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**PROGRAMME PLANNING AND EVALUATION: EVALUATION OF SELECTED  
PROJECTS ON MANAGING GLOBALIZATION**

(Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda)

**WTO/ESCAP JOINT TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

*Note by the secretariat*

**SUMMARY**

This document contains an independent qualitative assessment by the Programme Management Division of the World Trade Organization/Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific technical assistance programme, a flagship initiative aimed at helping the Commission's members and associate members to meet the challenges of globalization. It assesses the outcomes of the projects and the impact of this work on the Asian and Pacific region and considers how lessons learned could help guide future project planning and implementation. The Committee is invited to review the report with a view to providing further guidance to the secretariat on its work under this programme.

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## I. PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

### *Monitoring and evaluation is essential for results-based programming*

1. The present report is an independent qualitative assessment by the Programme Management Division of the World Trade Organization (WTO)/ESCAP technical assistance programme, an important ESCAP activity under the theme of managing globalization. As part of the ESCAP revitalization process, the organization is enhancing the monitoring and evaluation of its programme activities.
2. The report considers the secretariat's experiences in carrying out technical assistance activities on WTO-related issues in partnership with WTO. It assesses the outcomes of ESCAP work on this subject and considers lessons learned for future project planning and implementation.
3. The Committee is invited to review the report with a view to providing further guidance to the secretariat that will continue to strengthen the WTO/ESCAP technical assistance programme.

## II. INTRODUCTION

### Summary

4. The WTO/ESCAP technical assistance programme aims to increase Governments' understanding of the rules, strategies and policies of the multilateral trading system so that they have increased capacity to implement their commitments under WTO agreements and participate in and influence ongoing WTO negotiations.
5. To accomplish this, the programme organizes training courses and seminars for mid-level and high-level government officials working on WTO issues or WTO negotiations.
6. The programme is planned and carried out with close cooperation between ESCAP and WTO. Some specific activities have also involved other partners, notably the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Activities organized under the programme have been funded by WTO, the United Nations regular budget for technical cooperation (Section 21) and the Government of Japan. Host Governments have provided support for activities held outside Bangkok. An activity held in October 2003 was also supported by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Selected activities have been organized in collaboration with subregional organizations, notably the secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

### A. The problem

7. WTO was established on 1 January 1995 at the conclusion of the Uruguay Round negotiations. The WTO agreements establish a global trade regime that helps producers of goods and services, exporters and importers in WTO member countries conduct their business. WTO

membership is a significant benefit to a country's national economy. It entails significant challenges as countries align their domestic policies and legislative frameworks with the rules of the WTO system.

8. WTO has limited membership and a lengthy and arduous accession process. Almost half of ESCAP members are in the process of accession but remain excluded from WTO membership. Very few least developed countries, Pacific island developing countries and landlocked developing countries have managed to accede. In fact, despite the recent accession of Cambodia and Nepal, the ESCAP region still contains more WTO non-members than any other region in the world. Nevertheless, accession remains a high national priority for all their countries in the ESCAP region, and in possibly all these countries this commitment comes from the highest political level.

9. Not only are many countries in the ESCAP region still excluded from WTO, but many also feel their accession is not taking place on a level playing field. New members seem expected to make commitments that go beyond commitments made by existing members.

10. While WTO accession is a lengthy process, negotiations continue once a country has acceded. To participate effectively in these negotiations, government officials need to stay fully up to date with the latest WTO rules, procedures and policies, and the latest international trade issues. This is a substantial burden for which many Governments require assistance.

## **B. ESCAP response**

11. The WTO/ESCAP technical assistance programme is a response to these difficulties. The programme aims to address them by increasing the understanding of rules, strategies and policies reflected in the WTO system, especially among government officials who are involved in ongoing WTO negotiations or work on other WTO-related issues.

### ***1. Project strategy***

12. The programme consists of a series of training courses and seminars for government officials. Many of the training courses provide a general background to a broad range of WTO policies and procedures. In addition, some training courses cover more specific subjects such as the WTO system for dispute resolution, implications and impact assessments of WTO accession, and agricultural policy.

13. The Doha Ministerial Declaration, adopted at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference, held at Doha in November 2001, recognized the need for all countries to benefit from the increased opportunities of the multilateral trading system, and sought to place the needs and interests of developing countries at the heart of the WTO work programme. The Declaration increased recognition of WTO/ESCAP technical assistance work and led to an increase in its volume and scope.

