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Committee on Trade and Development

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE URUGUAY ROUND

Communication from UNCTAD

The following communication has been received from the UNCTAD secretariat with the request that it be circulated to the members of the Committee.

UNCTAD/UNDP Programme of Technical Assistance to Developing Countries in the Context of the Uruguay Round

1. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD was requested, in the Final Act of UNCTAD VII, to "provide technical assistance to developing countries, on request, in connection with the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations so as to facilitate their effective participation in these negotiations. UNCTAD should render technical support which might be required in the negotiations. UNDP is invited to consider favourably the requests for the provision of adequate financial resources to UNCTAD and to individual countries for this purpose".
2. In response to this request, UNCTAD has been providing technical assistance to developing countries in the context of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. Such assistance has been provided through UNDP financed projects, in some cases by building-on existing activities dealing with "external sector" issues. The UNCTAD/UNDP Technical Assistance Programme has aimed at establishing, developing and strengthening the national negotiating capabilities of developing countries with regard to the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations; identifying the trade policy interests of developing countries and facilitating the pursuit of such interests through negotiations at both bilateral and multilateral levels; and reinforcing the capacity of governments and national institutions, as well as regional and sub-regional organizations, where applicable, to participate in trade negotiations and deal with external sector issues.
3. The Programme consists of three regional projects for Africa (RAF/87/157), Asia and the Pacific (RAS/86/020) and Latin America and the Caribbean (RLA/87/019) and an interregional project (INT/88/020). Since 1990, this Programme has been complemented by a sub-regional project for the Central American countries (CAM/90/008). The regional projects for Latin America and Africa include support to the external sector in areas extending beyond those covered in the Uruguay Round.

4. At the sixty-seventh session of the GATT Committee on Trade and Development in November 1989, a description of UNCTAD/UNDP Programme of Technical Assistance to developing countries for the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations was circulated in document COM.TD/W/478. This note is intended to provide the Committee with updated information on the Programme and details of the activities carried out by the Programme.

Activities of the Technical Assistance Programme

5. As mentioned in document COM.TD/W/478, priority was given to two inter-linked areas essential to developing countries' active rôle in the negotiations. The first related to the rapid building-up of the knowledge and information base on the issues under negotiation. The second was enhancing the capacity and capability of developing country governments to participate effectively in the negotiations. The main activities of the Programme have been the preparation of studies on issues of interest to developing countries in the Uruguay Round, advisory missions to capitals and the organization of national, sub-regional, regional and inter-regional seminars, roundtables and brainstorming sessions.

6. Bridging the knowledge and information gap with respect to the issues under negotiations, particularly on the so-called "new issues" of TRIPS, TRIMS and especially trade in services (where developing countries had had no comparable analytical experience to that accumulated in the OECD) was a pre-requisite for effective participation. The Programme set about doing so by mobilizing expertise from various regions as well as in-house expertise in UNCTAD to prepare and circulate a variety of studies which covered in detail the issues of principal interest to developing countries in the various negotiating groups, as well as suggesting overall perspectives with respect to the development dimension of the international trading system. The studies were designed to raise awareness of the issues under negotiation.

7. Collection of papers prepared under the Programme, selected for their quality and pertinence, have been published to provide an important source of reference for negotiators of developing countries, as well as to enlarge the body of knowledge on the relation between trade negotiations and the pursuit of development strategies. The studies prepared by the projects were intended to increase understanding and appreciation of the complexity of the issues under the negotiations and their possible effects on the international trade, economic and social development of developing countries. It is hoped that these publications will consequently enable a wider audience, including academics concerned with questions of development and members of the business community who have a vital interest in decisions taken by governments on the international trading system, to improve their awareness of the issues at stake and to facilitate their contribution to the formulation of policies, both national and international, on the subjects covered by the publications. A list of the key publications which have been or will shortly be circulated is attached as Annex I.

8. Building upon the provision of information as indicated above, the Programme has addressed the question of strengthening the negotiating capacity of developing countries. Efforts have been directed toward the strengthening of national negotiating infrastructures beginning by the identification of national "focal points" for Uruguay Round issues. There is a continuous interaction between these focal points and the projects, as well as determined efforts being made to strengthen the existing focal points and to establish new ones. Assistance at national level, in turn, has involved the organization of national seminars, a large number of which have been held since the launching of the Uruguay Round. These seminars were seen as a means to disseminate information and familiarize officials with the main issues under negotiation, and to help develop expertise and skills. The exchange of views among officials from the various ministries, the participation of representatives from the private and academic sectors, the analysis of negotiating issues taking account of the special interest of the country concerned and the examination of national policy options on the various negotiating issues constituted the agenda of these seminars. In addition national seminars recommended follow-up activities at the national level, including assistance by the projects on technical studies of interest to the country concerned.

