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**CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN SUPPORT
OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK**

DOCUMENT FOR DISCUSSION

Note by the secretariat

This document contains a brief description of the most significant capacity building and technical cooperation activities undertaken by the secretariat in support of the programme of work. This document demonstrates the high priority which the secretariat gives to implementation activities.

In presenting this document the secretariat wishes not only to inform, but also to:

- Draw the attention of delegations from transition economies, and especially lower income transition economies, to capacity building activities that could potentially be implemented or replicated within their national contexts;
- Draw the attention of delegations to existing and potential capacity building activities to which they could contribute financially, in the form of contributions in kind or through the loan of experts;
- Request delegations to confirm the importance of these activities.

Previous related documentation: TRADE/2003/14.

SUBPROGRAMME: ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF TRADE DEVELOPMENT

I. Implications of EU enlargement in the UNECE region (Wider Europe project)

Project Objectives

1. This project was initiated by the UNECE member States at the UNECE Bureau meeting in 2002, which invited the Secretariat to propose practical measures to consider the implications of EU enlargement for the region. After discussions with some member States' representatives and the European Commission, a programme of sectoral workshops was agreed.
2. The project focuses on addressing the challenges and implications of EU enlargement in the UNECE region, particularly for transition countries in Eastern and Southern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in different areas.

Principal Activities

3. The main project activities are workshops on various topics. In 2003, in the context of this project, the UNECE organized following workshops and round tables related to Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development:
 - Trade, Business and Investment in a Wider Europe – held in April 2003 in Geneva
 - EU Enlargement: Regulatory Convergence in Non-accessing Countries – held in November 2003 in Athens and organized with the support the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece and the Institute of International Relations, Athens.
4. In relation to the above, in December 2003, the UNECE issued the publication, "Beyond Enlargement: Trade, Business and Investment in a Changing Europe", containing information presented at the Workshop on "Trade, Business and Investment in a Wider Europe", as well as related policy papers and documents.
5. In 2004, within this same project, the UNECE will, jointly with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), hold a workshop on 8 March to consider the economic dimension of security in a changing environment within the region and its economic implications. After this workshop, the Secretariat will prepare an evaluation report on all of the wider Europe workshops in order to appraise the usefulness of this technical assistance tool, proposing concrete outcomes, and considering their relevance for the future.

II. Joint Project for Technical Assistance in Trade Facilitation by UNECE and the Czech Republic

6. Since 1997, the UNECE and the Czech Republic have jointly been providing technical assistance in trade facilitation, through the project, "Support to Trade Facilitation Measures and UN/EDIFACT Implementation in Selected Eastern European Countries". The project administration is assisted by UNCTAD.

Project Objectives

7. In beneficiary countries, this project seeks to:
- Bring together representatives of relevant government authorities and institutions and the business sector in order to create an understanding among them of the cooperation required to implement trade facilitation measures;
 - Establish national trade facilitation bodies to provide relevant services both to the national trading community and to foreign partners;
 - Contribute to the implementation of trade facilitation measures in beneficiary countries and foster cooperation among them;
 - Raise awareness with regard to trade facilitation and electronic business.

Outcome and Results to Date

- Practical assistance has been provided to following countries: Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
- The project complements and extends UNECE's technical work on trade facilitation and electronic business recommendations and standards. UNECE's expertise in these areas has subsequently become more widely known and accepted in beneficiary countries.
- The involvement of beneficiary countries in UNECE's trade facilitation and electronic business work has increased, in particular through the countries' active participation in the annual sessions of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) and related events.

8. The Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic and UNECE have proposed extending the project until 2005. A formal request for extension has already been submitted to the Government of the Czech Republic.

III. Capacity-building in Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business in the Mediterranean

9. This project, funded during 2002 and 2003 by the United Nations Development Account, aimed at increasing the competitiveness of companies in the Mediterranean region in regional and global markets. In particular, through simplifying and harmonizing trade procedures throughout the transaction chain; implementing automated processes and information technology for administration and commerce; and facilitating the participation of small and medium-sized (SME) enterprises in electronic business. It focused on trade among the non-European Mediterranean countries, members of UNECE, ESCWA and ECA.

