

# WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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**Committee on Trade and Development**  
**Nineteenth Session**  
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## REPORT ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND TRAINING

Note by the Secretariat

### Corrigendum

Section IV on the High Level Meeting on Least-Developed Countries in document WT/COMTD/W/36 should be replaced by the following text.

#### IV. High Level Meeting on Integrated Initiatives for Least-Developed Countries' Trade Development

At their first Conference in Singapore in December 1996, WTO Ministers adopted the Comprehensive and Integrated *WTO Plan of Action for the Least-Developed Countries* which "envisaged a closer cooperation between the WTO and other multilateral agencies assisting least-developed countries" in the area of trade. Pursuant to the *Plan of Action*, aimed at improving the overall capacity of least-developed countries to respond to the challenges and opportunities offered by the trading system, it was agreed by the WTO, UNCTAD and ITC Secretariats, in collaboration with the staff of the IMF, the World Bank and the UNDP, that an Integrated Framework for the provision of trade-related technical assistance, including human and institutional capacity-building, for supporting trade and trade-related activities of the least-developed countries and including efforts to enhance the supply response of these countries should be drawn up and applied on a case-by-case basis to meet the needs identified by individual least-developed countries in the area of trade.

As a result of the Singapore Ministerial Conference, the WTO, in close collaboration with IMF, ITC, UNCTAD, UNDP and the World Bank organized the High Level Meeting on Integrated Initiatives for Least-Developed Countries' Trade and Development (HLM) in Geneva on 27 and 28 October 1997, to which all 48 least-developed countries, recognized as such by the UN, were invited. In addition, several other organizations dealing with trade and development aspects participated. This High Level meeting was financed from specific contributions made by Members for this purpose to the WTO Trust Fund. The Meeting endorsed the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance, including for Human and Institutional Capacity-Building, to Support Least-Developed Countries in Their Trade and Trade-Related Activities (document WT/LDC/HL/1/Rev.1). The Integrated Framework sets out a coordinated approach for the provision of trade-related technical assistance to

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\*English only

least-developed countries by the six multilateral organizations most directly involved in the HLM, based on the needs for such assistance identified by individual least-developed countries in needs assessments. These needs assessments are drawn up by individual least-developed countries on the basis of a questionnaire, formulated jointly by the secretariats of the IMF, ITC, UNCTAD, UNDP, the World Bank and WTO and covering questions of compliance with the WTO Agreements, trade policy, supply-side constraints including those identified by the private sector, and human and institutional capacity building in the area of trade. The Integrated Framework seeks to increase the benefits that least-developed countries derive from the trade-related technical assistance available to them from the six agencies involved as well as from other multilateral, regional and bilateral sources, with a view to assisting them to enhance their trade opportunities, to respond to market demands, and to integrate into the multilateral trading system.

Both in preparation of and as a follow-up to the High Level Meeting technical assistance missions visited least-developed countries that had requested assistance from the agencies involved in carrying out their Needs Assessments. Thus, missions visited Africa, Asia and the Caribbean (Haiti). These missions were financed from the special contributions to the WTO Trust Fund. Following the procedures agreed to by the agencies in the Integrated Framework, needs assessments, once received, are reviewed by the six agencies and initial, provisional programmes of trade-related technical assistance are drawn up by them, in consultation with the least-developed country concerned. In 1997, thirty-four least-developed countries expressed an interest in participating in this exercise by submitting completed needs assessments and in response, agencies reviewed and drew up initial provisional programmes of trade-related technical assistance for twenty-three least-developed countries pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(d) of the Integrated Framework (the remaining eleven have been reviewed in the beginning of 1998 and work is continuing). As a result, further general and specific assistance will thus be provided to countries engaged in this process to respond to the needs identified, including training seminars on the WTO and the multilateral trading system. At the HLM, Hong Kong, China announced a donation of US\$1.25 million to the WTO Trust Fund specifically for the purpose of providing technical assistance under this Integrated Framework.

Participants in the meeting were provided demonstrations of the WTO Information Technology for Development Project and results achieved to date. As a result the WTO was encouraged to extend the project to all LDC Members. Efforts will be undertaken to link up all 29 LDCs to the Internet by the end of 1998.

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