14. In addition, the Declaration marked an expansion from assistance aimed at increasing understanding of WTO policies and procedures to increasing the capacity of developing countries to participate in WTO negotiations. The Doha ministerial declaration on implementation-related issues and concerns requested WTO technical assistance to focus, on a priority basis, on assisting developing countries to implement existing WTO obligations as well as on increasing their capacity to participate more effectively in future multilateral trade negotiations. In carrying out this mandate, the WTO secretariat should cooperate more closely with international and regional intergovernmental organizations so as to increase efficiency and synergies and avoid duplication of programmes.

15. Increasing the ability of developing countries to participate in WTO negotiations in an informed manner helps to create a system of international trade that functions well, which should benefit both developing and developed countries. In addition, the strong negotiating capacities of developed countries, supported by well-funded administrations, has led to a perception both at home and abroad that WTO rules have been skewed in their favour. Following the Seattle meeting, Doha was an attempt to address this perception and create a stronger and more equitable system for international trade.

## ***2. Project activities***

16. The WTO/ESCAP technical assistance programme started on 4 August 1999 with a memorandum of understanding between the two organizations. The table below lists 16 workshops organized and planned under the programme, which include:

(a) Six general two-week training courses on WTO agreements for mid-level government officials responsible for trade issues;

(b) Two short seminars for senior officials and negotiators on WTO accession;

(c) One two-week advanced programme for senior government officials on Doha Development Agenda negotiations (cancelled based on a World Health Organization (WHO) travel advisory but planned for October/November 2003);

(d) Three short seminars on WTO dispute settlement procedures for government officials responsible for WTO dispute resolution;

(e) Four short seminars for senior officials on specific issues: (i) agriculture, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, textiles and clothing, (ii) technical barriers to trade, (iii) agriculture, (iv) telecommunications, and (v) accession issues.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Dates and location</b>	<b>Type of participants</b>
<b>1. First WTO/ESCAP Trade Policy Course on WTO and the Multilateral Trading System for Asian Developing Economies</b>	8-26 May 2000, Bangkok	Middle-ranking government officials working at least two years on trade-related issues and directly involved in work relating to WTO Agreements
<b>2. Second WTO/ESCAP Trade Policy Course on WTO and the Multilateral Trading System for Asian Developing Economies</b>	21 May-1 June 2001, Bangkok	As for 1 above
<b>3. Regional Seminar on Facilitating the Accession of ESCAP Developing Countries to the WTO</b>	18-21 February 2002, Bangkok	Senior trade policy decision-making officials of ESCAP member countries
<b>4. Third WTO/ESCAP Trade Policy Course on WTO and the Multilateral Trading System for Asian Developing Economies</b>	18-29 March 2002, Bangkok	As for 1 above
<b>5. First WTO/ESCAP Regional Seminar on Dispute Settlement Procedures and Practices and Dispute Settlement Understanding Negotiations for Asian Economies</b>	10-12 April 2002, Manila	Capital-based officials whose responsibilities directly involve WTO dispute settlement, including the dispute settlement understanding negotiations foreseen in this area
<b>6. WTO/ESCAP/ASEAN Regional Seminar on the WTO Agriculture, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Textiles and Clothing Agreement</b>	23-26 April 2002, Bangkok	Senior officials from the 10 ASEAN member States whose responsibilities directly involve trade policy in general and trade issues related to textiles and clothing and agriculture in particular
<b>7. Second WTO/ESCAP Regional Seminar on Dispute Settlement Procedures and Practices and Dispute Settlement Understanding Negotiations for Asian Economies</b>	4-7 June 2002, Bangkok	As for 5 above
<b>8. WTO/ESCAP/ASEAN Regional Seminar on Facilitating Trade through Implementation of the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement</b>	29-31 October 2002, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam	Senior officials from the 10 ASEAN member States and China whose responsibilities directly involve trade policy in general and trade issues related to textiles and clothing and agriculture in particular
<b>9. Fourth WTO/ESCAP Trade Policy Course on WTO Agreements and the Doha Development Agenda</b>	18-29 November 2002, Bangkok	As for 1 above
<b>10. Fifth WTO/ESCAP Trade Policy Course on WTO Agreements and the Doha Development Agenda</b>	18-28 February 2003, Bangkok	As for 1 above
<b>11. Third WTO/ESCAP Regional Seminar on Dispute Settlement Procedures and Practices and Dispute Settlement Understanding Negotiations for Asian Economies</b>	10-13 March 2003, Ulaanbaatar	As for 5 above