Project objectives

10. The implementation of the project is expected to result in:
- Broader application of the United Nations standards for trade facilitation and electronic business in Mediterranean countries that are not members of the European Union;
 - Establishment of a network of expertise between national institutions, the United Nations regional commissions and UNCTAD for trade facilitation and electronic business;

- Strengthened cooperation between the countries of the region with regard to trade facilitation and electronic business;
- Enhanced capacity for small and medium-sized enterprises in the region to join the international supply chain; and for trade facilitation and electronic business

11. Under the framework of this project, the UNECE held a regional seminar in Malta on 18-20 June 2003, which stressed the importance of implementing international norms and standards with support from trade facilitation software and the necessity for national seminars to focus on strengthening the implementation of UN standards for trade facilitation and electronic business.

12. The Malta Regional Workshop brought together networks of experts from the E-Med Business project and experts on Supply-Chain management for SMEs from the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce in Grenoble, France.

13. As a result of this project: the Turkish government implemented Recommendation N. 25 of UNECE - UN/EDIFACT for the automation of customs declarations and procedures; a SECI National Committee (TÜRKPRO) was established in the framework of the Southeast European Cooperation Initiative which implements Recommendation N. 4 of UNECE. In addition, the e-Document in foreign Trade project, coordinated by the Undersecretariat of Customs and Foreign Trade aims at implementing trade documents on the Internet, using the UN standards for trade documents. The UNECE and the Turkish administration are currently studying the possibility of strengthened implementation of UN standards, using the results of the UNeDocs project (www.unedocs.org).

14. Also as a result of the project, the government of Israel has begun two important projects. The first project concerns the automation of the Certificate of origin and aims at simplifying and maximizing efficiency in Customs procedures, and assisting in risk management. The second project concerns the integration of a paperless environment into Customs procedures. At the regional workshop in Malta, the representative of Israel expressed strong interest in the promotion and implementation of the UN trade facilitation and e-business standards.

IV. United Nations Extensions for electronic Trade Documents (UNeDocs)

16. The project “United Nations electronic Trade Documents (UNeDocs)” was put in place by the UNECE Trade Development and Timber Division to provide solutions for paper and electronic trade documents based on UNECE trade document standards and best practice. UNeDocs documents provide the basis for automated document processing and validation and the harmonization of documentary procedures.

17. For the UNECE International Forum on Trade Facilitation in 2003 the project cooperated with leading software providers to demonstrate implementations of a UNeDocs document. These demonstrators are based on Web Services and integrate trade facilitation standards and best practice. It was demonstrated that electronic document solutions can be made accessible to SMEs and transition economies. UNeDocs continues this research and development component with the target to provide users of UNeDocs with a wide choice of open and low cost electronic trade documents.

18. As part of this project, UNECE cooperated with the Electronic Post Mark (EPM) project of the Universal Postal Union. (UPU) EPM provides security and time stamping for electronic documents. The cooperation demonstrated the feasibility and complementarity of EPM signatures in UNeDocs trade documents. The project developed a Web Service for the automated validation of UNeDocs trade documents and EPM signatures through Web Services. This Web Service was demonstrated during the WSIS.

19. The UNeDocs Web Site (www.UNeDocs.org) was maintained and available services expanded. The project developed Web Services for important UN recommended code lists which are accessible on the Web Site.

20. In the course of 2003 the project continued its cooperation with SITPRO, the United Kingdom trade facilitation board. Together with SITPRO, the project developed the UNeDocs International Document Set (IDS). The IDS is based on the UNeDocs proof of concept developed in 2002. The solution provides a data model for paper documents aligned to the United Nations Layout Key and an electronic equivalent in XML and UN/EDIFACT syntaxes. The project also developed training modules for trade document automation for the UNeMed capacity building initiative

21. The UNeDocs advisory board has noted with satisfaction the progress of the project. It approved the management of the project and the development of the IDS. UNeDocs received several requests to conduct fact-finding missions or pilot implementations. The project team carried out missions to prepare technical assistance projects. Further progress of the project will depend on the mobilization of external resources to conduct implementations.

