, no specific proposals for further work were made. At its 45th Session, the Committee requested the Secretariat to draft a brief factual report summarizing the Committee's work on e-commerce since the Doha Ministerial Conference. Members agreed to adopt the report on a non-objection basis and forward it to the General Council.

E. DECLINING TERMS OF TRADE FOR PRIMARY COMMODITIES, AND ITS IMPLICATION TO TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY COMMODITY EXPORTING COUNTRIES

9. The issue of "Declining terms of trade for primary commodities, and its implication to trade and development of primary commodity exporting countries" was on the agenda of the 44th Session of the CTD. The delegations of Kenya, Lesotho, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe indicated that they

² The commitments are set out in paragraph 148 of WT/COMTD/M/43.

³ WT/COMTD/M/45

would circulate a document on the topic. That document was before the 45th Session. It highlights the problem posed to primary commodity exporting countries by the declining terms of trade and states the need for the WTO to take action on this issue (WT/COMTD/W/113). The Committee decided that the issue would remain on the agenda of the CTD and that the Chairperson would call informal consultations on the issue. These informal consultations were held on 3 July 2003, and the Committee will revert to the item at its 46th Session.

F. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

10. At the 44th Session an item relating to the "Notification procedures for regional trade agreements among developing countries" was included on the agenda and the Secretariat was requested to prepare a legal note on the existing notification requirements for RTAs. That note was before the 45th Session (WT/COMTD/W/114). The discussions were inconclusive and the Committee will revert to the item at its next meeting.

G. PARAGRAPH 51 OF THE DOHA DECLARATION ON IDENTIFYING AND DEBATING DEVELOPMENTAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, IN ORDER TO HELP ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE OF HAVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATELY REFLECTED

11. The item relating to paragraph 51 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration is a standing item on the agenda of the Committee. Members agreed, at the 44th Session of the CTD, that Secretariat staff be invited to brief the Committee about the work done in their areas of responsibility to help achieve the objective of having sustainable development appropriately reflected in the outcome of the negotiations. Consequently, the CTD was informed, at its 45th Session, about the developmental aspects of the negotiations on agriculture and Members agreed that the Committee be informed about the developmental aspects of the negotiations on non-agricultural market access at its next meeting.
