

# **WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)**

## **Support to NEPAD**

**Period of Report: July 2006 to June 2007**

### **Technical assistance and capacity building**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) provides a range of technical assistance and training activities in support of Africa's development. In 2006, 48 per cent of its national and 24 per cent of its regional/global trade-related technical assistance was directed at African countries.

WTO supports NEPAD's main objectives in the field of trade, particularly through its technical assistance activities for African countries. A major focus is technical assistance and institutional capacity building to enhance Africa's participation in the Multilateral Trading System. WTO organizes various general and specialized training courses geared towards assisting recipient countries in their understanding and implementing of international trade rules and to contribute towards human resource development. Whenever possible, priority is given to LDCs.

WTO, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and UNECA organized four joint trade policy courses (TPCs) for African countries in 2006, each course lasting two weeks. The main objective of the TPCs was to deepen the knowledge and understanding of African countries, in particular the LDCs, about the issues under negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda. The goal was to strengthen the capacities of African countries and enable them to participate more effectively in future negotiations and thereby take full advantage of the Multilateral Trading System (MTS). Representatives of subregional organisations were invited to make presentations on "Regional Cooperation and Economic Integration - a Strategy for Effective Participation in Liberalising Global Trade: perspectives of regional groupings".

The TPCs together with the various national technical assistance workshops underlined the potential contribution of trade and much improved market access towards the achievement of the objectives of the Doha Work Programme, and of the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger.

The knowledge and skills gained from the trade policy courses improved the participants' capacity to understand the functioning of the world trading system and the importance of strengthening their trade negotiations positions. In particular, officials from the various ministries in the different countries working together - including those from the ministries of commerce, finance, foreign affairs, industry, agriculture, and board of investment - learnt that it was extremely important to coordinate their negotiating positions since trade negotiations were a give-and-take process.

## **The Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP)**

The main aim of JITAP is to build the knowledge base and to boost the integration of the JITAP countries into the MTS. In this regard, efficient dissemination of trade-related information and improving transparency are among the factors which can help build the capacity of the beneficiary countries. JITAP is implemented jointly by International Trade Centre (ITC), UNCTAD and WTO. The year 2006 marked the completion of implementation of module 2 for the remaining JITAP countries (Botswana, Cameroon, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Senegal, and Zambia). In this regard, technical and training missions comprising resource persons from ITC, UNCTAD, and WTO were undertaken to all these countries.

For all the Reference Centres and National Entry Points (NEPs) in each country, computer equipment has been installed and the necessary Internet and email accounts have been created. Five persons from each Reference Centre and NEP have received training in the use of the installed IT equipment, search and retrieval of official documents from the websites of the WTO, UNCTAD and ITC, on-line statistical databases as well as information management and dissemination.

The JITAP programme underwent a major evaluation in 2006, which was both a final evaluation for the exited countries, and a mid-term evaluation for the remaining ones. One of the key recommendations of the evaluation was for the continuation of a new phase of the programme in a "simpler and lighter" mode, and the admission of another group of countries. The report pointed out that better synergy could be developed between JITAP and the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to LDCs (IF).

## **The Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to LDCs (IF)**

The IF is a unique instrument of coherence that is intended to ensure maximum use of scarce resources in support of enabling LDCs to be full and active players and beneficiaries of the MTS. The IF enables LDCs to work with the six agencies (IMF, ITC, UNCTAD, UNDP, the World Bank, and WTO), as well as with other development partners and the donor community, to ensure that national trade policies are integrated into their respective development strategies. The IF assists LDCs (34 out of the 50 LDCs are African) to mainstream trade integration strategy chapters into their national development plans and poverty reduction strategy papers.

The year 2006 marked an important milestone for the IF. WTO Members at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in December 2005 expressed their continued commitment to the IF and welcomed the agreement to improve the implementation of the IF in three specific areas: increased, additional, predictable financial resources to implement Action Matrices; strengthened in-country capacities to manage, implement and monitor the IF process; and enhanced IF governance. Ministers had also welcomed the establishment of a Task Force on an enhanced IF and mandated it to provide recommendations to the

Integrated Framework Steering Committee (IFSC) with a view to the enhanced IF entering into force no later than 31 December 2006.

To translate the Task Force recommendations into concrete actions, a Transition Team, as well as its three clusters, on administrative/legal, financial, and in-country issues, met according to an intense schedule from September through December 2006. Issues discussed included ways to enhance the capacity in the beneficiary countries to manage the IF process, additional funding, the legal entity of the enhanced IF, location of the new IF Secretariat and Trust Fund management, and governance structures of the enhanced IF.

### **Trade Policy Review Mechanism(TPRM)**

TPRM is a valuable forum for institutional trade capacity building and achieving understanding of the trade policies and practices of members. Trade Policy Reviews (TPRs) of developing and LDC members enhance understanding in these countries of the WTO Agreements, enabling better compliance and integration in the Multilateral Trading System (MTS). The wide coverage of the reports enables the members to identify any shortcomings in policy and specific areas where further technical assistance may be required. Since mid-2006, reviews have been completed in Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Kenya, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda.

### **Collaboration with partners**

In the implementation of regional technical assistance activities, a number of WTO Divisions and African partner institutions have been involved. These include AfDB, UNECA, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), the Intergovernmental Organisation of the Francophonie (IOF), Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa (TRALAC), Department of Trade and Industry of South Africa, South African Institute of International Affairs, Department of Agriculture of South Africa, University of Pretoria, University of the Western Cape (South Africa), University of Nairobi, University of Dar es Salaam and the University of Namibia.

Moreover, the WTO Secretariat has been exploring ways of deepening institutional relations with the NEPAD Secretariat with the view of assisting NEPAD in achieving its goals in the field of trade.