V. Trade Facilitation and Heightened Security

22. Trade security, and the impact of security measures on the flow and cost of international trade, remain a serious concern. The UNECE's approach to this issue is to encourage a multilateral approach to security rather than a unilateral one, which, if taken to its logical conclusion, could result in serious disruptions to trade in the longer term. On the positive side, the UNECE believes that the current focus on trade security issues presents greater impetus for the implementation of existing trade facilitation instruments, especially in areas such as document standards, advance cargo information, e-business standards and overall trade facilitation measures.

23. UNECE organised two conferences on trade security in February and November 2003, designed to discuss the above issues and encourage a collaborative approach. The November conference, which was organised jointly with the World Customs Organisation, was attended by over 100 participants who considered the meeting to be very beneficial and encouraged UNECE to continue with this work. The UNECE Transport Division was also actively involved in the conference.

24. UNECE has since followed up with several initiatives to work with other relevant agencies in pursuing the joint goals of trade facilitation and security.

VI. Capacity Building Workshop for Trade Facilitation Promotion Bodies, Geneva, October 2004

25. The secretariat, in cooperation with SITPRO and the World Bank, is planning a capacity building workshop for National Trade Facilitation Promotion (PRO) Organizations in October 2004. The purpose of the workshop is to enhance the knowledge and skills of Pro Organizations in order to develop their capacity to implement, and encourage the implementation of, required trade facilitation initiatives in their country and region.

26. The workshop will cover key areas of trade facilitation including:

- Implementation of key trade facilitation recommendations, standards and tools;
- Trade documentation alignment and simplification;
- Use of UN/CEFACT codes in trade facilitation (UN/LOCODE, etc);
- e-business standards;

- Current trends and issues in trade facilitation;
- UNeDocs – detailed presentation on the issues and steps required for implementation;
- Single Window;
- Supply Chain participation and trade facilitation;
- Possible organizational and funding models for Pro Organisations.

27. The workshop is planned for a three-day period and shall include approximately 40 participants from Pro Organisations around the world. Discussions are currently being held with SECIPRO (for Southeast Europe) and EUROPRO (for Western Europe) regarding their support and participation.

28. A key issue will be funding to support travel for participants. Initial discussions with the World Bank have been positive and other organisations have also expressed an interest in supporting the event. It is felt that the workshop would be a key tool for enhancing the implementation of UNECE trade facilitation recommendations and tools.

VII. Capacity building for implementation of UNECE agricultural quality standards

29. The secretariat of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality standards has contributed during the past year to different capacity building events, including:

- St. Petersburg customs academy – St. Petersburg, 3-7 March 2003 (Lecture to students on different quality standards for agricultural produce);
- EAN Pack-It and Trace-It conference – Cape Town, 17-21 March 2004 (Lecture on the work of ECE and Agricultural Standards);
- Joint FAO/BSEC workshop on institutional strengthening to facilitate intra- and interregional agricultural trade in BSEC member countries - Istanbul 29 June - 2 July 2003 (Lecture on “The importance of standards as a means of trade facilitation”);
- UNECE/ EAN international seminar on trade and the new security environment - Istanbul 2-3 July 2003 (assistance with preparation and follow-up of the event, lecture on UNECE Agricultural Quality Standards).

30. On 18-19 September 2003, the UNECE in cooperation with the Government of the Russian Federation organized in Moscow an international seminar on implementation of the UNECE standard for bovine meat. This seminar was attended by representatives from Australia, Belarus, France, Lithuania, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States and aimed to:

- Introduce the functioning of the international meat supply chain;
- Explain how the introduction of an international cutting standard can facilitate trade and lead to important savings for buyer and seller while guaranteeing product quality;
- Practically demonstrate the application of the standard in a cutting plant.

