



**Economic
Commission
for Africa**



**African
Development
Bank**



**United Nations
Development
Programme**



African Union

Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on Market Access

Aide-Memoire

Jointly Organized by

**The Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Development Programme,
the African Development Bank and the African Union**

In Collaboration with

**The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the African
Trade Policy Centre (ATPC), the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), Third
World Network, International Lawyers and Economists Against Poverty (ILEAP), and
the Southern African Trade Research Network (SATRN)**

22-23 November 2004

I CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

Previous multilateral trade agreements have been faulted for not being sensitive to development needs of developing countries including Africa. The resultant multilateral trading system that has evolved from these agreements is seen to have failed to take into consideration the priorities of such countries. It is in this background that the current round of multilateral negotiations was launched with an overarching objective of reaching a multilateral agreement that truly takes into account the developmental needs of these countries. To reflect this commitment it has been dubbed the Development Round. Unfortunately, the Doha Round has so far been dogged with problems emanating from lack of agreements on the same developmental issues that it is meant to address. The development related areas in the Doha Work Programme that have proved difficult to reach agreement on include: agriculture with its three pillars of market access, domestic support and export competition; non-agriculture market access; the Cotton Sector Initiative; the Singapore Issues; trade in services and the Special and Differential treatment of developing countries when it comes to tariffs reduction.

For developing countries such as those in Africa, the question of market access in agriculture and non-agriculture exports is of critical importance as it determines to what extent trade through exports can be relied on to deliver on growth and by extension help achieve poverty reduction targets. Proposals made with respect to market access in the rounds of negotiations prior to the 5th Ministerial Conference in Cancun could not be agreed upon and partly contributed to the collapse of the talks. Nevertheless, progress has been made since Cancun and in May 2004; there was emerging evidence that there may be agreement by end July 2004 on some form of “Negotiating Frameworks” on agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA), as well as reaching consensus on the cotton Sectoral Initiative and Singapore Issues, as a first stage for defining “Modalities” for further negotiations. The “July package” also defined the modalities for future negotiations on trade in services.

It is with this anticipation that the following questions become relevant for Africa. First, how can the Round provide for adequate market access for developing countries and which formula should be applied for further tariff reductions in agriculture. Second, what type of formula should be used in non-agriculture tariffs reductions such that it will provide for Special and Differential Treatment to developing countries and policy space for industrial development of these economies? Finally, what are the main stakes for the African nations in the WTO negotiations on trade in services; and what should be the ensuing negotiating position of African countries on the issue?

The United Nations Development Programme has significant experience in providing support to capacity building activities on trade related issues. During the introductory session of the workshop, on 24 November UNDP will take the opportunity of the workshop to launch its new initiative for ensuring that trade contributes effectively to poverty reduction and to Development in Africa, the new project will be entitled: “Trade Capacity Development for Poverty Reduction and Human Development for Sub-Saharan Africa”.

II OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The overall objective of the Expert Group Meeting is to enhance the negotiating capacity of African multilateral negotiators on the important issues of market access in the current Round of multilateral negotiations. Specific objectives are:

1. Broadly introduce the key issues in the literature on market access.
2. Create and improve the understanding among African multilateral negotiators of the various aspects of market access in the agriculture negotiations based on the various propositions in the Doha Round and their implications for African exports.
3. Present the technical aspects of the various formulae being proposed under agriculture and NAMA in the Doha Round including their links to the issue of Special and Differential Treatment for Developing countries and the potential impacts of each formula on African exports.
4. Present and discuss the technical issues on non-tariff barriers to trade and their link to the question of market access and how they impact on Africa's exports.
5. Present the stakes for African countries of trade in services, how these African interests are potentially affected by the current WTO negotiations and provide support to the African negotiators in their definition of Africa's position on services negotiations.
6. Make recommendations that would guide African policymakers and negotiators in their evaluation of the various negotiating positions that are on the table in multilateral negotiations on market access.

SESSION 1: DEFINING THE MEETING AGENDA

The objective during this session will be to set the agenda of the meeting and define the expected outcomes from the technical presentations and discussions.

SESSION 2: SETTING THE SCENE—OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUES IN MARKET ACCESS

During this session, a critical review of the body of knowledge in the current literature on market access will be presented and discussed. As an overview presentation, it will bring up to speed the negotiators where the discussion has come from and where it has reached, focusing on the technical aspects of the market access issues both in agriculture and non-agriculture.

