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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE URUGUAY ROUND

Communication from the UNCTAD Secretariat

The following communication received from the UNCTAD Secretariat containing a description of the UNCTAD/UNDP Programme of Technical Assistance to Developing Countries for Multilateral Trade Negotiations is circulated to the members of the Committee.

I. INTRODUCTION

At the Ministerial Session of the Contracting Parties of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), held at Punta del Este (Uruguay) in September 1986, it was decided to launch a round of multilateral trade negotiations (the "Uruguay Round"). To this end, a Ministerial Declaration was adopted which included a wide range of subjects for negotiations.

The negotiating structure for the Uruguay Round reflects the complexity and variety of the issues to be addressed. At the top of the pyramid is the Trade negotiations Committee (TNC) which has been established to carry out the negotiations. Actual negotiations on trade in goods are taking place in the fourteen individual Negotiating Groups which cover each of the subjects listed in Part I of the Uruguay Declaration. These groups report to the Group of Negotiations on Goods (GNG). Negotiations on Trade in Services, under Part II of the Declaration, are being conducted in the Group of Negotiations on Services (GNS). The GNG and the GNS report to the TNC. The implementation of the standstill and rollback commitments are monitored by a Surveillance body established for that purpose.

Given the experience of UNCTAD in providing technical support in such negotiations - the Tokyo Round being a case in point - the Final Act of UNCTAD VII requested the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to provide technical assistance to developing countries in order to facilitate their effective participation in the Uruguay Round. The programme was developed in close consultation with developing countries and the various regional commissions and organizations.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME

UNCTAD's technical cooperation programme consists of an interregional project and three regional projects for Africa, Asia and Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. All four projects are financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and are designed to be mutually supportive. The interregional project is the "core project" of UNCTAD's technical assistance on the Uruguay Round. In addition to its activities in providing technical support to developing countries on issues of general and common interest, the interregional project has the task of coordinating and "backstopping" the regional projects, the preparation of studies of general interest and organizing roundtables. The three regional projects are tailored to the specific needs and priorities of the developing countries in the respective regions. In addition, UNCTAD assists in the formulation and implementation of technical cooperation projects at the level of the individual countries when a theme (or themes) pertaining to the Uruguay Round is considered to be of such special concern as to require such a deployment of resource and effort.

During the second half of 1989 an ancillary component, entitled "Software for Market Analysis on Trade (SMART)", was added to the four-project programme cited above. The primary consideration in adding this component (which constitutes added financial support by UNDP to the Uruguay Round projects) has been the perceived need for the improvement of skills in the management of large volumes of complex data on trade and trade barriers and in the utilization of such data for evaluation of various options. SMART, which has been designed to assist developing countries in this management problem, represents the culmination of the joint technical effort of UNCTAD and the World Bank (IBRD).

The immediate objectives of the projects are:

- (1) To strengthen the negotiating capability of the governments of the developing countries, in order to provide their institutions with the basic elements to participate effectively in trade negotiations;
- (2) To enable the developing countries to be adequately prepared, in terms of technical capability and availability of necessary information, to participate fully and effectively in the Uruguay Round;
- (3) To provide developing countries with basic material for their analysis of the various subjects included for negotiation the Uruguay Round and evaluation of negotiating proposals;
- (4) To improve the existing infrastructure of developing countries and to enhance and consolidate the expertise and capacity of government officials in conducting trade negotiations and in the formulation and implementation of trade policies;
- (5) To provide the basis for informal exchange of views between developing countries and their developed partners with the aim of facilitating a better perception of the subjects of the negotiations and the identification of mutually advantageous and balanced solutions.

The technical assistance programme comprises the following main activities and outputs:

(i) Analysis of subjects

Given the agenda of the Uruguay Round, the projects analyse the issues in the various subjects of the negotiations in order to enable the developing countries to assess the issues and to develop their own positions in the course of the negotiations. A regular feature of the activity in this area is the periodic updating (the most recent covers developments until July 1989) of a paper entitled "Review of Developments in the Uruguay Round" which provides an overview of the negotiating issues, reports on proposals put forward under each of the main negotiating groups and analyses their implications. In addition, a number of studies and analyses on the specific issues under negotiation of particular interest to the developing countries have been prepared (see IV) below). These studies and analyses are updated and revised from time to time as the negotiations progress; and as new situations develop, additional issues will be addressed.