VIII. Capacity-building for good regulatory practices in the Balkan region

31. This project, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), aims at eliminating technical barriers to trade, simplifying regulatory frameworks and facilitating trade both between Balkan countries and with their traditional partners in the UNECE region. It covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro.

32. The implementation of the project is expected to result in:

- Improved mutual understanding and confidence building between regulatory authorities;
- Broader application of the UNECE recommendations on standardization and regulatory matters (namely UNECE Recommendation “L” International Model for Technical Harmonization”);
- Strengthened cooperation between the relevant national agencies in the region with regard to regulatory and standardization matters.
- Enhanced capacity of regulators to, whenever possible, implement the least trade restrictive means of meeting legitimate objectives.

33. In November 2003 the UNECE held a launching seminar for this project on regional experiences in good governance for regulatory practices. The Seminar was attended by about 80 participants from 33 countries, international and regional organizations and private associations and companies.

IX. Capacity-Building to Improve Trade Finance and Investment Prospects for the Sustainable Development of the Russian Timber Sector

Project Objectives

34. This project, initiated at the request of the Russian Federation, seeks to strengthen the trade performance of the Russian forest sector by contributing specific trade facilitation expertise of UNECE. The project focuses on:

- Sustainable development;
- Direct cooperation at the enterprise level;
- Regional cooperation at the level of the North-Western regions of the Russian Federation;
- Trade, timber and environment issues;
- Cross-sectoral work.

35. The main project activities are:

- Sustainable management practices for timber enterprises;
- Improved trade procedures in the timber industry;
- Innovative trade finance techniques;
- Capacity building for improved foreign investment;
- Sustainable use of biomass;
- Timber port operations and logistics.

36. These activities are based on the most urgent needs of the Russian forest sector. Experts from Timber Committee and the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED) are working together closely on this project for the benefit of Russian timber enterprises. The project activity, "Improved Trade Logistics for the Sustainable Use of Biomass" is a good example of the practical results achieved to date. In addition, the project work on the development of the sustainable use of biomass produced by the Russian forest industry as a substitute for fossil fuel has become a leading activity in the field.

X. Second International Forum on Trade Facilitation, 14-15 May 2003

37. UNECE organized the Second International Forum on Trade Facilitation on 14-15 May 2003 in Geneva in collaboration with UNCTAD, all UN regional commissions, UNIDO, WB, EC, WCO, WTO, ICC, with the objective of providing a neutral platform to raise awareness of the benefits and sensitive issues related to trade facilitation and trade security. It was attended by more than 500 participants from more than 90 countries.

38. The major achievements were: building consensus among the different groups of countries for trade facilitation in a UN setting; formulation of a number of important policy recommendations on how transition and developing countries can receive a fair share of the benefits of trade facilitation; setting up an inter-regional project for capacity building in trade facilitation to be funded by the Development Account beginning from 2004; and assisting over 20 participants from transition and developing countries to come and take part in the discussion and preparation of the policy recommendations, linked to the longer-term strategy of encouraging the creation of trade facilitation agencies, known as PRO committees.

XI. UNECE-EAN Regional Seminar on Trade Facilitation in the New Security Environmental, 1-2 July 2003

39. This seminar was organized jointly with the Government of Turkey (Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade), EAN International (International Article Numbering Association), and EAN Turkey.

40. Speakers represented the organizers as well as US Customs and Border Protection, the World Customs Organization, the United States Department of Agriculture, the UK Wines and Spirits Association, and several Turkish exporters associations.

Project Objectives

41. The project objectives were to:

- Organize a follow-up event to the International Forum on Trade Facilitation in May 2003 and bring the issues discussed at the Forum closer to the field.
- Raise awareness about new developments concerning the balance between international trade security and trade facilitation as well as food trade and emerging public and private safety and quality standards
- Promote the added value from a collaborative approach for trade security
- Promote value-added from food exports through access to international supply chains.

