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Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Sixth session

Geneva, 21-22(am) June 2021

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Room TPS 2,
starting at 10:00 a.m. on Monday 21 June 2021*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of officers.

A. General segment

3. Matters arising.

B. High-level segment: Removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the Economic Commission for Europe region

4. Supporting the removal of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade: Serbia.
5. Findings and recommendations emerging from the COVID-19 impact assessments targeting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in selected countries.

* The hybrid sessions will be organized on 21 June 10:00 – 12:00 and 15:00 – 17:00. On 22 June the hybrid session will take place 9:30 – 11:30. Restrictions to in-person participation apply and delegates are encouraged to join the sessions virtually. Delegates are invited to register online at <https://indico.un.org/e/sctcs-2021>. The session documents will be made available progressively at <https://unece.org/trade/sctcs-2021>. Please note that as part of its move to paperless meetings, the secretariat does not distribute paper copies of meeting documents.

Additional information for delegates, including a map of the Palais des Nations meeting rooms, is available at: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html>.



6. Country follow-up to Economic Commission for Europe studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade.

C. Continuation of the general segment

7. Programme of work:
 - (a) Updates from subsidiary bodies;
 - (b) Capacity-building and technical assistance activities;
 - (c) Cooperation with other organizations and Economic Commission for Europe bodies;
 - (d) Stakeholder needs and priorities;
 - (e) Status of implementation of the Trade subprogramme 2021 programme of work; and
 - (f) Trade subprogramme's programme of work for 2022 and outline of key components of the programme of work for 2023.
8. Other business.
9. Adoption of the report.

II. Annotations

Item 1. Adoption of the agenda

1. Delegates are invited to adopt the provisional agenda.

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Provisional agenda	ECE/CTCS/2021/1	Decision

Item 2. Election of officers

2. The delegates will be invited to elect, for a two-year mandate 2021 – 2023, a Chair and two Vice-Chairs.

A. General segment

Item 3. Matters arising

3. Under this item, the secretariat will report on matters arising from the 2021 meetings of the Economic Commission for Europe and its Executive Committee (EXCOM).

B. High-level segment: Removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the Economic Commission for Europe region

Item 4. Supporting the removal of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade: Serbia

4. Delegates will be briefed about the findings and recommendations emerging from the Economic Commission of Europe (ECE) study of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Serbia. The study, which was funded by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA), was conducted in 2020 using the ECE evaluation methodology, which was extended to capture the impact of non-tariff measures (NTMs) governing trade in goods on the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

5. The study captures behind and at-the-border regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, highlights their impact on transaction costs in terms of both time and money. It also highlights the implication of these barriers for the achievement of SDGs and provides detailed recommendations.

6. Delegates will be also briefed about the findings and recommendations emerging from the ECE COVID-19 impact assessment, titled, “The impact of COVID-19 on trade and structural transformation in Serbia: Evidence from UNECE’s survey of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)”. The assessment was undertaken pursuant to General Assembly’s Resolution on Global Solidarity to Fight the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (A/RES/74/270) of 2 April 2020. It was financed by UNDA and contributed to the UN system wide Global Initiative Towards Post-Covid-19 Resurgence of the MSME Sector (See agenda item 5).

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Economic Commission for Europe study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Serbia: Recommendations	ECE/CTCS/2021/3	Decision

Item 5. Findings and recommendations emerging from the COVID-19 impact assessments targeting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in selected countries

7. Pursuant to the General Assembly’s Resolution on Global Solidarity to Fight the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (A/RES/74/270) of 2 April 2020, the ECE undertook a series of demand-driven assessments to capture the impact of COVID-19 on trade and structural transformation in selected countries. In addition to Serbia, the assessments covered Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. In addition, the ECE conducted two national assessments on the impact of COVID-19 on the development prospects of export-oriented female owned MSMEs in Armenia and the Republic of Moldova. The assessments were financed by the UNDA and contributed to the UN-system wide Global Initiative Towards Post-Covid-19 Resurgence of the MSME Sector.

8. The assessments draw on the experience gained from the ECE studies on regulatory and procedural barriers in the six countries. They are based on a survey of MSMEs and main freight forwarders operating in the countries using ECE’s evaluation methodology, which was adapted to trace the way NTMs governing trade in goods influenced end-to-end supply

chains and capture the lingering ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy. The assessments of female owned MSMEs in Armenia and Moldova highlight main COVID-19-induced challenges to scaling up women's economic empowerment in the two countries.

9. The assessments have been published in English. Technical, informal versions of the assessments on Armenia, Belarus and the Republic of Moldova are available in Russian. The assessments can be downloaded from the Trade subprogramme's website at unece.org/trade.

10. To facilitate discussions, the secretariat prepared a summary report, highlighting common challenges and recommendations emerging from the assessments. Delegates are invited to discuss the summary report (ECE/CTCS/2021/4).

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Findings and recommendations emerging from the COVID-19 impact assessments targeting MSMEs in selected countries	ECE/CTCS/2021/4	Decision

Item 6. Country follow-up to Economic Commission for Europe studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade

11. Delegates will be informed of country follow-up to ECE studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, including work underway to support Kyrgyzstan implement recommendations from the study in the area of transparency in trade (implemented in cooperation with UNCTAD) and the demand-driven assessments of the impact of COVID-19 on trade and structural transformation in selected countries.

12. Delegates from countries and the UN Resident Coordinator Offices in countries where ECE studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade were undertaken will inform the Steering Committee about ongoing and planned follow-up activities, particularly those related to implementing the recommendations emerging from the studies and COVID-19 impact assessments.