<b>12. WTO/ESCAP/Ministry of Commerce/Peking University Advanced Programme for Senior Government Officials on the Doha Development Agenda Negotiations</b>	31 March-11 April 2003, Beijing (cancelled on 1 April based on a WHO travel advisory)	Senior government officials (Vice Ministers) of WTO members and observers from developing economies and economies in transition with analytical tools needed to formulate appropriate negotiating positions on issues central to the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) and with work directly related to DDA negotiations, including the design of their Government's negotiating position, as well as participation in the negotiations themselves
<b>13. Regional Seminar on Facilitating the Accession of ESCAP Members to the WTO through Regional Cooperation</b>	12-13 June 2003, Bangkok	Top negotiators of countries in the process of WTO accession (Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Mongolia, Vanuatu and Viet Nam)
<b>14. WTO/ESCAP Regional Training Workshop on Multilateral Negotiations on Agriculture</b>	21-23 July 2003, Bangkok	Senior-level officials with direct responsibilities in the area of agricultural trade policy and decision-making and/or officials involved in the current multilateral trade negotiations in agriculture and agriculture-related issues within the framework of DDA
<b>15. International Telecommunication Union/ESCAP/WTO Regional Seminar on Telecommunications and Trade Issues</b>	28-30 October 2003, Bangkok	Senior-level officials directly involved in the negotiation and implementation of the WTO agreements
<b>16. Sixth WTO/ESCAP Trade Policy Course on WTO Agreements and the Doha Development Agenda</b>	November-December 2003 (2 weeks), Manila	As for 1 above

17. WTO and ESCAP have also organized some national-level and subregional training courses under the programme, mostly in countries in the process of accession. These include the Subregional Workshop on Accession to the World Trade Organization for Economies in Transition, held at Tashkent in July 2001, and the national workshop on WTO agreements and trade and investment opportunities for Myanmar, held at Yangon in January-February 2002. Normally, a WTO staff member or a WTO-recommended resource person teaches these training courses.

### ***3. Monitoring the WTO technical assistance programme***

18. ESCAP has made a standard practice of distributing monitoring and feedback questionnaires at the end of each seminar or training course organized under the programme. The questionnaires ask participants how effective and relevant they think the training will be for their work. They also ask

for feedback on the quality of the lectures and training materials provided, and on technical arrangements such as flights, hotels and conference facilities.

#### **4. *Partners and target group***

19. The major partner of ESCAP in all the activities has been WTO. A recent seminar on telecommunications was co-sponsored by ITU and others have been hosted by national governments, in partnership with entities in the host country and subregional organizations such as ASEAN.

20. UNCTAD also organizes activities on commercial diplomacy. ESCAP activities combine skills development and substantive training on WTO rules and policies, and focus on specific sectors and other issues, such as accession, of special interest to the ESCAP region. Some ESCAP activities have also been carried out in partnership with UNCTAD.

21. Government officials directly involved with WTO trade negotiations are the target group of all training courses and seminars organized under the programme. Six of the training courses have been designed for mid-level government officials working on a range of WTO-related issues. Others have targeted senior officials from specific ministries responsible for issues such as agriculture, textiles or telecommunications.

### **III. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **A. Scope**

22. The present report broadly reviews the implementation and achievements of the WTO/ESCAP technical assistance programme since it began in 1999.

#### **B. Methodology**

23. The report is a desk review of the programme. Like similar evaluation reports prepared recently for the other thematic committees – the Committee on Emerging Social Issues and the Committee on Poverty Reduction – it addresses the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the programme.

### **IV. FINDINGS AND RESULTS**

24. The programme is clearly of great relevance, given the importance of the issue with which it deals, and as evidenced by global policies adopted since it was initiated. The programme is designed in an efficient and cost-effective way. Its effectiveness has not yet been measured systematically. It appears to be having a positive impact and thought is being given to sustainability in its design, but both its impact and sustainability are difficult to evaluate at this stage.



## A. Relevance

25. Relevance measures whether an activity addresses a real need or demand, as evidenced by situation analysis, stakeholders, global and regional mandates, and deliberations in other intergovernmental bodies.