Impact of the Seminar

42. The seminar was split into two parts – one day dedicated to trade facilitation and the challenge of the new security environment, and a workshop on trade facilitation and food safety. There was an open discussion session at the end of the day, which was the major objective of the meeting.

43. About 60 participants participated following the concerted efforts of EAN Turkey to organize the meeting and attract an audience from both the public and private sectors in Turkey, all of whom had a high interest in the discussion. There were people from outside of Turkey from the region present at the meeting, but their number was limited, most probably because the confirmation that the conference will be held in Istanbul was received too late, resulting in less impact at the regional level than we would have desired.

XII. Activities of the Regional Advisor on Trade Facilitation

44. As UNECE Focal Point, the Regional Advisor collaborates with the following regional initiatives and projects:

- (a) SECI and the Stability Pact: the Regional Advisor cooperates closely with Working Table II, which deals with economic reconstruction, development and cooperation, and with the Special Coordinator's office. He provides ongoing support and advice on project development and implementation to the relevant working groups on trade liberalization and trade facilitation in the SECI and Stability Pact environment.
- (b) eSEE initiative: the Trade Development and Timber Division is contributing to the development of the Information Society strategy of the eSEE initiative of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe, especially with its expertise in e-business standards. The Regional Advisor is reviewing the existing body of work in the UNECE subsidiary bodies with a view to finalize this contribution.
- (c) TTFSE: The Regional Advisor cooperates with the Trade and Transport Facilitation in Southeast Europe program (TTFSE), working with the World Bank and the United States State Department. He is also providing advice on possible new trade and transport facilitation projects during the process of development of the new phase of this program (TTFSE 2).
- (d) CIS: the Regional Advisor works with the Russian authorities on the incorporation of UNECE's trade facilitation standards, recommendations and best practice in the Russian Customs reform.
- (e) Southeastern Europe: UNECE is conducting an awareness campaign for the introduction of advanced trade facilitation tools as part of the process of reform and integration into European structures. It also provides support to the Trade Working Group for the implementation phase and harmonization of bilateral Free Trade Agreements in Southeastern Europe.

45. The Regional Advisor is also actively involved in PRO Trade Facilitation Capacity Building and the coordination of PRO committees (SECIPRO). He supports the process of the creation of new PRO Committees in the CIS, as well as the work of existing ones. The Regional Advisor also develops cooperation with various institutions in the Russian Federation and the South Caucasus countries with a view to establishing and supporting existing PRO Committees by facilitating know-how transfer from existing PRO Committees, in cooperation with the World Bank.

46. Finally, in 2003, the Regional Advisor on Trade Facilitation prepared a publication *Sharing the Gains of Globalization in the New Security Environment: The Challenges to Trade Facilitation*, which is expected to become, together with the publication from the first International Forum on Trade Facilitation, a standard reading in trade facilitation. The Regional Advisor on Trade Facilitation also prepared a reference publication on trade facilitation in Russian, containing selected papers from the two International Forums on Trade Facilitation.

XIII. Proposals for Further Capacity Building Activities

47. The following are possible technical cooperation projects in trade development for transition economies which have already been drafted, but for which funding has not yet been identified:

- Development of trade finance facilities, contracts and documents in trade;
- Improvement of trade logistics information exchange in the Republic Moldova;
- Capacity building for integrated border management and integrated management of international flows of trade information in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and, possibly, the Central Asian republics, Ukraine and Russia;
- Improvement of the implementation of UNECE standards on fresh fruit and vegetables in wholesale markets;
- Improvement of trade logistics for the sustainable use of biomass.

48. The Trade Development subprogramme is undertaking a baseline study in 2003 to find out how the 30 UN/CEFACT recommendations on trade facilitation and e-business have been implemented in member States. When completed, the study will be used to identify support needs (for implementation projects and national policy work, for example) in member States. Future work in trade facilitation and e-business capacity building will be determined, in part, based on the results of the study.

