NOTIFICATION

Thirtieth regional course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda

Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Sultanate of Oman
19 October to 6 November 2014

The UNCTAD secretariat is pleased to announce that the next regional course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda for Western Asia will be hosted by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Oman, and will take place from 19 October to 6 November 2014.

The course will focus on the links between trade, investment, finance and development, including in the context of international trade negotiations. Its aim is to:

(a) Enhance understanding of the relationship among these areas and their link to country development strategies;

(b) Provide participants with knowledge and skills for the design and implementation of trade and development policies, as well as for trade negotiations corresponding to the needs and interests of their countries.

The syllabus of the course will draw upon the perspective of UNCTAD, its analytical work and the lessons learnt from its technical cooperation activities, and will be enriched by the competence and expertise of representatives of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, as well as of national experts in these areas of work.

The course is mainly aimed at mid-level government officers in ministries and institutions dealing with trade, investment, finance and development issues, who are involved in the formulation and implementation of national trade and development policies. As appropriate, and depending upon the availability of places, other applicants such as academics from universities could be considered.

The course will be given in English. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce will make available simultaneous interpretation into Arabic.

For the sake of efficiency, the application process has been improved: it will now be in two steps. First, UNCTAD member States from Western Asia are invited to present the names and e-mail addresses of qualified candidates as soon as feasible through their permanent missions in Geneva. Second, these candidates will then be contacted by the secretariat to complete an application online on the course website; this process must be completed by 8 August 2014. It is therefore advisable that the names and e-mail addresses of candidates are submitted as soon as possible to allow sufficient time for them to submit their applications through the online process. Member States/successful candidates will be notified of the decision of the UNCTAD selection committee by 18 August 2014.
Member States are encouraged to nominate more than one candidate per country, in which case they may wish to rank the candidates. The selection committee will take this ranking into consideration, provided that the preferred candidate meets the eligibility criteria.

UNCTAD and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce will provide hotel accommodation for all participants, who will also receive sufficient funds to cover daily meals and miscellaneous expenses. Selected participants will be responsible for their own travel costs and for taking out adequate travel and medical insurance and obtaining a valid visa for travel to Muscat prior to their arrival in Oman. Travel funds covering the least costly fare will be provided for participants from least developed countries.

An outline of the course syllabus, which provides a detailed list of topics, learning objectives and questions to answer (P166.2014.TS.2) and the application guidelines (P166.2014.AG.2) are attached.

For additional information, please contact the Knowledge Sharing, Training and Capacity Development Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD (e-mail: mohan.panicker@unctad.org; fax.: +41 22 917 0050; tel.: +41 22 917 2561).

(signed)

Mukhisa Kituyi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

5 June 2014
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COURSE SYLLABUS

This syllabus gives a short overview of the content of the different modules with a perspective on developing countries in Western Asia. For each module, participants selected to attend the course will be expected to gather information on a number of issues before the beginning of the course so that they can contribute to discussions on the different modules using the experience of their countries.

Module 1: Trade, financial flows and macroeconomic policies in a globalizing economy

Objectives: This module highlights topical economic issues at the global level and explores their implications for countries’ development policies. It introduces participants to UNCTAD’s integrated approach, examining the interdependence between different policy areas including macroeconomic management and international trade and financial integration to discuss growth and development challenges. The module’s principal objectives are (a) to examine global economic dynamics and the attendant challenges faced by developing countries – including those related to macroeconomic and financial trends, trade and inclusive growth; (b) to enhance participants’ understanding of current economic debate and what this implies for policymakers in developing countries; (c) to help participants recognize the opportunities for development emanating from globalization, and the policy approaches that can help create an enabling environment for investment and growth.

Expected outcome: At the end of this module, participants will have deepened their understanding of the implications of trade and financial integration for inclusive economic growth, structural change and technological upgrading. They should also be able to understand key challenges related to macroeconomic and regulatory policies in order to prevent crises and enhance investment and growth. Participants will thus develop their capacities to pursue appropriate policies and strategies in these areas at the national, regional and international levels.

Module 2: Investment and enterprise development: trade and development implications

Objective: The objective of this module is to define and evaluate the impact of foreign investment on development, and to highlight best practices on how to create linkages between transnational corporations (TNCs) and domestic enterprises.