(ii) Information on trade measures

The projects provide governments as well as their Geneva-based missions with up-to-date information on trade measures and relevant trade policy decisions in major industrialized countries, together with analysis of their impact on the course of negotiations. SMART complements this activity by seeking to provide tools and improve skills of participating developing countries in the compilation and analysis of trade-related information.

(iii) Advisory missions

Advice to government officials in their capitals as well as the Geneva-based negotiators is also available. In doing so, the projects prepare briefing notes on the various issues emerging during the negotiations. Advisory missions to the capitals of developing countries are also included in the work programme of these projects. The advisory missions undertaken so far have contributed to work in areas covering:

- (a) improvements of national capacity to analyse measures affecting their trade and the provision of necessary data in this respect;
- (b) preparation of an inventory of technical assistance requirements;
- (c) the elaboration of a programme of work, including preparation of studies to be implemented under UNCTAD UNDP assistance;
- (d) provisions of experts on a short-term basis to assist national consultants in the elaboration of studies during the advisory missions.

Workshops have been organized in order to share other countries' experiences and approaches in the elaboration of studies.

(iv) Training activities

Training activities are organized by the projects, as required, with a view to reinforcing the negotiating capabilities of the developing countries on various subjects of the negotiations. These activities are devoted to familiarizing officials, including delegates - particularly those from countries with lesser experience in trade negotiations - with the fundamental issues. One of the main objectives is to assist developing countries to improve their infrastructures in support of their negotiating delegations. Under the training programme the projects organizes inter-regional, sub-regional and national seminars, and workshops concerning negotiating issues, and holds roundtable discussions on specific subjects of the negotiations.

III. FINANCING OF THE PROJECTS

As mentioned earlier, support to the Uruguay Round is presently provided by UNDP through financial allocations to the following technical cooperation projects:

- (i) INT.86.034- "Support to the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Negotiations: Phase I."*

Approved on 30 March 1987, for the amount of US \$143,000 extending over the period of one year.

*(ii) INT/88/020 - Support to the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Negotiations:
Phase II."*

Approved on 22 August 1988, for the amount of US \$510,700 extending over the period of two years.

(iii) RAS/86/020 - "Assistance for International Trade Negotiations (Preparatory Assistance)."

Approved on 9 April 1986, for an initial amount of US \$193,000 extending over a period of seven months. Through subsequent revisions, the preparatory phase has been incorporated with the main project phase, with a total allocation of \$1,277,468 extending to the end of 1989.

(iv) RAF/87/157 - "Support to Africa in the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations and to External Sector of African Countries."

Approved 18th of August 1988 for a period of two years, and with a total allocation of US \$1,046,000.

(v) RLA/87/019 - "Asistencia para el desarrollo del comercio y negociaciones comerciales."

Initially approved in June 1987 for one year, the project now covers the period up to December 1988 for a total allocation of US \$ 482,000.

With a view to making an optimal use of the funds allocated to the various projects, every effort is made to carry out as many activities as the opportunities will afford with a minimum of constraint as regards the relevant project phase. Thus, while the "preparatory assistance" phase of a project is primarily intended for the formulation of the "main" or "second" phase of the project in question, some of the activities properly belonging to the latter phase have been undertaken during the former as the opportunity has arisen. This is particularly true of the early advisory missions which, in addition to affording an exchange of views regarding the form and context of the subsequent project with various officials and entities, have also served the purpose of seminars in practical terms; and some of the research material prepared before such exchanges has served as working papers for these "advance seminars". In the continuing consultative process involved in the Uruguay Round, the project activities have been seen as an integral package of assistance to the developing countries.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE PROJECTS

Beginning with the preparatory phase of the Asian and the Pacific Project RAS/86/020 - subsequently incorporated in the main Project phase - see section III above), and the coming on-stream of the Interregional Project (Phase I in 1987, and Phase II in 1988), the Africa Project (August 1988), and the Latin America Project (June 1987 to December 1988) - the outputs of project activities have focussed on advisory and consultation missions, organization of seminars and workshops and the preparations of analytical papers and studies. These activities are described below:

A. Advisory Missions

Since the beginning of project activities, upwards of 50 advisory and consultation missions have been undertaken by UNCTAD and Project staff, including consultants, covering all developing regions.

