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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND  
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

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Item 7.3 of the provisional agenda

**CROSS-SECTORAL ACTIVITIES  
in Sustainable Development, Gender Mainstreaming, ICT for Development, and the  
World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)**

**DOCUMENT FOR INFORMATION**

Note by the secretariat

This document provides information which should help delegations to:

- Evaluate the extent of current cross-sectoral activities
- Determine potential new areas for cross-sectoral activities in the programme of work
- Measure the degree to which the Committee is supporting global United Nations mandates.

Previous related documentation: TRADE/2004/21

## **I. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

1. Sustainable development of trade continues to be an important policy framework for UNECE trade, industry and enterprise development activities. In 2004 the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development and its subsidiary bodies:

- Contributed to cross-sectoral trade, timber and environment projects and policy discussions
- Supported the integration of environmental aspects into the work on standardization policies
- Contributed to the recognition of environmental aspects in international agricultural quality standards
- Integrated environmental aspects into the work on international legal and commercial practice.

### Cross-sectoral trade, timber and environment projects and policy discussions

2. The Committee continued to cooperate with the UNECE committees on timber and on environmental policy in the area of promotion of trade in sustainably managed forest products and, namely, on the project "Improved Trade Logistics for the Sustainable Use of Biomass".

3. Many economies in transition are confronted with major challenges in the economic development of their forest resources. Russia, in particular, faces problems in promoting the sustainable development of what could be one of its principal renewable export products. The UNECE project aims at developing efficient trade networks for the export of biomass from the Russian Federation to European countries. To facilitate biomass trade flows between the participating countries, this project provides assistance in the field of trade logistics.

4. The following training courses, seminars and workshops were held under this project in 2004:

- Workshop on "Sustainable Use of Biomass in North West Russia" at the 2nd World Conference on Biomass for Energy, Rome, 10-12 May
- Seminar on "Sustainable Trade in Biomass", Rotterdam (Netherlands), 3 June
- Conference on "Sustainable Development of the Forestry Complex of Russian North-West Federal Area on the basis of Integrated Wood Utilization", St. Petersburg (Russian Federation), 14-15 June
- Workshop on Timber Port Logistics: Workshop at the 6th International Forestry Forum "Russian Timber Complex in the XXI Century", St. Petersburg, 12-15 October
- Seminar on "Business dialogue; Perspectives of biofuel development in Russia", St. Petersburg, 22 September
- Conference on "International Scientific and Practical Conference: Staff and Scientific Support as Key Factors of Sustainable Development of the Russian Forest Sector", St. Petersburg, 7-8 December .

5. The project led to the production of a number of reports on sustainable management and trade in timber products and biomass, such as:

- Sustainable development of the forestry complex of Northwest Russia and development of cooperation with the EU in the field of environmental protection
- Problems of sustainable development of the forestry complex of the North-West Russia for the period up to 2015
- Sustainable development and biofuel use as a way towards the Kyoto Protocol implementation and enhanced complex utilization of wood raw material and peat
- Sustainable development of biomass in Northwest Russia.

6. In addition, during 2004, the Committee contributed to policy discussions on trade and environment. In September 2004, the UNECE Timber Committee, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization, held a Workshop on "Illegal Logging and Trade of Illegally-derived Forest Products in the UNECE Region". This Workshop was organized as a follow-up to the discussions of the 2003 Roundtable Meeting on Trade, Environment and Forests: Working Together for Sustainable Development, which the Timber Committee held in cooperation with the Committee.

7. The Committee's information dissemination programme (Multiplier Point Programme) contributed to promoting this event and disseminating background documents and national reports in countries in transition. It has also helped disseminate UNECE publications on imports and exports of wood and secondary processed wood and paper products and establish direct contacts between the UNECE secretariat staff working on timber issues and interested organizations in countries in transition.

#### Integration of environmental aspects into the work on standardization policies

8. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) is working on the promotion of environmental management systems and wider participation of countries in transition in international environmental standardization. It currently cooperates with the UNECE Timber Committee in promoting sustainable forest management through setting clear standards for forest managers to apply, and by giving consumers information about how the wood was produced. The intention is to encourage and reward those who did manage their forest sustainably with market outlets, possibly even price premiums, and to enable consumers, and even Governments, to make informed purchase decisions with reliable information about the origin of the product.

9. At the 2004 session of the Working Party, the secretary of the UNECE Timber Committee presented a proposal for a seminar on forest certification matters to be held in Geneva, tentatively in autumn 2005, in cooperation with FAO and invited the Working Party to share its experts' knowledge and experiences with the participants.