The module addresses issues related to international and domestic investment and trade. It begins by examining the latest trends in foreign direct investment (FDI) flows, corporate strategies, and international systems of production. This will provide a basis for an assessment of the links between investment and international trade – the integration of developing countries into international systems of production (also called global value chains) as suppliers and producers. Attention will be paid to linkages between small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and TNCs in order for developing countries to benefit from global trading opportunities, as well as to the need to promote entrepreneurship and strengthen the local supply capacity to sustain competitiveness in
the long term. The focus during the whole module is on the policies, institutions and strategies that can best attract FDI and “embed” it in host economies, as well as on policies for strengthening local productive capacity.

**Expected outcome:** At the end of this module, participants will be able to define and evaluate the impact of foreign investment on development. Participants will also be able to identify the policies, institutions and strategies that can be put in place to attract and enhance the impact of foreign investment through technological and financial spillovers, growth of employment and exports, TNC–SME linkages and local enterprise development. Participants will also have a firm grasp of global trends in foreign investment flows.

**Module 3: The knowledge economy: Harnessing science, technology and innovation for development**

**Objective:** The objective of this module is to familiarize participants with how countries can harness science, technology and innovation (STI) to address development problems through the design and implementation of national STI policies and strategies.

The sources of economic growth and development include technological progress and innovation. Harnessing STI has contributed to economic and social progress in many countries. It is also critical to addressing environmental challenges. It has been a key part of the development strategies in several developing countries that have grown quickly and are catching up with the most advanced economies. This module discusses what STI is, how it can contribute to growth and development and what types of policies and strategies countries can design and implement to build STI capabilities, promote successful technology transfer and develop strong innovation systems. It will compare the experiences of other regions with STI policies and strategies. The linkages between STI, trade, investment, education and training, and industrial policies will also be discussed.

There is huge diversity among countries in many respects and national STI strategies and policies must take account of different country circumstances. However, the argument will be made that all countries can harness STI in ways that support growth, development and improved social welfare, regardless of their specific circumstances. The module is therefore relevant for economic policy analysts and policymakers from all developing economies.

**Expected outcome:** By the end of this module, participants will have some understanding of (a) the role that science, technology and innovation can play in stimulating economic and social development; (b) the concept of innovation systems; (c) how national policies can be used to build STI capabilities and promote technological progress and innovation; (d) the challenges that developing countries are facing in designing and implementing STI policies and strategies.

**Module 4: International transport and trade facilitation**

**Objective:** The objective of this module is to introduce participants to key issues in international trade logistics, transport and trade facilitation and how these issues link to global value chains.

Participants will discuss trade facilitation measures as contained in the recently agreed World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement as well as regional initiatives. Participants will gather the elements required to develop a national trade facilitation implementation plan and to establish a national institutional framework, such as the national trade facilitation committees as required under article 13 of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.
The module will also look at the role of international transport for the trade competitiveness of countries, global transport networks, transit arrangements, trade support services and institutional and legal frameworks, including customs issues and trade facilitation measures that are contained in the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and increasingly included in regional trade agreements. In this context, the module will elaborate on the needs and priorities of countries relating to capacity-building and technical assistance requirements as part of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

**Expected outcome:** At the end of this module, participants will better understand the role of institutional and physical trade and transport infrastructures in fostering trade competitiveness in terms of supporting productive and trading capacities. They will also grasp the relevance of trade and transport facilitation and their importance in trade transactions at national, regional and multilateral levels.

**Module 5: Development gains from the international trading system**

**Objectives:** This module will (a) examine developments in the international trading system, especially in view of the global financial and economic crisis and its impact on development and the Millennium Development Goals; (b) review the state of play in multilateral trade negotiations under the Doha Round of international trade negotiations, as well as issues of particular relevance for Western Asian countries and policy options in that regard; (c) consider broader trade and trade-related policy reform issues to achieve structural transformation and to draw maximum development gains from the international trading system; (d) investigate ways and means to maximize the beneficial effects of regional trade agreements, for instance by adopting coherent national approaches to regional and multilateral negotiating processes, mitigating adjustment costs, and exploring export opportunities in regional partners for diversification of their economies.