The purposes of these missions and the activities undertaken have varied but can be broadly grouped under a number of general areas:

- Advice, at the request of governments concerned, on matters such as issues before the Uruguay Round, to ascertain their technical assistance requirements and to discuss other matters relating to the negotiations;
- Advice on the methodology and assistance in the preparation of national studies on subjects such as services (Dominican Republic, Ivory Coast, Malta, Mexico, Nicaragua and Tunisia);
- Advice on the development and improvement of data bases on trade measures. (Brazil, ECLAC, the Philippines and Singapore).

B. Seminars and Roundtables

The Project staff have been involved in the convening and organization of a number of seminars and workshops dealing with issues before the Uruguay Round. Many of these seminars have been organized in close consultation and collaboration with United Nations' regional Commissions such as ECLAC and ESCAP. In these activities, the projects have had the benefit of advice and participation of national Governments and organizations such as, ACP, Commonwealth Secretariat, the EEC, GATT, INTAL, ICAO, SELA, UNCTC and WTO.

An important aspect of the projects' work has been participation in Uruguay Round-related seminars convened by Governments and international organizations. This has involved the presentation of papers, the provision of studies and of experts.

The following table summarizes information on these activities organized by the UNCTAD UNDP Projects. (Additional seminars/workshops and roundtables are also being planned for 1990.)

<i>Subject/Title of seminar</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Source of Financing</i>
National Seminar on the Uruguay Round	Beijing	May 1987	RAS/86/020
National Seminar on Services	Mexico	August 1987	RLA/87/019
National Seminar on Services	Abidjan	September 1987	INT/86/034
National Roundtable on Trade Negotiations on Services	Tunis	November 1987	INT/86/034
Regional Seminar (Latin America and the Uruguay Round)	Punta del Este	December 1987	RLA/87/019
National Seminar on Services	Havana	February 1988 - March 1988	RLA/87/019
Regional Seminar (New issues)	Caracas	March 1988	RLA/87/019
Sub-regional Seminar (Uruguay Round/Central America)	San José	July 1988	RLA/87/019
Seminar (Caribbean countries in Uruguay Round)	Kingston	September 1988	RLA/87/157
Training Seminar	Geneva	October 1988	RAS/86/020
Roundtable on Developments in the Uruguay Round	Santiago	October 1988	RLA/87/019
Regional Seminar on Developments in the Uruguay Round	Bangkok	October 1988	RAS/86/020
Seminar (Uruguay Round/Andean Group)	Santa Cruz (Bolivia)	October 1988 - November 1988	RLA/87/019
Technical Seminar (ASEAN/Uruguay Round)	Geneva	November 1988	RAS/86/020
Regional Seminars: (Telematics)	Lima	November 1988	RLA/87/019
(Statistics on services)	Lima	November 1988	RLA/87/019
(Producer services)	Lima	November 1988	RLA/87/019
ASEAN Technical Seminar on the Uruguay Round	Geneva	November 1988	RAS/86/020

<i>Subject/Title of seminar</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Source of Financing</i>
Roundtable on Safeguards, Textiles and TRIPs	Talloires	January 1989	RAS/86/020
Roundtable on TRIPs to GATT from Developing countries	Talloires	February 1989	RAS/86/020
Regional Seminar on the Uruguay Round for Western and Central African countries	Lomé	February 1989	RAF/87/157
Seminar on Services	New Delhi	February 1989	RAS/86/020
National Seminar on Services	Colombo	March 1989	RAS/86/020
National Seminar on Dominican Republic and the Uruguay Round	Santo Domingo	March 1989	RLA/87/019
Subregional Seminar on the "New Issues" in the Uruguay Round and the Central American countries	Nicaragua	March 1989	RLA/87/019
Roundtable on the Uruguay Round for Africa	Geneva	April 1989	RAF/87/157
Roundtable on Technology and Trade Policy	Delphi	April 1989	INT/88/020
Regional Seminar on the Uruguay Round and Technical assistance to Latin America and Caribbean countries (in the framework of the SELA consultation meeting on the Uruguay Round)	Caracas	May 1989	RLA/87/019
Regional Seminar on the Uruguay Round for Eastern and Southern Africa	Lusaka	May 1989	RAF/87/157
Roundtable on Agriculture	Cairo	May 1989	INT/88/020 RAF/87/157 RAS/86/020

