



**Economic Commission for Africa**

**Expert Group Meeting on Enhancing Africa's  
Participation in the WTO Negotiation Process**

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**Aide-Memoire**

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**7 - 8 September 2009  
Nairobi - Kenya**

## **I. CONTEXT**

### **Relevant Background**

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The Doha Round of international trade negotiations is now in its eighth year since it was launched in November 2001. The negotiations were supposed to be concluded after three years, with the target date of 1 January 2005. Based on the relevant mandates, the agriculture and NAMA modalities should have been agreed by March 2003. This was not achieved and further failure was registered from efforts to secure an agreement on modalities in Cancun in September 2003. While the July 2004 framework re-energised the Round, the subsequent momentum was not sufficient to facilitate an agreement in full modalities in July 2005. And the Hong Kong Ministerial of December 2005 was not able to muster enough political consensus to conclude full modalities.

Even after the negotiations being suspended in July 2006, their resumption in February 2007 has not yielded a concrete agreement on modalities in agriculture and NAMA and efforts to have agreement by end of April 2008 could not be realised. Indeed, the negotiations collapsed for yet another time in July 2008 with outstanding issues remaining unresolved, thus blocking the way for an agreement. The subsequent efforts to have agreement based on new modalities paper released in December 2008 failed yet again to yield a consensus.

Despite these long-drawn efforts to reach agreement, there is consensus that unlike in the previous rounds of trade negotiations, the African countries have in the current Doha Round enhanced their participation and voice. However, pessimism remains that when the results of the Doha Round are finally audited; they might not measure up to the early ambitions of the round. For Africa, such a verdict would be quite disheartening given the resources that the countries have expended to ensure that this time round, real and credible results are achieved that will enhance the continent's chance of moving out of the margins of the global trade to the centre. It is for this reason that an early audit of the possible results of the Doha Round becomes necessary. Such an audit will point out areas where potential results, based on analysis of current version of negotiations modalities may not match ambition in Doha mandate.

This Workshop/Expert Group Meeting is an endeavour to take stock of the progress in the Doha Round with the objective of identifying negotiations areas where African countries might still need to enhance their negotiations capital. The workshop will consider papers prepared by the ECA staff and other international organizations. The ECA paper will revisit the development agenda of the Doha Mandate, recalling what originally was seen would constitute a development round. Some of the other papers will review the African countries position timeline on each of the negotiations issues, in particular, on the expected development

content. This will inform in-depth discussions of current modalities including their potential economic implications for African countries. Presentations on empirical investigation of the modalities in areas of agriculture, NAMA, services and trade facilitation negotiations among other areas, evaluating the possible development impacts will also be made. Given that majority of the African countries are also LDCs; the meeting will have a dedicated section on the achievements of the Doha Round in terms of delivering results for the LDCs.

### **ECA Current Work on Trade and International Negotiations**

The ECA's current work in the area of trade and international negotiations falls under four main components: (1) Trade mainstreaming; (2) Trade negotiations; (3) Implementation of trade policies and international trade agreements; and (4) Aid for Trade.

- 1) Mainstreaming and integration of trade policies in national and regional development strategies to achieve faster growth for poverty reduction and sustainable development

Mainstreaming of trade in national and regional trade strategies is important if trade is to play its role as an engine of growth. But for mainstreaming to be successful, the appropriate trade policies and how they link to the various sectors in the national and global economy must be identified. As a result, ECA's work in the area of trade mainstreaming starts with a focus on the formulations of trade policies, which involves enhancing the analytical and institutional capacity of African countries and RECs for trade policy formulation.

- 2) Trade negotiations for effective integration into the global economy

The formulated trade policies at national and regional level need to be coherent with bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements for them to be implementable and effective. Consequently, the ECA focuses on improving the capacity of African countries through their Capitals, Representatives in Geneva and Brussels, and RECs to participate effectively in bilateral, regional and multilateral trade negotiations. The Economic Partnership Agreements, the Doha Round of the WTO negotiations, and the rationalisation and harmonisation of the RECs trade protocols is the current focus with respect to trade negotiations activities.

- 3) Implementation of trade policies and international trade agreements.