9. A further element in the strategy pursued by the Programme to develop national capabilities consisted of the advisory services provided to individual governments. Such services were utilized by Geneva-based negotiators, and assistance to them included background and analytical technical notes on the various issues emerging from the negotiating process from the point of view of the country concerned. In addition a large number of country advisory missions were undertaken by project personnel. The assistance provided to individual governments by these missions varied, but included, inter alia, contributions to improvements of national capacity to analyse measures affecting trade; appraisal of specific issues emerging in the process of negotiations; the elaboration of a programme of work at a national level for the Uruguay Round; advice on the methodology in the preparation of national studies on various issues; advice on the development and improvement of data bases on trade measures; and the preparation of an inventory of technical assistance requirements to strengthen the negotiating infrastructure, including through the provision of short-term consultants.

10. Advisory missions on services which were sent to a number of developing countries created a growing awareness to strengthen their service sectors, and the importance of multilateral negotiations on trade in services. Many of these missions have led to the initiation of national projects for studies on the rôle of services in their economies. Studies were also prepared on agriculture and tropical products from the perspective of developing countries. A study to assist some developing countries to identify a set of policy measures and actions that could be implemented, individually or jointly by governments of the region in order to improve the local processing of their raw materials so as to increase domestic value added is also under way.

11. Another important element at the national level to develop the negotiating infrastructure was the installation of the system "Software for Market Analysis and Restrictions on Trade" (SMART) in a substantial number of developing countries. SMART was developed as a collaborative effort by UNCTAD and the World Bank with financial assistance from UNDP, and has enabled negotiators of individual developing countries to review the basic data on trade, tariff and non-tariff barriers in partner countries, to quantify the effects of the changes in tariffs in partner countries on their exports and more generally to identify and quantify possible requests for and offers of concessions in the negotiations. SMART has been useful in providing easily-accessible information on trade barriers to exports of interest to a country and by facilitating the handling and analysis of voluminous information.

12. Complementary activities to develop negotiating capacity were undertaken at an inter-country level. The Technical Assistance Programme organized a number of sub-regional, regional and interregional seminars. The substance of the seminars generally had common elements, often focusing on the new issues, but the perspective of each seminar was different. The sub-regional seminars addressed the problems from the point of view of economic groupings, on the basis of joint positions in the Uruguay Round. The regional seminars focused on the issues of common interest in Asia, Africa and Latin America respectively, while the interregional seminars were aimed at enabling the various groups of developing countries to synthesize the interests and positions. In addition the Programme organized a number of roundtables and "brainstorming sessions" in order to facilitate consensus building among countries with varied priorities in respect of the negotiating issues.

13. The wide range of issues being negotiated has necessitated much more intensive interministerial co-ordination than previous rounds. In this connection, national interministerial committees on the Uruguay Round are being established in many developing countries to follow developments in the negotiations and to ensure follow-up to the results thereof. The exchange of views on these occasions permitted a better understanding of each other's positions and the identification of common interests and views. A tabulated summary of the activities undertaken by the Programme through the projects is attached as Annex II.

Co-ordination of the Technical Assistance Programme with other organizations

14. The involvement of the UN Regional Economic and Social Commissions as associates in the execution of the regional projects, the collaboration of the World Bank in the SMART programme, the participation of a number of other organizations, notably, GATT, UNCTC, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the secretariat of sub-regional economic groupings such as ACP, PTA, ECOWAS, SELA and ASEAN, in various studies and events held under the Programme has helped provide the recipients with the widest range of available institutional expertise. The GATT secretariat has participated in many of the workshops and seminars organized under the Programme. The involvement of UNDP staff formally through the mechanism of the Joint

UNDP/UNCTAD Steering Committee for the Programme and the participation of the UNDP Resident Representative at virtually all the national and regional seminars, and informally through regular contacts also appears to have contributed to efficient and flexible implementation of the Programme.

Technical assistance during the final phase of the Uruguay Round

15. UNDP, as a funding agency for the Programme of Technical Co-operation for the Uruguay Round has, in the light of the Round not being concluded at the Brussels TNC meeting in December 1990 and its extension, agreed to continue supporting the Technical Assistance Programme activities until the end of December 1991. UNCTAD is requesting UNDP to continue to provide technical assistance to developing countries, on request, during the final and critical phase of the Uruguay Round, and to identify the evolving technical co-operation needs of developing countries in the context of the Fifth Programming Cycle of the UNDP.