26. WTO agreements provide a legally-binding framework within which countries conduct their trade. The agreements are particularly important for the Asian and Pacific region, with its outward-oriented, trade and investment growth strategies. Complying with and negotiating future trade agreements has therefore become a cornerstone of economic policy making in the region.

27. WTO accession is an especially prominent concern for many countries in the region. Despite the high priority that those countries attach to accession, Asia and the Pacific contains more WTO non-members than any other region in the world.

28. For these reasons, WTO and ESCAP identified the need to begin a programme of technical assistance. Since the start of the programme, this need has been given greater prominence by the Doha Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus (see the annex). The Doha Declaration instructed the WTO secretariat, in coordination with other relevant agencies, to carry out technical assistance designed to assist developing and least-developed countries and low-income countries in transition to adjust to WTO rules and disciplines, implement obligations and exercise the rights of membership.

29. The Monterrey Consensus was adopted at the International Conference on Financing for Development, held at Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002 and is considered one of the key global policies guiding the work of the United Nations system. The Consensus encouraged the United Nations and WTO to improve their relationship for development and strengthen their capacity to provide technical assistance. In particular, it suggested that the role of the regional commissions in supporting policy dialogue among countries at the regional level on macroeconomic, financial, trade and development issues should be promoted.

30. These important global policies demonstrate a strong interest in technical assistance on trade and in work carried out at the regional level. Furthermore, as the traditional institutional focus of WTO is on trade negotiations rather than technical assistance, the Doha Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus underline the need for the WTO secretariat to carry out technical assistance in partnership with the United Nations and other organizations. Paragraphs from these mandates, as well as comments made during annual sessions of ESCAP indicate the importance that Governments attach to the programme at a high political level (see the annex).

31. The Monterrey Consensus specifically identifies the need to promote the role of the regional commissions in supporting policy dialogue among countries at the regional level on trade issues. The WTO secretariat, which, in relation to its significant work, is a small organization with only about 550 staff members, has no regional offices. Regional aspects of trade are nevertheless important.

Different countries within a region often have cultural similarities and similar geographical and socio-economic conditions, meaning that they may export and import similar goods. Countries in a region are also situated close to each other, making it more likely that they will be important trading partners.

32. The ESCAP partnership with WTO under the technical assistance programme is relevant because of the need for regional-level technical assistance on WTO agreements, as demonstrated by the Doha Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus. ESCAP is the only organization covering the entire Asian and Pacific region, and has a long-term mandate for technical assistance in the field of trade. It is therefore the ideal partner for WTO under this technical assistance programme.

33. The ESCAP partnership with WTO in the training programme has ensured that the regional issues are addressed. Some activities under the programme have addressed specific issues of special importance to the region, including agriculture, textiles, clothing and information and communication technologies. Overall, ESCAP has ensured that the programme has been designed to reflect the regional culture and context.

34. From the perspective of ESCAP, trade and investment is an important area of work under the theme of managing globalization. It is an area of special concern for development and is highlighted by the targets of Millennium Development Goal 8, in particular:

- Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory.
- Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction.
- Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States.

35. Partnership with WTO ensures that ESCAP development work in this field continues to be of high relevance and aligned with global mandates. Cooperation with WTO has also instituted institutional capacity-building synergies that have benefited other areas of ESCAP work on trade, through an increased familiarity of ESCAP staff with WTO issues and close working contacts with WTO.

36. A systematic situation analysis is another way to ensure that an activity is relevant. ESCAP might consider strengthening the involvement of stakeholders (e.g., from government ministries) in the design of the programme, for instance, through questionnaires or even project design workshops. WTO does already develop an annual plan with ESCAP based on a questionnaire sent to WTO focal points in national government ministries. An ESCAP situation analysis would therefore be useful only if it could add to existing WTO government consultations, for instance, by involving more interested government ministries in each country.

## **B. Efficiency**

37. Efficiency measures the success of the programme in delivering its result, which, for the WTO/ESCAP technical assistance programme, would be the existence of government officials in the ESCAP region with a greater understanding of relevant issues related to WTO agreements. Efficiency includes factors such as the cost-effectiveness of the budget, timely delivery, the selection of participants with suitable backgrounds, the quality of lecturers and materials provided, and the smoothness of conference and travel arrangements.

38. Efficiency is an aspect of the WTO/ESCAP programme which has been monitored regularly through evaluation questionnaires at the end of each workshop. The questionnaires report that participants in the workshops had a consistently high level of satisfaction with the clarity and relevance of the lectures, the usefulness of the subject matter and the travel and conference arrangements.