SESSION 3: MARKET ACCESS IN AGRICULTURE

This will be a more detailed session on the agriculture negotiations. While the focus will be market access, the link between export competition and domestic support to market access cannot be overlooked. Hence, the session will involve technical presentations on the various proposals on the three pillars of agriculture.

SESSION 4: NON-AGRICULTURE MARKET ACCESS

This session will focus on the different formulae for tariffs reductions in non-agriculture goods currently being discussed in the WTO negotiations. The aim will be to show the potential impacts of each formula on African exports. Based on these results, the African negotiators will have an opportunity to weigh their objectives on non-agriculture market access against the possible impacts of each of the formulae. The Special and Differential Treatment aspects will also be discussed during this session.

SESSION 5: TRADE PREFERENCES

This session will deal with commercial agreements, which concern African countries directly, and which will provide them access to most OECD markets. The objectives of the this session is to examine carefully the consequences of the actual commercial round on trade preferences which beneficiate to African countries. Finally It will be advisable to release solutions in order to reduce the effect of these preferences erosion on African exports:

SESSION 6: NON-TARIFF BARRIERS TO TRADE AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICAN EXPORTS

This session will begin with a technical presentation giving an overview of the NTBs. The session will deal with issues ranging from SPS, trade facilitation, the administrative bottlenecks that make it difficult for Africa to export and standards. The question of how to quantify the non-tariff barriers will also be tackled with specific country examples. The NTB issues and their relationship with the current negotiations will be discussed.

SESSION 7: TRADE IN SERVICES, AN AFRICAN POSITION IN THE CURRENT WTO NEGOTIATIONS

This session will present a review of the importance and development potential of the services sectors in Africa. It will then follow on with a presentation of the WTO settings for trade in services and the state of the current negotiations. Finally, this session will discuss what the position of Africa should be in the current WTO negotiations, in order to promote poverty reduction and sustainable development through trade services.

III PARTICIPATION

The meeting's main target audience is the technical experts involved in the WTO negotiations both in Geneva and in African capitals. Other participation will be drawn from research institutions, universities, and international organizations.

IV DATE AND VENUE OF THE MEETING

The meeting will be held from 22-23 November 2004.

Details on venue and accommodation will be communicated later.

V INFORMATION ON THE MEETING

For further information about this meeting please contact:

Mr. Patrick Osakwe
Team Leader, Trade Policy Analysis Team
Trade and Regional Integration Division
P.O. BOX 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: (251-1) 44-34-09
Fax: (251-1) 51-30-38
E-mail: posakwe@uneca.org

Mr. Bashir Conde
Trade and Regional Integration Division
P.O. BOX 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: (251-1) 44-32-23
Fax: (251-1) 51-30-38
E-mail: cbashir@uneca.org

VI PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

MONDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2004

8:30 –9:00 Registration

Session I: Opening ceremony and Definition of the meeting agenda

9:00 – 9:45: Opening Ceremony

- Remarks by Mr. Hakim Ben Hammouda, Director, Trade and Regional Integration Division, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
- Remarks by the African Union,
- Remarks by Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Director of the regional bureau for Africa, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Remarks by the African Development Bank (ADB)
- Remarks by the Africa WTO Geneva group
- Welcome address by the Honourable Minister of Trade, Republic of Tunisia

Session II: Setting the scene—overview of the issues in market access

Chairperson: *(To Be Determined)*

9:45 – 10:15 Presentation

- ECA

10:15 – 10:30 Coffee Break

10:35 – 11:25 General Discussions

Session III: Market access in agriculture

Chairperson: *(To Be Determined)*

11:30 – 12:00 Presentations

- ECA
- UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development)

12:00-13:00 General Discussions

13:00–14:30 Lunch Break

Session IV: Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA)

Chairperson: *(To Be Determined)*

14:30 – 15:00 Presentation

- UNCTAD

15:00-15:45 General Discussion

Session V: Trade preferences

15:45-16:45 Presentations

- ECA
- CEPII
- UNDP

16:45-17:45 General Discussion

TUESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2004

Session VI: Non-Tariff barriers to trade and their implications for African Exports

Chairperson: *(To Be Determined)*

9:00-9:45 Presentations

- Frank van Tongeren (LEI)
- UNDP

9:45-10:45 General Discussions

10:45-11:00 Coffee break

Session VII: Market access in Services

Chairperson: *(To Be Determined)*

11:00-11:35 Presentations

- ILEAP

11:35-12:30 General discussions

12:30–14:30 Lunch Break

14:30-16:30 Recommendations and way forward

16:30 –17: 00 Closing Remarks