

**INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT MEASURES FOR LDCS –  
SPECIAL & DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN WTO PROVISIONS  
AND PREFERENTIAL MARKET ACCESS**

**EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON THE SURVEYS TO LDCS AND TRADING  
PARTNERS & INFORMATION REQUEST TO WTO**

**Wednesday 10 - Thursday 11 February, 2010**

**Organized by the United Nations Development Policy and Analysis Division  
Committee for Development Policy Secretariat**

*Hosted by the WTO Secretariat, Geneva*

**BRIEFING NOTE**

*Objectives of the meeting*

The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) is organized by the Secretariat of Committee for Development Policy (CDP). The main objective of the meeting is to review the content and implementation strategy of two draft surveys prepared by the CDP Secretariat.

One survey is addressed to LDCs and the other one to trading partners. Both surveys are focused on the special and differential treatment (SDT) provisions for LDCs in the WTO Agreements and Decisions and on LDC-specific preferential market access. The surveys will not address future SDT provisions discussed under the Doha round of negotiations and only focus on the trade-related international support measures currently available to LDCs

The EGM will also discuss the information request about SDT provisions and market access addressed to WTO and explore how the WTO Secretariat could facilitate access to background information needed to fill out the surveys.

***Background information***

The CDP is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and responsible for, among other things, the identification of Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Information on the CDP, its terms of reference, membership and activities are available at <http://www.un.org/esa/policy/devplan>

Over the years, the Secretariat of the Committee has become increasingly involved in providing background information on the identification of LDCs and in documenting the special support measures from the international community for these countries.

Recently, the Secretariat has developed a project on capacity-building for graduation strategies for LDCs in Asia and Africa. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of LDCs to draw on the advantages associated with LDC status by improving these countries' ability to access information on existing support measures and to take advantage of such measures.

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### *Implementing the surveys on trade*

Trade-related international support measures for LDCs are a complex and broad subject. Therefore, in the view of the CDP Secretariat, an exchange of ideas with a sample of LDCs and trading partners is essential to ensure the effectiveness of the surveys' implementation. The surveys should include pertinent questions in a clear and straight forward way so as to maximize the quantity and the quality of replies to be received from LDCs and their main trading partners.

The exchange of views at the EGM will focus on the three following draft documents:

A survey addressed to LDCs inquiring about their awareness and use of special and differential treatment provisions for LDCs in the WTO Agreements and Decisions and of preferential market access. In this respect, government officials in Nepal and Uganda agreed to fill out the draft survey to LDCs, in order to provide first hand experience to the EGM and possible insights where the surveys would need to be revised.

A survey addressed to major trading partners concerning countries' experience in facilitating SDT for LDCs and market access.

An information request addressed to the WTO concerning the LDC specific SDT provisions and preferential market access. The purpose of the information request document is to facilitate the responses from LDCs and trading partners by providing easily accessible background information to the questions raised in the surveys.

### *The EGM*

Participants will receive the three above mentioned documents prior to the meeting in order to be able to review the surveys and information request to WTO. Discussions during the EGM will focus on the content of the survey questions and whether the information requested from the WTO will facilitate the collection of information on the availability and use of existing trade related support measures for LDCs.

The other objectives of the project are assessing the likely impact of graduation on countries and building capacity in graduating countries in preparing strategies for a smooth transition from the category. The project has counted on the generous collaboration from ECA, ESCAP, OECD/DAC, OHRLLS, UNDP, UNCTAD and the WTO Secretariat.

Further details about the project are available at <http://www.un.org/esa/policy/devplan/ldcproject.html>

Information on the availability of international support measures for LDCs is not accessible from one single source, is often spread over a wide range of sources and often not visible or easy to locate. Surveys are therefore designed to collect the relevant information.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the surveys will be used as a tool to gather information about the use of such measures by LDCs and the extent to which the international community assists LDCs in accessing these measures.

The responses to the surveys will be made available as an input into the preparatory process for LDC-IV and as an input to the internet information portal being developed under the project.

<sup>1</sup> For instance, the CDP Secretariat, in close collaboration with the OECD DAC Secretariat, already sent out a survey addressed to DAC members related to official development assistance to LDCs.

Participants are invited to provide their opinion and discuss where in their view questions need to be rephrased, added or deleted.

Previous experience with other survey implementations indicates that, unless there is a well thought out implementation strategy in place, the response rate will not be high. Therefore, the participants will also discuss and identify implementation strategies to achieve the highest possible response rates. A draft implementation strategy document with initial suggestions for an implementation strategy will be sent to the participants prior to the meeting.

There will be no minutes of the meeting in order to allow participants to provide informal contributions reflecting their own expertise.