SUBPROGRAMME: ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF INDUSTRIAL RESTRUCTURING AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

XIV. Activities of the Regional Advisor for Investment Promotion

49. The capacity building and implementation activities carried out by the Regional Adviser for Investment promotion relate to the Real Estate Advisory Group (REAG) Land for Development programme, the Intellectual Property Advisory Group programme on the enforcement of intellectual property rights and the Public-Private Partnership Alliance programme. A summary report of these activities can be found in document TRADE/WP.5/2003/10

XV. Activities of the Regional Advisor on SMEs and Entrepreneurship

50. The UNECE SME-related operational activities are implemented by the Regional Adviser on Entrepreneurship and SMEs and, for the activities on women's entrepreneurship, by the Senior Social Affairs Officer of the Office of the Executive Secretary. The paragraphs below contain a brief summary of the activities of the Regional Advisor on SME and Entrepreneurship in area of development of SME policies, increasing the competitiveness of SMEs, as well as other SME related policies. A detailed report on his activities can be found in the document TRADE/WP.8/2004/11.

1 SECIPRO is a network of national PRO Committees in Southeast Europe. A "PRO Committee" is a national body that aims to increase business and investment through the simplification and modernization of PROCedures and information exchange in administration, commerce and transport.

1) Development of SME Policies

51. The work of the Regional Adviser focuses on the rapprochement of views and on the development of a common platform for sustainable entrepreneurship development by:

- (a) Assisting in the adoption of sub-regional declarations on SMEs
- (b) Providing analytical support to national and regional bodies.

(a) Contribution to sub-regional declarations on SMEs

52. During the year 2003 the Regional Adviser on SMEs contributed to the work of the following regional bodies involved in development of national and regional SME strategies:

- The CEI Working Group on SMEs: the regional advisor assisted in revitalizing the CEI WG modalities of work and terms of reference and in organizing the 5th International Conference on “Challenges and Opportunities of EU Enlargement for SMEs in CEI Countries” held on 5-7 November 2003 in Slovenia.
- The BSEC Working Group on SMEs: the regional advisor assisted the Permanent Secretary in organizing two SME-related workshops on “Promotion of SMEs – Development of Youth Entrepreneurship” (March 2003, Republic of Moldova), and on “How to develop Information Resources for Entrepreneurs in Internet and build up web-sites for Start-ups” (June 2003, Russian Federation).
- The OSCE: the Regional Adviser participated in the preparation and contributed papers to several OSCE SME-related conferences. He also assisted in drafting the Bern Declaration on Promoting SMEs in the OSCE region.

(b) Providing analytical support to national and regional bodies involved in SME policies

53. To assist countries in transition and emerging market economies, since 1995 the UNECE has reviewed the development of related legislation, produced statistical data on small- and medium-sized enterprises and highlighted the problems faced by the SME sector during transition in individual countries.

54. In 2003, the Regional Adviser paid special attention to assisting the south-Caucasian transition economies and developed a project on the development of Entrepreneurship and the SME Sector in the South-Caucasian Region, as well as the revision of national SME policies and supporting infrastructure based on the UNECE integrated model. Three teams of experts on SME policy in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia prepared diagnostic studies based on the Questionnaire prepared by the Regional Adviser. The current situation and project proposals for this group of countries were discussed at a special Workshop held on 30-31 October 2003 in Istanbul.

55. The Regional Adviser on Entrepreneurship and SMEs highlighted the main characteristics of the SME development in transition economies at the following 2003 events:

- The 48th World Conference on “Advancing Entrepreneurship and Small Businesses”, International Council for Small Businesses (June 2003, Northern Ireland).
- Workshop on “Policy and Regulatory Options for Promoting Industrial Restructuring in the UNECE Region” (April 2003, Geneva, Switzerland)
- Meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal in Sustainable Development (November 2003, Geneva, Switzerland).

56. The Regional Adviser on Entrepreneurship and SMEs also organizes forums on best practice in national policies and programmes for promoting entrepreneurship and SMEs in CITs, and expert meetings on the benchmarking of various aspects of supporting and operating SMEs.