ANNEX I

List of Key Publications

Uruguay Round: Papers on Selected Issues	(UNCTAD/ITP/10)
Uruguay Round: Further Papers on Selected Issues	(UNCTAD/ITP/42)
Technology, Trade Policy and the Uruguay Round	(UNCTAD/ITP/23)
Services, and the Development Potential: The Indian Context	(UNCTAD/ITP/22)
Trade in Services: Sectoral Issues	(UNCTAD/ITP/26)
Services in Asia and the Pacific: Volume I	(UNCTAD/ITP/51)
Services in Asia and the Pacific: Volume II	(UNCTAD/ITP/51/Vol. II)
Agricultural Trade Liberalization in the Uruguay Round: Implications for Developing Countries	(UNCTAD/ITP/48)

ANNEX II

Summary of the Activities Undertaken by the Programme

1987

1. National seminars and advisory missions

China, Seminar on the Uruguay Round (with the participation of a representative from GATT)

Mexico, Seminar on Services (with the participation of representatives from GATT and the World Bank)

Côte d'Ivoire, Seminar on Services

Tunisia, Roundtable on Services

2. Regional seminar

High level Seminar for Latin America on the Uruguay Round, Punta del Este (with the participation of representatives from GATT, ECLAC, etc.)

1988

1. National seminars and advisory missions

Cuba, Seminar on Services

2. Regional seminars and roundtables

Seminar for Latin American Countries on New Issues, Caracas (with the participation of representatives from SELA)

Sub-regional Seminar for Central American Countries on the Uruguay Round, San José

Seminar for Caribbean Countries on the Uruguay Round, Kingston

Training Seminar for Asian and Pacific Countries, Geneva

Roundtable on Developments in the Uruguay Round for Latin American Countries, Santiago (with the participation of representatives from SELA)

Seminar for Asian and Pacific Countries on the Developments in the Uruguay Round, Bangkok (with the participation of a representative from GATT)

Seminar on the Uruguay Round for Andean Group, Santa Cruz (Bolivia)

Seminar on the Uruguay Round for ASEAN Countries, Geneva

Seminar for Latin American Countries on Telematics, Statistics on Services and Producer Services, Lima

1989

1. National seminars and advisory missions

India, Seminar on Services (with the participation of a representative from GATT)

Sri Lanka, Seminar on Services

Dominican Republic, Seminar on the Uruguay Round (with the participation of a representative from GATT)

Ecuador, Seminar on the Structure of the International Trading System

Bolivia, Seminar on the Uruguay Round

Costa Rica, Seminar on the Uruguay Round

Guatemala, Seminar on GATT and the Uruguay Round

Mexico, Seminar on the Uruguay Round (with the participation of a representative from GATT)

Peru, Seminar on the Uruguay Round/SMART

Brazil, Seminar on Services

Chile, Seminar on Services (with the participation of representatives from SELA and ECLAC)

Indonesia, Seminar on the Uruguay Round

China, Seminar on TRIPS, TRIMS and Services (with the participation of representatives from WIPO and UNCTC)

Singapore, Seminar on Anti-Dumping Legislation and Practices of Major Trading Countries

Thailand, Seminar on TRIMS and Services

Yugoslavia, Seminar on Services

Rwanda, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round

Bangladesh, Seminar on the Uruguay Round (with the participation of representatives from the Commonwealth Secretariat and GATT)

Cameroon, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round

Benin, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round

Tanzania, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round (with the participation of a representative from ECA)

Zimbabwe, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round (with the participation of a representative from ECA)

Ethiopia Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round (with the participation of representatives from OAU and ECA)

Pakistan, Seminar on the Uruguay Round

Korea, Rep., Seminar on Agriculture

Senegal, Advisory Mission

Benin, Advisory Mission

São Tomé, Advisory Mission

Sri Lanka, Seminar on SMART

Yugoslavia, Seminar on SMART

Turkey, Seminar on SMART

2. Regional seminars and roundtables

Seminar on the Uruguay Round for Western and Central African Countries, Lomé (with the participation of representatives from ECA, OAU, the Commonwealth Secretariat and GATT)

Sub-regional Seminar on the New Issues for the Central American Countries, Nicaragua (with the participation of a representative from SELA)

Roundtable on the Uruguay Round for African Countries, Geneva (with the participation of representatives from ITCB, OAU, GATT and ECA)

Seminar for Latin American and Caribbean Countries, Caracas (with the participation of a representative from SELA)

Seminar on the Uruguay Round for Eastern and Southern African Countries, Lusaka (with the participation of representatives from PTA, the Commonwealth Secretariat, ECA and GATT)

Seminar on Conditions of Market Access and Issues in the Uruguay Round for Asian and Pacific Countries, Geneva