39. Most activities under the programme carried out capacity-building in the form of regional-level group training, which has proven to be cost-effective. This was combined with some national-level training courses, which have advantages in including a greater range of participants within the country, including participants from business and civil society, and allowing the training to be tailored to issues of special importance to the country concerned.

40. Two special measures made activities especially cost-effective. First, training was carried out by WTO and ESCAP staff members, obviating the need to hire paid consultants. Second, most training courses took place at the United Nations building in Bangkok, saving money on ESCAP staff travel and conference facilities.

41. All activities set out in the programme were carried out according to the technical assistance plan agreed to with WTO at the beginning of each year.

42. Established ESCAP contacts with Governments in the Asian and Pacific region also helped to make the programme effective. ESCAP contacts ensure it can select suitable participants for a training programme more easily than other organizations such as WTO. ESCAP was also able to bring in senior government officials with in-depth negotiating experience, as guest speakers, at no extra cost to the programme.

## **C. Effectiveness**

43. Effectiveness measures the success of a project in meeting its immediate objective. For WTO/ESCAP technical assistance activities, one immediate objective would presumably be that participants in training courses or seminars use their new information and expertise after returning to their home countries. Since the participants selected are involved in WTO negotiations, they should presumably be able to increase the quality of their country's positions in WTO negotiations. They should also initiate measures to improve their countries' implementation of existing commitments under WTO agreements.

44. One necessary condition for a project to be effective is to select participants who can use their knowledge after the end of the training course or workshop. The WTO/ESCAP programme has placed emphasis on selecting participants who are involved in WTO issues in the course of their regular work, rather than participants with an interest in the issue but with little chance of being able to influence national policy. ESCAP circulates pre-course questionnaires which provide information on the expectations of the participants and their particular area of focus.

45. Beyond this, however, there is little information on how effective the programme has been. Following the 16 training courses and seminars organized under the programme, it might be useful to study the extent to which previous participants have been able to take advantage of their training.

#### **D. Impact**

46. Impact measures the success of a project in meeting its goal. A project's goal would be something achieved by its target group, in this case, here national government officials, probably some time after the end of the project. Possible goals for the WTO/ESCAP technical assistance programme might be an improvement of countries in the ESCAP region in implementing commitments under WTO agreements, an increased ability of those countries to protect their national interests in WTO negotiations, and visible progress towards WTO accession for countries that are not yet members.

47. Impact is often measured, if at all, after the conclusion of projects, and the information is then used to guide the development of new projects of a similar design, or which address a similar subject. A systematic measurement of the impact of the WTO/ESCAP technical assistance programme might require in-depth research into the negotiating positions of countries in the ESCAP region, progress towards WTO accession and, in particular, exactly what progress can be attributed to the programme. It is therefore normal that its impact has not yet been measured in a systematic way. There are indications, however, that the programme is having an impact.

48. One indication is the interest being demonstrated in the programme itself. There are many clear indications of this increasing interest. First, there has been an increase in the level of participants. All of the programme's activities during its first two years were organized for mid-level government officials. Over the last year and a half, an increasing number of activities have been organized for senior officials who have more ability to influence their national policy, including their Government's negotiating position in WTO forums. The recent advanced programme for senior government officials, which was cancelled on April 1 following a WHO travel advisory, included five participants at the level of Vice-Minister/State Secretary (from the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Tonga, Vanuatu and Viet Nam). The programme is now scheduled to be held at Beijing from 27 October to 1 November 2003.

49. Another indication of impact is the increasing frequency of the activities and the increasing range of the subject matter they cover. One training course per year was held in 2000 and 2001, each a general training course on WTO issues. Six activities were held in 2002 and six are planned for 2003 on a much wider range of issues and for a broader cross-section of officials representing multisectoral and multidisciplinary interests. The activities have also seen an increase in the number of self-funded participants, who sometimes account for a third of participants. This proportion could have been higher but for the secretariat's limit on the number of self-funded participants to ensure that funded participants, from countries with limited resources, can benefit fully from the courses.

50. Two notable recent successes were the accession of Cambodia and Nepal to the WTO as its one hundred and forty-seventh and one hundred and forty-eighth members. ESCAP played a supportive role in the process through the establishment of a network of acceding countries, in collaboration with WTO and UNCTAD, and with the financial support of Japan. ESCAP also supported the regular participation of Cambodian and Nepalese officials in activities organized under the programme.

