

ITEM 5: TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Statement by the Representative of UNIDO at the TBT Committee Meeting of 23 March 2004¹

1. In relation to UNIDO's cooperation with WTO, certainly the most outstanding outcome of this last year was the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Cancún, to enhance cooperation and to implement a joint technical cooperation programme. This programme aims to achieve a marked increase in developing country exports by removing supply side constraints, developing and proving conformity to technical requirements and supporting integration into the multilateral trading system. Armenia, Bolivia, Cuba, Cambodia, Egypt, Jordan, Kenya, Ghana and Mauritania participate in this pilot programme. Initial kick-off seminars were held jointly by WTO-UNIDO in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Havana, Cuba and La Paz, Bolivia during the first quarter of 2004. Similar seminars are being organized in the other 6 countries in the coming months.

2. A concerted response is necessary to deliver trade-related technical assistance. In the implementation of the programme, WTO and UNIDO may invite other specialized agencies such as UNCTAD, FAO, ISO or the ITC to join according to their comparative advantages. Along the same lines of thought, namely, strongly supporting the establishment of coordination mechanisms for the delivery of TBT-related technical assistance, UNIDO has been supporting the consolidation of the Joint Committee on Coordination of Technical Assistance for Metrology, Accreditation and Standardization, and an Expert Group Meeting, sponsored by UNIDO was held last December 2003 in Vienna.

3. I am pleased to inform the TBT Committee that UNIDO and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) have just launched a publication on "Laboratory Accreditation in Developing Economies, Tested Once - Accepted Everywhere". This publication aims at facilitating laboratory accreditation bodies in developing countries to participate in the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangements. The publication is available electronically as CD-ROM version and can be downloaded from the UNIDO Website. A hard copy version is under way and will be distributed to the members of this Committee.

4. UNIDO is committed to continue developing demand driven technical cooperation programmes and projects related to the TBT Agreement and has therefore taken very seriously the answers to the survey questionnaire G/TBT/W/178 in the context of the Third Triennial Review. This in-depth analysis shows that the vast majority of the services provided under the UNIDO Service Module Framework are relevant to the needs of the developing countries and fully in line with the results of the TBT survey.

5. Furthermore, the activities led jointly with other agencies proved successful and fruitful:

- (a) with UNCTAD, WTO and the ITC, we organized two seminars in Africa which contributed to raising awareness for an integrated approach to trade capacity building for LDCs. We provided training on TBT, SPS implications as well as trade

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facilitation. The seminars were held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, June 2003 for 7 East African LDCs, and in Dakar, Senegal, October 2003, for 11 West African LDCs. Altogether 60 participants from the private sector, standards and conformity assessment infrastructures, as well as custom administrations attended the workshops.

- (b) UNIDO and WTO cooperated in the programme for the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Within this project, UNIDO, WTO and the Government of Bangladesh jointly organized and led a Workshop on the TBT Agreement in Dhaka, last November. Thirty high-level participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives and Nepal attended the Workshop.
- (c) In the context of the Trade Capacity Building Programme for Central America, UNIDO identified around 60 product categories that encounter trade difficulties in foreign markets, thus showing decreases in profits estimated at, at least USD 375 millions, owing to conformity assessment problems associated with the composition of and trends in Central American exports. An industrial survey of sectors affected, led to set priorities aiming to improve the technical infrastructure necessary for the development and harmonization of standards and conformity assessment procedures. A needs assessment for the establishment and/or strengthening of National Enquiry Points for TBT and SPS was conducted jointly with ITC.
- (d) During the UNIDO General Conference, December 2003, a Round Table on “Making Trade Work for the Poor” was held with special emphasis on TBT related matters. The main focus of discussion was on how to overcome supply side constraints, how to develop the productive capacities in a way to cope with TBT and SPS measures, and to successfully access international markets. The discussion also covered the need to establish and/or upgrade standards and conformity assessment infrastructures for the implementation in particular of the TBT and SPS Agreements. The Round Table gathered renowned panellists from the business community, government authorities, academia, civil society and development partners and we are particularly thankful for the presence of Dr. Rana, Deputy Director-General of the WTO.

6. Finally, I would like to draw the attention of the Committee that UNIDO has been submitting to the OECD/WTO database comprehensive information on our trade related technical assistance. In the period 2001-May 2003, UNIDO Trade-Related Technical Assistance and Capacity Building (TR/TACB) activities amounted to around US\$35 million related to 174 activities. Seventy projects were classified as Trade Policy and Regulations (TPR) amounting to US\$19.1 million, while 104 projects with an amount of US\$15.8 million were classified under Trade Development (TD). Specifically, 64 activities have been carried out under Trade promotion strategy and implementation - Industry amounting to US\$9.9 million and 24 activities under Market Analysis and Development - Industry for a total amount of US\$5.5 million.