Seminar on Trade in Services for ASEAN Countries, Jakarta (with the participation of a representative from GATT)

Seminar on Textiles and Clothing for ASEAN Countries, Bangkok (with the participation of a representative from ITCB)

Sectoral Meeting on Services for Latin American Countries, Caracas (with the participation of a representative from SELA)

Joint Meeting With SELA and ECLAC on Services, Caracas

Brainstorming Session on the Development Dimension in International Trade - Joint UNCTAD/ECLAC/SELA Activity, Caracas

3. Interregional seminars and roundtables

Roundtable on Safeguards, Textiles and TRIPS, Talloires

Roundtable on TRIPS, Talloires

Roundtable on Technology and Trade Policy, Delhi

Roundtable on Agriculture, Cairo

Seminar for Least Developed Countries on the Uruguay Round, Dacca (with the participation of representatives from GATT and the Commonwealth Secretariat)

Roundtable on TRIMS and Trade in Services, Talloires

1990

1. National seminars and advisory missions

Cuba, Seminar on the Uruguay Round and Services (with the participation of representatives from SELA, ECLAC and GATT)

Cuba, Training Workshop on SMART System (with the participation of representatives from the World Bank)

Uruguay, Seminar on the Uruguay Round (with the participation of representatives from GATT, ECLAC and SELA)

Chile, Seminar on the Uruguay Round (with the participation of representatives from ECLAC and SELA)

Honduras, Seminar on the Uruguay Round and the Latin American private Sector (at the framework of AICO meeting)

Guatemala, Advisory Mission

Honduras, Advisory Mission

El Salvador, Advisory Mission

Costa Rica, Advisory Mission

Nicaragua, Advisory Mission

Mexico, information and consultation with representatives of the private sector

Venezuela, Brainstorming Meeting on Services Sectors (with the participation of a representative from SELA)

Venezuela, Advisory Mission and Seminar on Uruguay Round (with the participation of a representative from SELA)

Fiji, Seminar on the Uruguay Round

Philippines, Workshop on Uruguay Round

China, Advisory Mission

Cape Verde, Advisory Mission

Burundi, Advisory Mission on Services

Burundi, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round

Tanzania, Advisory Mission on Services
Côte d'Ivoire, Advisory Mission on Services
Cape Verde, Seminar on the Uruguay Round
Congo, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round
Central Africa, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round
Benin, Advisory Mission on Services
Morocco, Seminar on New Issues
Madagascar, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round
Mauritius Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round
Botswana, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round
Malawi, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round
Kenya, Seminar on Selected Issues of the Uruguay Round
Zimbabwe, Workshop on Negotiating, Interpreting and Monitoring Performance
of Multilateral Trade Agreements
Indonesia, Seminar on SMART
Bangladesh, Seminar on SMART

2. Regional seminars and roundtables

Meeting for Latin American Experts on Services, Caracas (with the
participation of representatives from SELA)
Workshop on SMART System with Latin American Countries, Caracas (with the
participation of representatives from SELA and the World Bank)
Training Workshop on Uruguay Round for Asian and Pacific Countries, Geneva
ASEAN Workshop on Services Sector, Bangkok
ASEAN Workshop on the Uruguay Round, Kuala Lumpur
Asia/Pacific Seminar on Trade in Services, Bangkok
ASEAN Workshop on Subsidies and Anti-Dumping, Singapore

Second Roundtable on Uruguay Round for African Countries, Geneva (with the participation of representatives from ECA and OAU)

Seminars on SMART for African Countries, Cairo, Rabat and Nairobi

Seminar on the Uruguay Round for some Arab States and African Countries, Morocco

Seminar on the Uruguay Round for ACP Countries, Brussels

Seminar for CREC Countries, La Réunion

Workshop on SMART for ASEAN Countries, Jakarta

Seminar on SMART for some Asian Countries, New Delhi

3. Interregional seminars and roundtables

Roundtable on Agriculture, Santiago (with the participation of representatives from ECLAC, SELA and IICA)

Roundtable on TRIMS, Cairo (with the participation of a representative from UNCTC)

Roundtable on Services and TRIMS, Annecy

Seminar on Anti-Dumping, Geneva

1991

1. National seminars and advisory missions

Ghana: Advisory Mission on Services
China: Advisory Mission on Services
China: National Seminar on Anti-Dumping

2. Regional seminars

High Level Brainstorming Session on the Uruguay Round for Latin American Countries, Punta del Este

High Level Brainstorming Session on the Uruguay Round for African Countries, Arusha

3. Interregional seminars and roundtables

Brainstorming Meeting on Services, Cairo (with the participation of representatives from ITC and GATT)