#### **E. Sustainability**

51. Sustainability measures how likely it is that the beneficial effects of the project will continue after the project has ended.

52. There is evidence that many outcomes of the programme are sustainable. A change in national trade policy as a result of the programme, or WTO accessions that can be attributed to it, will obviously continue after ESCAP input has ended. The sustainability of other aspects of the programme, such as the existence of trained government officials, depends on factors such as how long the knowledge and skills of the trained officials continue to be relevant, and to what extent their Governments can effectively take advantage of their knowledge and skills.

53. Previous WTO/ESCAP workshops have provided information and training on WTO agreements. One important factor related to sustainability is how fast the agreements and negotiations progress. If the substance of agreements evolves quickly, WTO and ESCAP would have to provide continuous training so that Governments can stay up to date with the latest developments in WTO agreements and prepare effective negotiating positions based on this information.

54. Previous workshops have focused not only on providing information, but also on developing skills, such as negotiation skills. One possible way to increase sustainability might be to place greater emphasis on the development of skills. It might be useful for ESCAP and WTO to consider effective ways to increase the capacity of ESCAP members to access and manage up-to-date information on WTO agreements, develop indigenous expertise in this area, and incorporate this into more effective negotiations.

## V. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### ***1. The programme began as a quick response to an emerging issue***

55. The WTO/ESCAP technical assistance programme was a quick response to an emerging issue, namely, perceived inequities in international trade rules resulting from ineffective participation of developing countries in WTO which, at the start of the programme, was only four years old. Subsequent developments emphasize its relevance at the time of its creation. The overall reputation of ESCAP in the field was one factor leading to a successful partnership with WTO. Another was the secretariat's ability to respond quickly to this new opportunity. The experience demonstrates the importance of flexibility in ensuring that ESCAP work can take advantage of new opportunities and respond to emerging issues.

### ***2. The ESCAP and WTO secretariats have clearly defined roles***

56. The ESCAP and WTO secretariats have clearly defined roles that reflect the respective institutional mandates of the two organizations. The WTO secretariat is the leading organization responsible for the administration of WTO agreements and servicing of negotiations. ESCAP is the only intergovernmental organization responsible for the entire Asian and Pacific region and has a strong mandate for technical assistance activities in the field of trade. Together, the organizations can ensure that the programme is tailored to the needs of the region, and include courses that are relevant, up to date and well taught.

### ***3. The programme is supported by Governments***

57. The programme is supported by Governments of both developed and developing countries, which have expressed their support in annual sessions of ESCAP and, at the global level, by the Doha Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus.

### ***4. Continuity of activities over the long term may be necessary to produce visible results***

58. Trade and investment are complex issues and WTO accession is a lengthy process. Although there are signs the programme is having a positive impact, that is difficult to measure after only three years of project implementation. A longer-term project based on longer-term planning and more secure financing may be necessary to show visible results.

### ***5. Future activities should be organized as part of a systematic, long-term plan***

59. Programme activities have so far been organized on an ad hoc basis under a general memorandum of understanding between WTO and ESCAP. The activity, however, appears to be gaining pace, and it appears likely the programme will continue for some years. It might therefore be useful to begin multi-year planning on a programming level. This might have a number of advantages, in particular:

(a) Creating an overall vision and direction for the activity that is transparent and to which other stakeholders (beyond ESCAP and WTO) could contribute meaningfully, for instance, through a situation analysis;

(b) Clearly establishing criteria and priorities that would enable ESCAP to decide how to respond to a demand for technical assistance that is greater than the supply ESCAP is currently able to deliver;

(c) Establishing a consolidated document with planned activities and funding requirements for submission to donors, which might attract new donors and place funding on a more permanent footing.

60. In particular, ESCAP is now carrying out project planning using the logical framework approach. This approach would make future evaluation of WTO/ESCAP activities more concrete by defining criteria such as their goal, immediate objective, and how to measure the project's success (indicators of achievement).

#### **6. *The programme should consider an evaluation of its effectiveness***

61. Future planning would benefit from a systematic survey of the programme's effectiveness. By contacting participants in previous programme activities, and their employers, programme managers would find out how participants have been using the skills and knowledge they acquired. Based on this, managers may choose to make certain changes to the mix and format of future workshops, for instance group size, the subject matter of training, and the type of training (for example, whether it focuses on skills or information).