10. Finally, the Working Party is continuing its work on the implementation of the "International Model for Technical Harmonization", which describes the steps to be followed when harmonization of technical regulations is favoured by a number of United Nations Member States. The Model facilitates the international harmonization of technical regulations, while taking into account the legitimate concerns of Governments in the area of environment, public health and safety. It is therefore a practical tool for integrating environmental concerns into international standards and regulations.

Integration of environmental aspects into international agricultural quality standards

11. The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards, together with its Specialized Section on Standardization of Fruit and Vegetables, supported the Fruit and Vegetables Initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO). The Initiative encourages consumption of fruit and vegetables, which has been identified in the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health as an important means of preventing non-communicable diseases. In cooperation with the WHO, Codex, and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development secretariats, UNECE developed a series of 12 colour postcards (in the six official languages of the United Nations) to support the Initiative and promote the UNECE standards for fruit and vegetables.

12. The Working Party also continues to contact producer organizations of organic produce to ensure that their interests are taken into account when standards are being drafted or amended.

Integration of environmental aspects into the work on international legal and commercial practice.

13. The Working Party on International Legal and Commercial Practice (WP.5) continued to support the UNECE Private-Public Partnership (PPP) Alliance, which was established to increase the capacity of Governments to promote successful PPPs for sustainable development. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development gave a high priority to public-private partnerships for infrastructure development. It urged Governments and all stakeholders to promote PPPs to improve the access of populations to water and energy. The UNECE PPP Alliance has been in the forefront of promoting the use of PPPs in pursuing these values and agreed to elaborate guidelines for PPPs for sustainable development.

14. Taking these issues forward during 2004, the PPP Alliance, in cooperation with UN-Habitat, organized a seminar at the second World Urban Forum for Sustainable Development, in Barcelona, Spain, on 13 and 14 September 2004. The meeting examined specific cases where PPPs were being implemented for urban renewal and sustainable development. In addition, the PPP Alliance held a meeting at the conference of the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships (24 November 2004 in Toronto, Canada), where a consultation between the Alliance and leading Canadian companies took place. The Canadian Union of Public Employees was also involved in this consultation.

15. In its guidelines, the PPP Alliance has developed sustainable-development indicators for PPPs in order to measure the extent to which such new policies are meeting agreed objectives. Monitoring of the extent to which these guidelines are being put into practice will take place after the guidelines are published. Overall, it is ministries of trade, industry, transport and finance that are exploring and promoting PPP policies, whereas ministries of environment are working to promote sustainable development. Accordingly, greater cross-sectoral dialogue needs to take place between these two constituencies if PPPs in the UNECE region are to follow the principles of sustainable development.

## II. GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

16. During the reporting period the UNECE Team of Specialists on Women's Entrepreneurship focused on the following areas:

- Analysis of good practices in access to financing and ICT
- Assessment of data on women's entrepreneurship
- Analysis of training needs and methodologies
- Support to subregional initiatives.

17. A second volume on good practices in women's entrepreneurship, entitled *Access to financing and ICT for women's entrepreneurs in the UNECE region*, was published in May 2004 (ECE/TRADE/336; sales No. E.04.II.E.11). The publication includes policy recommendations on microcredit schemes, cooperatives and credit lines provided by commercial banks. It shows how e-technologies could be used to develop small companies and presents the assessment of data on self-employment by sex and guidelines to improve data collection and methodologies. The publication is available in English and Russian.

18. The Team of Specialists continued its review of methodologies for the compilation, consistency and comparability of available data on women's entrepreneurship. The final objective of this work is to establish a consistent set of indicators for measuring entrepreneurship development, particularly its gender aspect.

19. Members of the Team of Specialists participated in two subregional workshops in Udine, Italy and Portoroz, Slovenia. The workshops discussed the impact of EU enlargement on women's entrepreneurship and identified good practices from a number of UNECE member States. The representatives of a business incubator for women's entrepreneurs from Graz, Austria, shared their experience with a view to organizing similar centres in other countries.

20. In the first half of 2005, the Team of Specialists is planning to organize a subregional UNECE Forum of Women's entrepreneurs in Istanbul.

## III. ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS)

21. The principal activities supported by the Committee in this area include:

- Continued support to the WSIS process and participation in the interregional partnership for promoting trade as an engine of growth through knowledge management and information and communication technologies
- United Nations electronic trade documents (UNeDocs) project
- Work on Internet enterprise development.

22. The UNECE made a significant contribution to the Geneva phase of the **World Summit on the Information Society** in December 2003 and will continue supporting the WSIS process up to the Tunis Summit in November 2005, as well as the UN ICT Task Force. UNECE also took part in the Bishkek Conference on the Information Society and Regional Cooperation in Information and Communication Technologies for Development, jointly organized in November 2004 by the Government of Kyrgyzstan, UNECE, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN ICT Task Force. The UNECE Regional Adviser on Trade Facilitation regularly contributed to the work of the e-Southeast European initiative of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe. As a result, an e-business strategy paper for the transition economies of the western Balkans has been prepared. In addition, a regional Ministerial Meeting in south-east Europe (SEE) in preparation for the WSIS will be held in June 2005.