<i>Subject/Title of seminar</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Source of Financing</i>
National Seminar on the Structure of the International Trading System and the Interests of Ecuador	Quito	June 1989	RLA/87/019
National Seminar on Bolivia and the Uruguay Round	La Paz	June 1989	RLA/87/019
National Seminar on Costa Rica and the Uruguay Round	San Jose	June 1989	RLA/87/019
National Seminar on Guatemala, the GATT and the Uruguay Round	Guatemala City	June 1989	RLA/87/019
National Seminar on Mexico and the Uruguay Round	Mexico City	June 1989	RLA/87/019
National Seminar on Peru and the Uruguay Round	Lima	June 1989	RLA/87/019
National Seminar on Services	Rio de Janeiro	June 1989	RLA/87/019
National Seminar on Services	Santiago	June 1989	RLA/87/019
Seminar on Conditions of Market Access and Issues in the Uruguay Round	Geneva	July 1989	RAS/86/020
National Seminar on the Uruguay Round	Jakarta	August 1989	RAS/86/020
ASEAN Seminar on Trade in Services	Jakarta	August 1989	RAS/86/020
Seminar on TRIPs, TRIMs and Services	Beijing	August 1989	RAS/86/020
National Seminar on Anti-dumping Legislation and Practices of Major Trading Countries	Singapore	August 1989	RAS/86/020
National Seminar on TRIMs and Services	Bangkok	August 1989	RAS/86/020

<i>Subject/Title of seminar</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Source of Financing</i>
National Seminar on Services	Belgrade	September 1989	INT/88/020
National Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round	Kigali	September 1989	RAF/87/157
National Seminar on the Uruguay Round	Dhaka	September 1989	RAS/86/020
Interregional Seminar for least developed countries on the Uruguay Round	Dhaka	October 1989	INT/88/020
Roundtable on TRIMs and Trade in Services	Talloires	October 1989	RAF/87/157
National Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round	Douala	October 1989	RAF/87/157
National Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round	Cotonou	October 1989	RAF/87/157
Regional Seminar on Developments in the Uruguay Round	Bangkok	October 1989	RAS/86/020
ASEAN Seminar on Textiles and Clothing	Bangkok	October 1989	RAS/86/020
National Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round	Dar-es-Salaam	October 1989	RAF/87/157
National Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round	Harare	October 1989	RAF/87/157
National Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round	Addis Ababa	November 1989 (2-4 Nov.)	RAF/87/157
National Seminar on the Uruguay Round	Islamabad	November 1989 (6-8 Nov.)	RAS/86/020
National Seminar on Agriculture	Seoul	November 1989 (13-14 Nov.)	RAS/86/020

C. Studies prepared by the projects

Since its beginning, a key focus of project activities has been the preparation of analytical studies on issues before the Uruguay Round. Given the complexity of the subjects particularly in areas dealing with some of the "new issues" before the agenda, the projects have focussed considerable attention on studies relating to services, trade-related aspects of investment, trade-related aspects of intellectual property, as well as on traditional subjects such as safeguards, textiles, tariffs and non-tariff measures, agriculture, tropical products etc. In addition, studies have been prepared regarding the important developments in major industrialized countries having significant relevance to the Uruguay Round. While some of the studies have been used as background material for the work of the projects, others have been circulated to the developing countries. A volume of papers "Uruguay Round - Papers on Selected Issues - (UNCTAD/ITP/10)" prepared under the various projects for public dissemination was published early in 1989. A number of similar publications for wider dissemination are planned for later this year. The studies circulated or to be circulated in near future include the following:

- Definitional aspects of trade in services; Concepts and methodology in the statistics on trade in services; Services demand in textile industry - a case study; Services in development process; Elements of multilateral framework on services; Negotiations on trade in services and Latin American countries;
- Intellectual property rights and international trade; analysis of proposals or trade-related aspects of intellectual property and implications for developing countries;
- Trade-related aspects of investment measures - Issues for developing countries in the Uruguay Round;
- Safeguards issues in the Uruguay Round;
- Article XVIII of GATT in the Uruguay Round;
- Agriculture; Tropical products; Natural resource-based products;
- Review of developments in the Uruguay Round (updated from time to time);
- Developments in major developed countries having significant relevance to the Uruguay Round.

How to obtain information on the activities offered by the programme:

Developing countries can request training and/or advisory assistance and information concerning studies and seminars from UNCTAD or through the UNDP office servicing the country:

Mailing Address

UNCTAD/UNDP Projects on MTN's
Palais des Nations,
CH-1211 Geneva 10,
Switzerland.