



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
RESTRICTED

TRADE/R.649
14 October 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE
(Forty-fifth session, 10-12 December 1996)
(Item 10 of the revised provisional agenda)

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 1997-2000

Note by the secretariat

1. The Annex to this Note contains a draft programme of work prepared by the secretariat, taking into account the deliberations of the Committee at its forty-fourth session and the decisions taken by the Commission at its fifty-first session. It is recalled that, at its forty-first session, the Committee restructured and rank ordered its programme of work. The new structure and ranking are reflected in the attached draft programme of work.
2. Taking into account the provisions of Commission decisions B (49) and C (49), the Committee may wish to note the following information about secretariat resources.

PROGRAMME 04 - TRADE FACILITATION

- The current United Nations regular programme budget for the biennium 1996-97 provided a total of US\$ 2,392,300 for ECE work on Trade Facilitation. About 95 per cent of this amount is spent on staff costs with small sums available for official travel, consultants, equipment and the external printing of publications. This amount is supplemented by about 3 per cent of the UNOG costs apportioned to ECE for Conference Services.

- A total of 20 half-day meeting sessions were allocated to this programme since the last session of the Committee in December 1995.

PROGRAMME 07 - DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

- The current United Nations regular programme budget for the biennium 1996-97 provided a total of US\$ 1,982,100 for ECE work on the development of international trade. About 95 per cent of this amount is spent on staff costs with small sums available for official travel, consultants, equipment and the external printing of publications. This amount is supplemented by about 1 per cent of the UNOG costs apportioned to ECE for Conference Services.
- A total of 11 half-day meeting sessions were allocated to this programme since the last session of the Committee in December 1995.

SUB-PROGRAMME 09(A).3 - STANDARDIZATION OF PERISHABLE PRODUCE AND QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

This subprogramme is included in programme 9 "Agriculture and Timber" in the regular budget for 1996-1997 which provides for a total of US\$ 1,932,000. No official breakdown is available but this subprogramme was formerly served by a professional and a general service staff member.

* * *

ANNEX

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 1997-2000

PROGRAMME 04 - TRADE FACILITATION

Priority: 1

Description: The work programme shall allow for continuity between the existing WP.4 work programme and that of CEFACT. This requires that it build upon the existing work programme: eliminating those elements which are no longer relevant and, where appropriate, revising existing elements, and incorporating new ones. In developing this work programme the Centre must consider both the rapid development of information technology and the availability of resources.

Role of the Committee. In all areas of its work programme the Centre shall evaluate and take into special consideration the needs of countries with economies in transition. It shall also provide support to and coordinate with agencies working with developing countries and countries in transition in the area of trade (for example the other UN regional commissions, UNCTAD, ITC and the WTO).

Ongoing activities: (1) Analyze, review and model the key elements of international transactions in commerce, transport and administration, with particular emphasis on their information content and the communication methods used (for example, paper or UN/EDIFACT). (2) Provide a forum for institutional cooperation in formulating and implementing international trade facilitation strategies and for reconciling official governmental and commercial requirements. (3) Develop recommendations which simplify, harmonize or eliminate practices and procedures used in international transactions. Then publish, promote and report on the use of such recommendations. (4) Ensure that UN/EDIFACT and related activities effectively serve the facilitation requirements of international trade, administration, commerce and transport. In particular, respond to any requests for message development or maintenance coming out of the work on the International Trade Transaction Model. Where appropriate, this work may be done through the development of model scenarios and, based upon these scenarios, recommended message implementation guidelines, message subsets or document layout keys. (5) Identify and evaluate legal constraints that affect: procedures and practices in international administrative commercial and transport transactions; and the use of tools for facilitating international trade. (6) Propose and recommend practical solutions to these legal constraints, when appropriate in cooperation with organizations such as the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). (7) Promote the development of international trade facilitation initiatives as well as related initiatives covered by the work of the Centre. (8) Promote and support the establishment and ongoing activities of national trade facilitation organizations in all countries, taking advantage of the best tools and practices currently in use in the world. This shall be done in cooperation with the UN regional commissions and UNCTAD. (9) Maintain close liaison with national trade facilitation organizations in order to better understand their trade facilitation needs, encourage cooperation in trade facilitation and improve the flow of trade facilitation information to all countries. (10) Taking into account the developments in the field of information technology, identify electronic

information exchange needs in the areas of administration, commerce and transport. As part of this work: (i) review, monitor and evaluate the worldwide use of electronic exchange of data in order to better understand the opportunities for EDI in the world and in the multisectoral business environment. In particular, monitor the results of business procedures based upon EDI; (ii) identify potential new requirements for world and multisectoral EDI harmonization activities and work for their development; (iii) monitor developments in information technology which are likely to facilitate information exchange in administration, commerce and transport, notably in an international context.