23. The UNECE Trade Development and Timber Division is participating, along with the corresponding divisions of other regional commissions of the United Nations, in the project **Interregional partnership for promoting trade as an engine of growth through knowledge management and information and communication technologies**. This project is financed by the United Nations Development Account. One of the UNECE's major contributions to this programme is the UNeDocs project, described in the following paragraphs.

24. **The United Nations electronic trade Documents (UNeDocs) project** develops and implements solutions for efficient trade document systems based on international trade standards and technologies that are accessible to traders from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and developing countries. The project combines existing UNECE standards for paper documents with e-business standards, such as the United Nations Trade Data Element Directory (ISO 7372) and United Nations/Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UN/EDIFACT), to define the electronic equivalents for paper documents used in trade. The project provides a migration path from paper-based trading environments to advanced electronic systems. The electronic documents integrate UNECE trade recommendations and are thus an instrument to promote and implement trade standards on a global level.

25. In 2004, the project developed jointly with the United Kingdom trade facilitation board (SITPRO) an integrated set of 10 standard-based trade documents in paper and electronic format (UNeDocs International Document Set v0.4). The electronic documents are based on UN/EDIFACT and XML (an Internet-based technology suitable for SMEs). The document set is made available through the UNeDocs website and is currently being implemented in the United Kingdom. During the past year, the UNeDocs website ([www.UNeDocs.org](http://www.UNeDocs.org)) was maintained and available services were expanded. The project also further expanded Web Services for important UN recommended code lists, which are accessible on the website.

26. Following publication of the document set, the project cooperated with leading technology providers to develop practical tools for the use of electronic trade documents in order to provide users of UNeDocs documents with a choice of low-cost solutions. These tools use Web Services and provide access to trade facilitation standards and best practice. The UNeDocs document set and related tools were a major component in the Capacity-Building Workshop on Trade Facilitation Implementation held in Geneva in October 2004.

27. The Bureau of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) outlined the importance of UNeDocs for cross-border automation and simplification and integrated UNeDocs into the revised UN/CEFACT e-Business strategy. The Bureau asked the UN/CEFACT secretariat to develop a migration strategy to transfer the UNeDocs project into a working group to be set up under the UN/CEFACT Forum. The purpose of this working group will be to further develop UNeDocs as the global standard for paper and electronic trade documents. In December 2004 the UNeDocs project submitted a transition strategy to the UN/CEFACT Bureau, which was approved. It is expected that the new working group on UNeDocs will be launched on the occasion of the UN/CEFACT Forum in Kuala Lumpur in March 2005.

28. In the course of 2004, the work of the **Team of Specialists on Internet Enterprise Development** was revitalized and a new programme of work adopted. At its meeting in May, the Extended Bureau of the Team selected two of its subprogrammes as priorities:

- assessment of readiness of Eastern Europe and the CIS for the knowledge-based economy (the so-called e-readiness assessments);
- e-business repository project.

29. The project on the readiness assessment of East European and CIS countries for the knowledge-based economy, initially focusing on ICTs, was initiated by UNECE in 2002. Fourteen national reports have been published as of October 2004. Two further reports will be published in 2005.

30. The e-business repository project of the Team of Specialists has as its main goal to strengthen trust in and sustainability of e-business by fostering the transfer of standards, methods, knowledge and good practices among the countries of the UNECE region. This is to be achieved by putting in place technical means for the collection, storage and dissemination of reliable commercial information on companies by presenting disparate and already existing information bases as an “e-Business repository”. The first phase of the project, consisting of a preliminary survey of the current practices of business registration in selected countries of the UNECE region, was launched in September 2004. The preliminary results of this phase were discussed at the “Seminar on the Regulatory Framework for Internet-based Entrepreneurship: the e-Business Repository project”, held in Geneva on 9 February 2005.

31. In October 2004, the Team organized a Seminar on “Fostering Internet Enterprise Development by Governments and by Large Companies through Subcontracting”. It was attended by participants from 20 UNECE member countries that are active in government, businesses, academia and intergovernmental organizations. The main issues discussed were: the role of Governments in Internet enterprise development (regulation, e-government, etc.), incentives for the adoption of ICTs by consumers and citizens, the impact of international outsourcing in the ICT industry on developed market economy countries and on emerging market economy countries, the future of the ICT services industry in industrialized countries, and emerging market opportunities for countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS. The Seminar recommended that the Team should continue its work on issues of international outsourcing in the ICT industry.

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