This module is expected to provide information to understand better and make better-informed decisions regarding trade negotiations strategies. This information relates to (a) problematic issues in managing the interface between bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements and the broader policy reform agenda aimed at development; (b) key factors in making decisions about national positions in trade negotiations; (c) opportunities and challenges derived from the evolution of scope and provisions of trade agreements; (d) opportunities and challenges derived from the evolution of trade patterns.

**Expected outcome:** At the end of this module, participants will be able to identify and understand key challenges and opportunities in the international trading system. They will also be cognizant of important factors affecting the design of appropriate national policies and strategies, to maximize gains from their integration into the global economy and to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis.

**Module 6: Simulation exercise on national policy objectives and the multilateral trade negotiations**

**Objective:** To understand the relationship between negotiations on trade in services (in the context of a country’s negotiations on services at the WTO) and the wider policy context at the national level, participants will undertake a simulated consultation between national stakeholders as regards a country’s possible commitments on financial services under the General Agreement on Trade in Services. The exercise will result in a consensual services offer.

**Expected outcome:** At the end of the simulation exercise, participants will be able to understand the dynamics and challenges of crafting a national position to participate in trade negotiations.
QUESTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

All applicants will be contacted by e-mail to complete an online application.

The online application must include responses to two questions indicated below. All applicants must answer question No. 1. They will then have to answer either question No. 2 or question No. 3. Please ensure that their responses take into account the national context with regards to economic development objectives. The reply to each question must not be longer than 250 words.

Question No. 1 (compulsory question - all applicants must answer)

How is national development planning undertaken in your country? What are the broad macroeconomic principles and objectives that determine your Government’s approach and the choice of policies used? What is the role of economic development and which are the relevant agencies responsible for their implementation? What are the indicators that best measure economic development in your country? What do they show about your country?

____________________________________________________________________________

Please choose either question No. 2 or question No. 3.

Question No. 2

What roles do trade, investment and finance policies play in addressing economic challenges in your country? What domestic and international constraints affect the choice and design of these policies and their implementation? What are their main effects?

___________________________________________________________________________

Question No. 3

What roles do technology, and/or entrepreneurship and/or trade logistics play in supporting economic development in your country? Are these issues incorporated into your national economic development plans and strategies? If yes, how? Then provide a brief description of the main challenges faced for each of the three issues. If not, why not?
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APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Applicant profile

The course is aimed mainly at mid-level government officials dealing with international economic issues, including the formulation and implementation of policies in one or more fields covered in the attached training syllabus.

When submitting nominations, it is advisable that candidates:

(a) Have an advanced degree in economics, business, international relations, trade law or public administration. A first degree with proven relevant work experience may also be accepted if places on the course are available;

(b) Have between 4 and 10 years of relevant professional experience in a national public administration, an international or regional development organization, a research institute or a university dealing with the above-mentioned areas in the training syllabus;

(c) Be in a position to use and disseminate the information and knowledge acquired during the course. In this context, it is highly desirable for participants to remain in relevant positions for a sufficient time after the course so that the skills and knowledge gained are disseminated to the fullest at their workplace;

(d) Have a full working knowledge of English, the official language of the course, with proven drafting and oral communication abilities in this language.

Instructions on completing and submitting applications

Candidates will be contacted to complete an online application. Applications must be submitted in English and must include the following four documents:

(a) An application form (P166.2014.AF.2);

(b) A detailed curriculum vitae;

(c) A letter of motivation stating (i) how the applicant in the discharge of his/her professional duties contributes to policy design and implementation in the areas of trade, investment or finance; (ii) how the course will contribute to enhancing his/her professional and personal development; (iii) why the applicant feels he/she should be chosen to attend this course;

(d) A short paper answering question No. 1 and any one of the other two questions in the course syllabus (one A4 page only per question with a maximum of 250 words) relevant to his/her national context.

Nominations should:

(a) Be submitted to UNCTAD through the permanent mission accredited to the United Nations Office at Geneva and should contain the candidates’ names and e-mail addresses;

(b) Be addressed to:

Mr. Mohan Panicker, Project Coordinator
Knowledge Sharing, Training and Capacity Development Branch,
Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Fax.: +41 22 917 0050
E-mail: mohan.panicker@unctad.org;

(c) Names and e-mail addresses must reach the UNCTAD secretariat by 8 August 2014;

(d) Nominated candidates will be contacted to complete an online application by 8 August 2014. It is therefore advisable that names and e-mail addresses are communicated as soon as possible.