### **Summary**

62. The WTO/ESCAP technical assistance programme is a flagship initiative aimed at helping ESCAP members and associate members meet the challenges of globalization. Created in response to an emerging issue, the subject matter is clearly relevant and the roles of WTO and ESCAP are well defined and supported by Governments. Recommendations in this report are aimed at increasing the value of this work. ESCAP invites the Committee to provide further guidance.

*Annex*

**Intergovernmental declarations and statements relevant to the WTO/ESCAP  
technical assistance programme**

***Doha Ministerial Declaration***

We confirm that technical cooperation and capacity building are core elements of the development dimension of the multilateral trading system [...]. We instruct the [WTO] Secretariat, in coordination with other relevant agencies, to support domestic efforts for mainstreaming trade into national plans for economic development and strategies for poverty reduction. The delivery of WTO technical assistance shall be designed to assist developing and least-developed countries and low-income countries in transition to adjust to WTO rules and disciplines, implement obligations and exercise the rights of membership, including drawing on the benefits of an open, rules-based multilateral trading system. [...] (para. 38).

We underscore the urgent necessity for the effective coordinated delivery of technical assistance with bilateral donors, in the OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development] Development Assistance Committee and relevant international and regional intergovernmental institutions, within a coherent policy framework and timetable. [...] (para. 39).

***Monterrey Consensus***

To strengthen the effectiveness of the global economic system's support for development, we encourage the following actions:

- Improve the relationship between the United Nations and the World Trade Organization for development, and strengthen their capacity to provide technical assistance to all countries in need of such assistance;

[...]

- Strengthen the coordination of the United Nations system and all other multilateral financial, trade and development institutions to support economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development worldwide;

[...]

- Promote the role of the regional commissions and the regional development banks in supporting policy dialogue among countries at the regional level on macroeconomic, financial, trade and development issues. (para. 64).



*Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific*

*Report of the Commission on its fifty-sixth session*

The Commission noted that a number of members and associate members were not yet members of WTO, and that the WTO accession process continued to impose a heavy burden on their limited human and institutional capacity. Expeditious accession to WTO on a fair and equitable basis was therefore an important consideration, and the secretariat was requested to continue to accord high priority to its technical assistance and advisory services in that regard. (para. 86).

The Commission held the view that the complexity of WTO agreements and strengthened dispute settlement procedures required extensive knowledge and resources to enable developing countries to implement the obligations and be able to exercise their full rights accruing from the agreements. In that regard, it reiterated its support for the positive role which the secretariat could play.... The secretariat was commended for its constructive collaboration with WTO in launching a joint training programme that would provide valuable capacity-building opportunities for developing countries. (para. 89).

The Commission expressed appreciation of the secretariat's work in organizing the training workshops on WTO agreements, and recommended that similar training workshops should be organized in the future, preferably at the national level. (para. 332).

*Report of the Commission on its fifty-seventh session*

The Commission noted the importance of accession to WTO of countries that were not yet members and commended ESCAP for its activities in that area. In particular, it recommended that those activities should be continued, with a focus on technical assistance such as training. (para. 77).

The Commission urged the secretariat to continue to accord high priority to its work in assisting developing countries and countries with economies in transition to integrate more effectively into the multilateral trading system. In particular, high priority should be given to capacity-building and training activities for trade negotiations, the implementation of WTO agreements, enhanced understanding of WTO accession procedures and the integration of various WTO agreements into national legal frameworks. The Commission commended the secretariat for the Memorandum of Understanding between ESCAP and WTO and the joint WTO/ESCAP training programme on WTO issues, and recommended that such collaboration and joint activities should be continued. It recognized the importance of the continuation of ESCAP activities aimed at assisting the countries of the region which were not yet WTO members to gain early accession. (para. 142).

*Report of the Commission on its fifty-eighth session*

The Commission expressed appreciation of the launch of the Doha Development Agenda and the adoption of the Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference. It confirmed its commitment to a transparent and rules-based multilateral trading system but cautioned that new negotiations could only be successful if the concerns of developing countries were adequately and appropriately addressed and reflected in a transparent, non-discriminatory and consistent manner. It urged the secretariat to provide WTO developing member countries with the necessary technical assistance to build their capacity for effective participation in the new multilateral trade negotiations and assist aspiring members by facilitating their accession to WTO on a case-by-case basis. (para. 68).

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