13. Delegates will be invited to discuss areas for possible joint action and coordination with development partners.

C. Continuation of the general segment

Item 7. Programme of work

(a) Updates from subsidiary bodies

14. Each subsidiary body will report about its priorities, completed activities and future plans as well as about decisions that need to be considered by the Steering Committee. Consistent with the nature of its work, the programme of work of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (contained in document ECE/CTCS/WP7/2020/3) is biannual. The working party will report on its priorities, completed activities and future plans on an annual basis. Delegates will be invited to endorse the reports by the subsidiary bodies.

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Chair's Note on the Informal Virtual Consultations of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies	ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2020/2	Decision
Chair's Note on the Informal Virtual Consultations of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards	ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2020/2	Decision
Draft programme of work of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards 2021	ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2020/3	Decision
Programme of work of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies for 2021	ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2020/10	Decision

(b) Capacity-building and technical assistance activities

15. Delegates will be invited to endorse the relevant sections of the Trade subprogramme's report on capacity-building and technical assistance activities implemented since the previous session. The activities reported by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) are for information only.

16. Delegates will also be briefed on the results of an independent review of UNECE project financed under the United Nations Development Account "Strengthening the National Capacities of Selected UNECE Countries for Evidence-Based Regulatory and Procedural Trade Policies to Achieve SDGs". The project was implemented over the period January 2017 – December 2020. The report is available on UNECE's website at <https://unece.org/evaluation-reports>.

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Report on capacity-building and technical assistance activities	ECE/CTCS/2021/5	Decision

(c) Cooperation with other organizations and Economic Commission for Europe bodies

17. Delegates will be briefed about activities of potential interest undertaken by UN/CEFACT.

18. The secretariat will report on ongoing collaboration with other international organizations.

19. Representatives from other international organizations will be invited to highlight areas for potential cooperation with the Steering Committee as well as current and future activities of relevance to delegates.

20. A discussion will take place on potential areas for collaboration between the Steering Committee and other Economic Commission for Europe bodies and international organizations.

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Report of the Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business on its twenty-seventh Plenary session	ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/2	Information
Cooperation with other organizations and Economic Commission for Europe bodies	ECE/CTCS/2021/6	Decision

(d) Stakeholder needs and priorities

21. Delegates will be invited to discuss the needs of low and middle-income countries for removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, including those identified in the ECE studies. The discussion will focus on possible measures by member States, and how the Trade subprogramme might assist in addressing these needs drawing on experience gained and activities undertaken in the areas covered by the Steering Committee.

(e) Status of implementation of the Trade subprogramme 2021 programme of work

22. The secretariat will report on the status of the implementation of the programme of work currently under way including on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation.

(f) Trade subprogramme's programme of work for 2022 and outline of key components of the programme of work for 2023

23. The secretariat will present the Trade subprogramme's draft programme of work for 2022. This document is based on the Trade subprogramme's proposed programme plan and performance indicators for 2022, reviewed by the ECE Executive Committee in December 2020 as part of the ECE proposed programme budget for 2022, and submitted for consideration by the 76th session of the UN General Assembly. The draft programme of work document reflects the annual budget format introduced in 2020 in line with General Assembly resolution 72/266, with enrichments reflecting General Assembly resolutions 74/251 adopted on 27 December 2019 and 75/243 adopted on 31 December 2020. Delegates will be invited to adopt the programme of work and recommend it to the Executive Committee for approval. Sections on UN/CEFACT are for information only.

24. At its meeting on 5 March 2021, the ECE Executive Committee adopted a document entitled "Sequential review of the proposed programmes of work of ECE subprogrammes" (doc. 2021/8). In line with the sequential review procedure, the Committee will be invited to also consider the "Outline of key components of the programme of work of the Trade subprogramme for 2023" (ECE/CTCS/2021/INF.1) and provide recommendations on these components, as necessary. Recommendations agreed by the Committee and included in its decisions will be reflected in the proposed programme plan of the Trade subprogramme for 2023.

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>For information/decision</i>
Trade subprogramme's draft programme of work for 2022	ECE/CTCS/2021/7	Decision
Outline of key components of the Trade subprogramme's programme of work for 2023	ECE/CTCS/2021/INF.1	Consideration

Item 8. Other business

25. The Steering Committee will approve the dates for its next session.

Item 9. Adoption of the report

26. Delegates will adopt the report of the sixth session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards, containing the deliberated decisions.

III. Tentative timetable

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>
21 June 2021	10:00-10:10	1	Adoption of the agenda
	10:10-10:20	2	Elections of officers
		A	General Segment
	10:20-10:30	3	Matters arising
		B	High-level segment: Removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the Economic Commission for Europe region
	10:30-11:15	4	Supporting the removal of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade: Serbia.
	11:15-12:00	5	Findings and recommendations emerging from the COVID-19 impact assessments targeting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in selected countries
	15:00-15:40	5	Findings and recommendations emerging from the COVID-19 impact assessments targeting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in selected countries (<i>continued</i>)
	15:40-15:50	6	Country follow-up to Economic Commission for Europe studies on regulatory barriers and procedural barriers to trade
		C	Continuation of the general segment
		7	Programme of Work
	15:50-16:20	(a)	Updates from subsidiary bodies
	16:20-16:40	(b)	Capacity-building and technical assistance activities
	16:40-16:55	(c)	Cooperation with Economic Commission for Europe bodies and other organizations
16:55-17:00	(d)	Stakeholder needs and priorities	
22 June 2021	09:30-09:45	(e)	Status of implementation of the Trade subprogramme 2021 programme of work
	09:45-10:15	(f)	Trade subprogramme's programme of work for 2022
	10:15-10:30	8	Other business
	10:30-11:30	9	Adoption of the report