NOTIFICATION

Thirty-first Regional Course on Key Issues on the International Economic Agenda

University of Mauritius, 9–27 February 2015

The UNCTAD secretariat is pleased to announce that the next regional course on key issues on the international economic agenda, which is designed for African economies in transition, will be hosted by the University of Mauritius with the support of the Mauritian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, from 9 to 27 February 2015.

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

- To enhance understanding of the relationship between these areas and their link to country development strategies
- To 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 course syllabus will draw on the perspective of UNCTAD, its analytical work and lessons learned from its technical cooperation activities and will be enriched by the competence and expertise of representatives of the Economic Commission for Africa and of national experts in these areas of work.

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

The course will be given in English, with simultaneous interpretation into French. Training materials will be made available in English, with some documentation in French. Candidates are expected to have a full working knowledge of English.

For the sake of efficiency, the application process has been improved to include two steps. First, UNCTAD member States of Africa are invited to present the names and e-mail addresses of qualified candidates by 7 November 2014 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 also be completed by 7 November 2014. It is therefore advisable that the names and e-mail addresses of candidates be submitted as soon as possible to allow sufficient time for them to submit their applications through the online process. Member States or successful candidates will be notified of the decision of the UNCTAD selection committee by 20 November 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 will provide hotel accommodation for all participants. Participants will also receive sufficient funds to cover daily meals and miscellaneous expenses. Travel expenses covering the least costly fare will be provided for participants from least developed countries. All selected participants will be responsible for obtaining valid visas to travel to Mauritius prior to their arrival.

An outline of the course syllabus, which provides a detailed list of topics, learning objectives and questions to answer (P166.2014.TS.3) and the application guidelines (P166.2014.AG.3) are attached.

For additional information, please contact the Knowledge 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 September 2014
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Course Syllabus

This syllabus gives a short overview of the content of the different modules. For each module, participants from Africa who are selected to attend the course will be expected to gather information on a number of issues before the beginning of the course so they can contribute to discussions on the different modules by sharing 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 principal objectives of the module are as follows:

- To examine global economic dynamics and the attendant challenges faced by developing and transition economies, including those challenges related to macroeconomic and financial trends, trade and inclusive growth
- To enhance participants’ understanding of current economic debate and what this implies for policymakers in developing and transition economies
- 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 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 and domestic enterprises.

This 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 and transnational corporations allowing developing countries to benefit from global trading opportunities. In addition, the need to promote entrepreneurship and strengthen the local supply capacity to sustain competitiveness in the long term will be explored. The focus of the module is on the policies, institutions and strategies that can best attract FDI and embed it in host economies, as well as on policies aimed at 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, linkages between transnational corporations and small and medium-sized enterprises, and local enterprise development. Participants will also have a firm grasp of global and regional 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 discuss the experiences of other regions with STI policies and strategies. The linkages between STI, trade, investment and industrial policies will also be discussed.

There is broad 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 and transition economies.

Expected outcome: By the end of this module, participants will have some understanding of the following points:

- The role that science, technology and innovation can play in stimulating economic and social development
- The concept of innovation systems
- How national policies can be used to build STI capabilities and promote technological progress and innovation
- The challenges faced by countries with economies in transition and developing countries 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, with an emphasis on African economies.

Participants will discuss trade facilitation measures as contained in the recently agreed World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade Facilitation, as well as regional initiatives. Participants will gather the elements required to develop a national trade facilitation implementation plan and establish a national institutional framework, such as the national trade facilitation committees, as required under article 13 of the Agreement.
The module will also look at the role of international transport for the trade competitiveness of countries, infrastructure and 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 Agreement and increasingly included in regional trade agreements. In this context, the module will elaborate on the needs and priorities of countries with respect to capacity-building and technical assistance requirements as part of the 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: The perspective of developing countries in Africa

Objectives:

- To 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;

- To review the state of play in multilateral trade negotiations under the Doha Round of international trade negotiations, as well as issues of particular relevance to developing countries in the region and policy options in that regard;

- To consider broader trade and trade-related policy reform issues in these countries’ efforts to achieve structural transformation and draw maximum development gains from the international trading system;

- To investigate ways and means to maximize the beneficial effects of trade agreements, for example 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.

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

Module 6. Simulation exercise on national policy objectives and multilateral trade negotiations

Objective: To understand the relationship between negotiations in trade in services in the context of a country's services negotiations at WTO and the wider policy context at the national level, participants will undertake a simulated consultation between national stakeholders regarding the country's possible commitments 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 provided below. All applicants must answer question 1. They will then have to answer either question 2 or 3. Please ensure that their responses take into account the national context with regard to economic development objectives. The reply to each question should not exceed 250 words.

Question 1 is compulsory and must therefore be answered by all applicants:

1. 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?

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Please choose one of the following two questions:

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?

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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 so, how? Make a brief description of the main challenges faced with respect to each of the three issues. If they are not part of your national economic development plans and strategies, please explain why.
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 course syllabus.

To be considered for nomination, candidates should meet the following requirements:

- 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.
- 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 course syllabus.
- Be in a position to use and disseminate the information and knowledge acquired during the course. In this context, it is highly desirable that participants remain in relevant positions for a sufficient length of time after completion of the course so that the skills and knowledge gained can be disseminated as widely as possible at their workplace.
- Have a full working knowledge of English, the official language of the course, with proven written and verbal communication skills.

Instructions for submitting applications online

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

- Application form
- Detailed curriculum vitae
- Letter of motivation stating:
  - How the applicant in the discharge of his or her professional duties contributes to policy design and implementation in the areas of trade, investment or finance
  - How the course will contribute to enhancing his or her professional and personal development
  - Why the applicant feels he or she should be chosen to attend this course
  - Short paper answering question 1 and one of the other two questions in the course syllabus relevant to his or her national context (not more than 250 words per question).

Nominations

- Nominations should be submitted to UNCTAD through the permanent mission accredited to the United Nations Office at Geneva and contain the candidates’ names and e-mail addresses.
- Nominations should be addressed to:
  - Mr. Mohan Panicker, Project Coordinator
  - Knowledge Development Branch
  - Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
  - Palais des Nations
  - CH-1211 Geneva 10
  - Fax: 41 22 917 0050
  - E-mail: mohan.panicker@unctad.org.

- Names and e-mail addresses must reach the UNCTAD secretariat by 7 November 2014.
- Nominated candidates will be contacted to complete an online application that must be completed by 7 November 2014. It is therefore advisable that names and e-mail addresses be communicated as soon as possible.