(11) Maintain and develop the UN/EDIFACT standard, update the UN/EDIFACT directories and related deliverables accordingly, analyze supporting requirements and, based upon scenarios/models, define interchange profiles capable of meeting these needs through a sequence of UN/EDIFACT messages and, to that end: (i) identify, promote and, where appropriate, propose information technology developments and initiatives which are likely to bring practical results to the exchange of information in international administration, commerce and transport; (ii) provide an open forum for the continued development of UN/EDIFACT and all its components, in a global, multi-sectoral and coherent manner; (iii) produce directories and related documents/products for users of UN/EDIFACT.

Special activities for 1997: [To be completed in the light of decisions to be taken at the forty-fifth session.]

Programme activity 04.1: **Data Elements and Automatic Data Interchange (GE.1)**

Ongoing activities: The secretariat shall support the development and maintenance of UN/EDIFACT as well as related projects on codes and data elements and will publish the UN Trade Data Interchange Directory (UNTDID) and the UN Trade Data Elements Directory (UN/TDED).

Special activities for 1997: The secretariat shall develop means to disseminate information about UN/EDIFACT using the Internet World Wide Web.

Programme activity 04.2: **International Trade Procedures and Documentation (GE.2)**

Ongoing activities. The secretariat shall support the meeting of experts (GE.2) in its efforts to facilitate international trade procedures and to align trade documents to the UN Layout Key (UNLK). The meeting shall continue to update and revise earlier-issued recommendations with the support of the secretariat.

Special activity for 1997: The secretariat shall issue Trade Facilitation Recommendations in the new modelling format and disseminate the material using the Internet World Wide Web.

PROGRAMME 09: AGRICULTURE AND TIMBER

Programme activity 09 (A).3: Standardization of perishable produce and quality development

Description: The Working Party prepares and revises standards, recommendations and interpretative brochures for the marketing and control of commercial quality of selected perishable produce moving in international trade between and to UN/ECE member countries. In certain areas (quick-frozen foods, fruit juices), this work is carried out in cooperation with the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission. Workshops are organized: (1) in the form of informal meetings of rapporteurs for particular standards under elaboration or revision (seed potatoes; bovine meat; dry and dried fruit); and (2) on harmonization of standards and control procedures in countries in economic transition.

Work accomplished: Several standards for fresh fruit and vegetables were revised. A new standard for dried pears was adopted. A Recommendation on dried apples was adopted for a two year trial period and the Recommendation for dried figs was extended for a further year. The standards for unshelled walnuts, walnut kernels, unshelled hazelnuts and decorticated hazelnuts were reviewed and revised. Elaboration of a draft standard for cashew kernels continued. The revised UN/ECE Standards for fresh fruit and vegetables (including early and ware potatoes), dry and dried fruit and seed potatoes were published on the Internet World Wide Web.

Work to be undertaken: (a) Elaboration of new standards for dry and dried produce, fresh fruit and vegetables and meat; (b) Revision of selected standards and recommendations: publication of revised standards for fresh fruit and vegetables and for dry and dried fruit in A-5 format and on the Internet World Wide Web. Review of standards for early and ware potatoes, seed potatoes and poultry meat (including the interpretative brochure); (c) Workshops on harmonization of standards and control procedures for perishable produce in countries in economic transition; (d) Interpretation of the provisions concerning quality tolerances in the standards for fresh fruit and vegetables; (e) Investigation of quality assurance systems for perishable produce.

Duration: Continuing.

PROGRAMME 07: DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Programme activity 07.1: Trade promotion

Description: The Committee shall contribute to trade promotion in the ECE region by developing and disseminating information useful to policy makers and to firms interested in business opportunities and by promoting the exchange of such information and experiences among interested private sector participants and trade policy officials.

Role of the Committee: The Committee will review annually the work of the Working Party on International Contract Practices in Industry (WP.5) and other trade promotion activities. The Committee will consider and, where agreed, endorse selected subjects of seminars and workshops to be undertaken under the auspices of the Committee, as well the subjects of new Guides.

Programme element 07.1.1: **Preparation and revision of Guides relating to international commercial transactions** **Priority: 2**

Ongoing activities: The Working Party will undertake the preparation of Guides and documents in line with its new method of work agreed at its forty-fifth session (TRADE/WP.5/59). The Working Party will provide advice to individual governments on laws which would improve the investment environment in their countries and work with the WTO on laws that may have to be adopted to facilitate accession to the WTO.

Work accomplished in 1996: The Guide on "Financing Private Enterprises and Trade" was published. The document on "Adapting Property Laws: A Guide for the Transition Economies of Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS" was finalized. A pre-publication version was placed on the Web-site of the Trade Division. A Forum on "Developing viable real estate markets in central and eastern Europe and the CIS" was held on 24 June 1996. A final document from this Forum containing recommendations on laws, institutions building, development of specialized skills and financing for creating viable real estate markets, was approved and sent for publication. A pre-publication version of the final document was placed on the Web-site of the Trade Division.

Special activities for 1997: The Working Party proposes to hold a Forum on Investment Promotion Techniques in Geneva in June 1997 in conjunction with the Foreign Advisory Service of the World Bank. In the light of the successful consultations between the UN/ECE BOT Group and the Hungarian Government as well as invitations from other Governments to the Group, it is proposed that the Group will remain in existence to disseminate and publicize its Guidelines in the form of special consultative meetings with officials of Governments. These consultations will be financed by the host Governments and from external sponsorship. Interested Governments may wish to contact the secretariat for further details. It is proposed that a private sector advisory group will hold consultations with Governments on implementing the recommendations of the Forum of June 1996 on real estate markets.