57. In 2003, he worked on the publication of the proceedings of the workshops on the Polish and Belarusian experiences of SME development held in 2001 and on preparing the 6th Forum on “Best Practice in the Development of Entrepreneurship and SMEs in CITs: The Romanian and Slovak Experiences”, which will be held on 31 March 2004.

2) Increasing the competitiveness of SMEs:

58. These operational activities were driven by the demand of member States to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs through benchmarking and the creation of special business service institutions, such as quality development centres for the implementation of quality management systems and ISO 9,000 and 14,000 series standards. These activities include the work of the:

- (a) Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems (TOS on QMS)
- (b) Team of Specialists on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation

(a) Team of Specialists on Quality Management Systems (TOS on QMS)

59. In 2003, the Regional Advisor participated in and contributed to the following QMS related events:

- Workshop on “Ecological Assessment of Enterprises in accordance with the ISO 14, 000 standards requirements”, organized by the UNECE in November 2003 in cooperation with the Besançon Professional Training Academic Delegation (France);
- Expert Meeting on “How to Become Supplier of Large National Enterprises and Transnational Corporations (TNCs)” held on 20-21 March 2003.

60. The Regional advisor developed or contributed to the development of the following practical QMS tools:

- A web page on Quality Management Standards (<http://www.unece.org/operact/quams.htm>), created to highlight this activity undertaken under the joint auspices of the Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development and the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies.
- A Questionnaire on Quality Models, Awards and Practices for SMEs, which will allow the collection of information for the comparative analysis of excellent quality models and practices.
- A new UNECE Guide on, “Model of Integrated Management System”, which is currently being prepared as a part of the UNECE contribution to the implementation of the Integrated Management System project, which aims to elaborate guidelines for enterprises, especially SMEs, on how to develop and monitor quality, environmental, social and other standards as part of a company’s sustainable development.
- A pilot project on the implementation of quality management systems in accordance with the ISO 9,000 standards, developed in order to improve the competitiveness of Russian light industry and to facilitate meeting the requirements for the Russian Federation’s accession to the WTO, at the request of the ROSSLEGPROM association.

(b) Team of Specialists on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation

61. During the reporting period, the Regional Adviser served as secretary to the Team of Specialists on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation.

62. At its meeting in February 2003, the TOS on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation decided to focus its future activities on the expansion of the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network and on cooperation with international initiatives such as the Youth Employment Summit Campaign, Youth Business International and Junior Chamber International. Emphasis was also put on raising awareness of youth-related issues in different UNECE sub-regions.

63. In 2003, within the framework of UNECE and BSEC Regional Forum on "Youth of the 21st Century: Realities and Perspectives" held in Kiev, the TOS organized a Workshop on "Promotion of SMEs – Strategic Direction in the Development of Youth Entrepreneurship" in the Republic of Moldova.

3) Other SME-related activities

64. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel and UNECE organized an International Workshop on Agribusiness Enterprise Development (Israel, September 2003). The Workshop focused on recent case studies reflecting Israel's experiences in handling overseas technical cooperation programmes in the field of agribusiness development. Over the last ten years, Israel has cooperated intensively with the CIS countries, having generated a solid methodological basis as well as practical agribusiness experience at the field level in a wide range of agribusiness activities.

65. The Regional Adviser on Entrepreneurship and SMEs created a Virtual Network of SME National Focal Points, among the officials responsible for the development of entrepreneurship and the SME sector. The network serves as a basis for policy formulation, data collection, and the organization of SME-related events.

XVI. Advisory activities on Gender and Economy and Capacity Building for Women's Entrepreneurship

66. The Senior Social Policy Officer took over some of the advisory activities previously performed by the Regional Advisor on Gender and Economy as of 1 March 2003. She also implements SME-related operational activities that are related to women's entrepreneurship. A summary report of these activities can be found in the section on Gender-mainstreaming in document TRADE/2004/21.

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