Integrating the commitments of African countries to make into their national and regional policy frameworks is an important step in realising the intended objectives of trade agreements. The ECA, therefore, helps the African countries meet their commitments by strengthening their institutional capacity for implementation of trade policies and international trade agreements. This requires the unpacking of the trade

agreements and helping African countries formulate their schedules that must be deposited with the relevant authorities for monitoring implementation of trade agreements commitments.

#### 4) Aid for Trade

The ability of the trade policies and implementation of trade commitments to realise improved performance of the African countries from trade depends to a large extent on how the internal and external trade challenges are dealt with. The Aid for Trade implementation focuses on dealing with these challenges. The ECA supports countries and RECs in identifying the priority areas for Aid for Trade implementation. The ECA also builds the capacity of African countries and RECs to monitor the implementation of the Aid for Trade.

This workshop falls under Component 2.

## **II. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP AND EXPECTED RESULTS**

### **Overall objective**

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To assist African trade negotiators define common negotiation strategies in order to enhance the participation of African countries in the WTO negotiation process. The meeting will also enable African trade negotiators and representatives of regional economic communities to exchange best practices.

### **Specific objective(s)**

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The specific objective is to enable the African countries take stock of the Doha Round draft modalities vis-à-vis the various Common African Positions.

### **Expected Results**

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The expected results would include enhancing the knowledge of the African negotiators and Senior Officials to identify and define common negotiations strategies of those areas of the WTO negotiations where there is significant divergence from the Common African positions and which could lead to African countries not being able to benefit from the final Doha Round agreement.

## **III. ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS**

The financial crisis, which has transformed into an economic crisis, has resulted in not only a significant slowdown in the global trade, but also to economic recessions in the major African markets. As countries have grappled with the implications of the crisis, an increase protectionist measures has also been witnessed. This environment has called for a re-

look at the global rules governing finance (an important factor in trade), and which is likely to have significant implications on the WTO. This workshop assumes that the mandate for the Doha Round remains the same and the draft modalities where so far there has been consensus will form part of final modalities. The workshop further assumes that there is a political commitment to conclude the Doha Round and the Multilateral Trade Rules developed under the auspices of the WTO will remain relevant even as a new international financial architecture and a new template for global governance of international financial institutions is being sought.

The workshop will be a good opportunity to take into account any deviations in the assumptions above with respect to the Common African positions in the different areas of negotiations.

#### **IV. ORGANISATION AND METHODOLOGY**

##### **Organisation of the workshop**

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The Trade and International Negotiations Section will organize the workshop in collaboration with the African Trade Policy Centre. The ECA staff; consultant(s); and the African Group focal points in the different negotiations committees will prepare the technical papers for discussions during the workshop. The ECA partners at the regional (AUC, AfDB, RECs) and international (UNDP, UNCTAD, WTO, IFPRI, FAO, South Centre, TWN, World Bank) level will also be invited to prepare and present technical papers in order to enrich the Workshop.

Workshop facilitation expenses: The ECA will be responsible for making available all the meeting documents and the necessary resources for the delivery of the presentations. Workshops expenses, including coffee breaks, consumables, etc., will be met, as per the programme and budget.

Cost of participation: The ECA will pay for **economy class round air tickets** and **applicable per diem rates** to sponsored participants.

##### **Language**

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The working languages during the Workshop will be English and French.

#### **V. REQUIRED EXPERTISE:**

The terms of reference for the preparation of the technical papers for presentation will be prepared by the ECA. The ECA staff will also produce one of the key papers for discussion during the workshop. The resource persons comprising of the consultant and the Geneva-based African Group focal points should be conversant with the Doha Round mandate and the key issues for Africa in the development of modalities. The experts to be sponsored to attend and participate in the workshop must be experienced

senior officials and negotiators that are directly involved in the formulation of negotiating positions, and preferably be involved in actual negotiations themselves.

## **VI. LOCATION, DATE AND DURATION OF THE MISSION**

### **Starting date**

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The workshop will be held from 7 to 8 September 2009.

### **Location**

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Nairobi, Kenya.

### **Milestones and Reports**

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- (a) A report of the workshop will be prepared and submitted before 31 October 2009.
- (b) A summary of consensus positions in the areas under negotiations in which Africa has common interests will be prepared and submitted before 31 October 2009.