



**Regional Seminar:
“Increasing Participation of ESCWA Member Countries
in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations”**

- in collaboration with WTO -

24-26 February 2009
UN-House, Lebanon

Information Note

Background and Objectives

Trade negotiations lie at the heart of the multilateral trading system. Parties and governments are exercising the art of negotiation skills to protect and advance their interests and benefits in various forms, particularly at a critical stage in the process of the ongoing Doha trade talks. Despite the current impediments that face the WTO in achieving a successful round of negotiations, more and more key players are insisting to conclude the Doha round.

By no means is the ESCWA region an exception. Since the launch of the Doha trade negotiations in 2001, ESCWA member countries have exerted efforts to effectively increase their participation in the multilateral trade negotiations in order to address their national concerns and interests within the framework of the ongoing negotiation process. However, progress is still needed for ESCWA member countries to sufficiently generate better knowledge and skills in strategies and tactics of different negotiation scenarios, especially the means to consolidate a common position on the regional level as well as to coordinate positions with other negotiating groups.

ESCWA, in collaboration with the WTO, is planning to hold an intensive three-day regional seminar in the form of a training workshop. This will be designed to focus on providing the participants from member countries with the skills and knowledge that is needed for trade negotiations concerning appropriate strategies and tactics, focusing on non-agricultural market access (NAMA) and agriculture, as well as techniques for effectively participating in and monitoring of the negotiation process. It will also briefly update the participants on the latest

developments in the Doha round. In this regard, the training will build national capacities of member countries in pre-negotiation planning, effective negotiation strategies, tactics and skills. Using simulation exercises, participants will not only become familiar with the techniques and skills of interest-based negotiation on practical and theoretical levels, but also they will have an opportunity to learn how to analyze the given subject matter of a negotiation, identify national priorities, build an overall consensus, consolidate decisions and formulate a comprehensive negotiation package.

Expected Outcomes

1. Generate better understanding of trade negotiation strategies, tactics, techniques and processes with a focus on how to formulate national and regional positions, especially in goods and services;
2. Enhance the benefits of trade negotiations to ESCWA member countries;
3. Improve and develop skills in pre-negotiation preparatory phase, negotiation strategies, required skills and techniques to form national positions;
4. Respond effectively to different positions, which are forwarded by other parties in the course of the negotiations; and
5. Encourage participants to share their experiences, opinions, best practices and lessons learnt.

Invited Participants

Approximately 25-30 participants are expected to participate as follows:

1. Representatives of concerned ministries in the ESCWA member countries (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen).
2. Regional organizations: League of Arab States; Arab Monetary Fund; Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization; Arab Labour Organization; Arab Organization for Agricultural Development; Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development; Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development; Abu Dhabi Development Fund; the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries (GUCCIAAC); Islamic Development Bank, among others.
3. International organizations: UN Regional Commissions among others.

The target-audience should have a basic knowledge of the WTO agreements or the functioning of the multilateral trading system and serve as their government negotiators (or future government negotiators) in bilateral, regional and multilateral trade negotiations. They should also be able to communicate in English. Participants are responsible for their own travel and accommodation arrangements and expenses, unless otherwise specified.

A letter of invitation will be sent to the relevant government authorities, through established channels, providing the specific conditions and requirements of candidates for the regional seminar. Candidates officially nominated by their national governments will be considered.

Sponsored Participants

ESCWA will cover the cost of travel (ticket, daily subsistence allowance and terminal expenses) for a limited number of participants from member countries who are in need of assistance, provided they have been nominated by ESCWA member country focal points. ESCWA will inform the sponsored participants accordingly. Purchase of their round-trip ticket from their country to Lebanon will be made by ESCWA. Tickets will be sent to the sponsored participants via prepaid ticket advice (PTA). They are advised to coordinate their travel requests with ESCWA before January 23, 2009. Sponsored participants are not to purchase their own tickets unless they have been authorized by ESCWA. All other non-sponsored participants are kindly requested cover their own expenses (travel, accommodation, transportation, etc.) and make their own arrangements.

Entry Visas and Accommodation

All invited participants should obtain their entry visas into the Republic of Lebanon from the Lebanese embassies or consulates in their respective countries, when applicable. Travel and hotel accommodation are to be borne by the participants themselves unless otherwise specified. For a list of hotels with special rates and other logistical matters, please refer to ESCWA's internet website (<http://www.escwa.un.org>).

Venue and Date

UN-House, Riad El-Solh Square, Beirut, Lebanon
Tuesday to Thursday, 24-26 February 2009

Languages

This regional seminar will be conducted in English.

For Further Information, Please Contact

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