Programme element 07.1.2: **Liaison with other organizations and organization of seminars and workshops** **Priority: 3**

Ongoing activities: The secretariat will maintain close liaison with other international organizations (e.g. WTO, OSCE, Council of Europe, World Bank, IMF, etc.) in order to coordinate ECE activities with theirs and avoid any duplication of work. The secretariat will also continue to organize seminars and participate in workshops sponsored by member States under the auspices of the Committee as resources permit. The secretariat will report to the Committee on the level of activity in trade promotion which can be undertaken with the available resources and other sources of finance and assistance.

Work accomplished in 1996: During 1996 the secretariat assisted in the organization of and participated in the following workshops and meetings: OSCE Review Meeting of the Bonn Document, Geneva, Switzerland, 22-23 January 1996; National Executive Symposium on Trade Efficiency, Midrand, South Africa, 29-30 April 1996; Seminar on the Implications of the Single European Market for Asian/Pacific Economies: Challenges and Opportunities, Bangkok, Thailand, 10-12 July 1996; OSCE Seminar on Framework for Private Sector Development, Industrial Cooperation and Direct Investment in the CIS States, Minsk, Belarus, 24-26 September 1996. During the forty-fifth session of the Working Party on International Contract Practices in Industry (WP.5) in June 1996 a Forum on developing viable real estate markets in the transition economies of central and eastern Europe and the CIS was organized (Geneva, 24 June 1996). Also during 1996 the secretariat assisted in organizing a number of meetings of an expert group (under the auspices of the WP.5) on new project financing and construction techniques including BOT for the transition economies.

Special activities for 1997: The secretariat will assist host and/or sponsor member States or regional institutions in the organization of workshops under the auspices of the Committee, subject to the interest of ECE Governments or regional institutions in hosting such workshops and the availability of full sponsorship of the cost of these workshops.

Programme element 07.1.3: **Information relevant to business operators**
Priority: 5

Ongoing activities: The secretariat will update its database on foreign direct investment and publish the quarterly "East-West Investment News". It will also disseminate information on sources of information relevant to trade and investment activities in the transition economies needed by business operators. Work on trade in services will be continued, as resources permit.

Work accomplished in 1996: The secretariat maintained its database on foreign direct investment and published the quarterly "East-West Investment News". It continued its work on issues relating to the dissemination of information relevant to trade and foreign direct investment.

Special activities for 1997: [To be completed in the light of decisions to be taken at the forty-fifth session when the continuation of East-West Investment News will be discussed.]

Programme activity 07.2: **Analysis of recent trends in trade, policies and problems**

Description: The Committee shall contribute to the understanding of recent and prospective trade and related investment trends, policies and problems through analysis and exchanges of views.

Role of the Committee: The Committee will discuss at its annual session the perspectives of member countries on certain subjects within a theme of particular interest to the Committee. The presentation of member countries' views will take the place of national statements which present more general information on trade trends and economic growth in member countries, although such information may be made available to the Committee in written form. The Committee will determine the discussion theme for its next session.

Programme element 07.2.1: **Analysis of recent and prospective trade trends, policies and problems including discussion themes for the Committee's annual sessions**
Priority: 4

Ongoing activities: The Bureau, in cooperation with the secretariat, will define timely specific subjects for discussion under the general theme. The secretariat will prepare discussion papers on these subjects. It will also arrange a round-table or a panel discussion on these subjects in consultation with the Bureau. The secretariat will coordinate with other international organizations as appropriate. The secretariat will prepare a new volume of the Economic Bulletin for Europe and seek to ensure that it is made available to member countries as soon as possible and not later than three weeks prior to the annual session of the Committee. The secretariat will prepare studies and notes on subjects selected by the Committee, giving special attention to questions of expanding trade of transition economies. The secretariat will report to the Committee on the level of activity in trade analysis which can be undertaken with the available resources. The Committee will agree on a specific theme for discussion at its forthcoming annual session.

Work accomplished in 1996: The secretariat undertook a study, as a follow-up to the round-table on ways and means of financing trade and investment, on the "Institutional, legal and business framework for developing more efficient systems to finance trade and promote more dynamic intraregional trade between ECE countries". This study formed the basis of a round-table discussion at the forty-fifth session.

At the forty-fifth session, the secretariat also presented to the Committee an annotated outline for a study on "Evaluating the role and impact of norms, standards and regulations in international trade, in particular the economies in transition, both on global and sectoral levels (immediate and long-term effects of new agricultural, social, environmental and technical standards on intraregional trade, exports, etc.)" which will be the general topic for the years 1997-1998. The precise topic for the study and round table in 1997 will be decided at the forty-fifth session.

Special activities for 1997: [To be completed in the light of decisions to be taken at the forty-fifth session.]
