

**AGENDA ITEM 5: TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

Statement by the Representative of the UNCTAD at the TBT Committee Meeting of 23 March 2004

1. Since early 2003, UNCTAD has been implementing a UK-DFID funded project for six developing countries in Asia and seven in Central America and the Caribbean, whose activities focus to a significant degree on the issue of environmental requirements, market access and export competitiveness for various specific sectors. More than 20 country-case studies are being prepared on four different sectors: leather and footwear; electrical and electronic goods; horticultural products; and organic produce. For each product group, sub-regional workshops and national policy dialogues are being held.
2. The analysis is focusing on four critical areas: (i) the level of awareness on environmental requirements in key export markets; (ii) effectiveness of information gathering, analysis and dissemination; (iii) current national adjustment measures for meeting the new requirements; and (iv) elements of more pro-active adjustment policies in developing countries.
3. Preliminary results of this work are available for leather and footwear and electrical and electronic products, mostly based on analysis and discussions in the Asian beneficiary countries of the project: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.
4. The analysis and policy dialogues have been very helpful in clarifying and conceptualizing issues at the interface between environmental requirements, market access and export competitiveness. Discussions have concluded that it is important to see the distinction, but also the interplay between policy and capacity-constraints issues at three different intervention levels: the national level in developing countries, the WTO level and the international level outside the WTO. It has also been very useful to exchange national experience on different adjustment approaches and toolkits, including effective information management and public-private partnerships. Furthermore, there have been a number of sector specific recommendations on policy and capacity-building issues. The country-case studies and the conclusions of the sub-regional workshops are available on UNCTAD's Trade, Environment and Development website ([www.unctad.org/trade\\_env/](http://www.unctad.org/trade_env/)).
5. The 7th Session of UNCTAD's Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities in February 2003 asked the UNCTAD secretariat to launch exploratory activities for the possible creation, as a project-based activity, of a Consultative Task Force on Environmental Requirements and Market Access for Developing Countries. The UNCTAD secretariat and the National Institute of Metrology, Standardization and Industrial Quality (Inmetro) of the Brazilian Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade will jointly organize a workshop, as a pre-UNCTAD XI event, on 7-8 June 2004 in Rio de Janeiro that will review the preliminary results of exploratory activities for the Consultative Task Force.
6. The workshop is expected (a) to make recommendations on the objectives, concept and nature of activities of the Consultative Task Force; and (b) discuss the findings of a number of specific studies on the involvement of developing country exporters in pre-regulation- and pre-standard-setting consultations and the feasibility of international and sub-regional clearinghouses of information on environmental regulation and standards.

7. The workshop is open to all UNCTAD member States. The outcome of the workshop will be reported to UNCTAD XI, which will be held a week later in Sao Paulo. Further information on the workshop is available on UNCTAD's website.

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