

# **Technical Assistance Services in Trade-Policy: A contribution to the discussion on capacity-building in the WTO**

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## FOREWORD

Over the last six years, bilateral donors and multilateral agencies, including the World Trade Organization (WTO) have been mobilising increasingly more, though still limited, means for technical co-operation programmes in the field of trade policy. Considering the magnitude of needs in developing countries, particularly as we move towards new trade talks, and the limited amount of resources at disposal, the effectiveness of these programmes in delivering tangible results is becoming an issue of utmost importance.

The purpose of this study is to provide a short overview of policies and procedures used by major multilateral agencies when formulating, implementing and assessing capacity building programmes in the field of trade policy. The objective is not to advocate any specific model of technical co-operation, but rather to pave the way for a much-needed international debate on trade policy related technical assistance (TA) by bringing to bear the experience of other organisations. With this in mind, the paper looks at institutional mechanisms provided by these agencies and presents the opinions of leading experts on capacity-building on the current state of such programmes, as well as future options. The study focuses on the WTO and, to a lesser extent, on other leading multilateral institutions in trade-related TA, such as the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Bank as well as relevant non-governmental initiatives.

The study was commissioned to Mr. Michel Kostecki, currently Director of the “Institut de l’Entreprise” of the University of Neuchâtel, who has been involved in trade-related technical co-operation programmes for many years. It was carried out through an extensive review of existing material and a series of in-depth interviews with international civil servants as well as a balanced group of experts from both developed and developing countries, including providers and beneficiaries of TA. ICTSD would like to wholeheartedly thank all these contributors for their time and the inestimable input they provided to this paper.

Soon after the beginning of the study in May 2000, the WTO embarked on a thorough review of its TA services. This review resulted, among other things, in a reorganisation of WTO technical cooperation, including the creation of a new cross division *Management Committee* to oversee the strategy, priority setting and review of spending priorities; a *Technical Cooperation Audit* responsible for monitoring and evaluation; and a *WTO Training Institute* providing trade policy courses, training of trainers, distance learning services and cooperation with universities and other institutions. A board made up of international organisations (UNCTAD, ITC, World Bank) and academics advises the institute and monitors its training activities. More recently, WTO Members endorsed, as part of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, a “New Strategy for WTO Technical Cooperation for Capacity Building, Growth and Integration”, and instructed the Secretariat to develop a plan to ensure long-term funding.

In spite of these new developments, the substantial analysis provided in this paper remains accurate and the need for an international debate on the effectiveness of trade policy related technical co-operation, more pressing than ever. With the launch of a new round of trade negotiations in Doha, strengthening developing countries’ capacity to implement existing agreement, as well as to formulate trade policy and participate in negotiations is not only crucial, but might also become a “deal maker/breaker”. While these needs have been recognised explicitly in different paragraphs of the Doha Declaration (see Annex VI), views still diverge on the effectiveness of TA services in delivering tangible results and responding to specific needs expressed by developing countries.

In this context, knowledge of the various TA schemes provided by key multilateral agencies, their processes and their assessment by independent experts can help move the debate forward and contribute to the establishment of better practices and instruments in the interest of sustainable development as a superior public goal.

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## INTRODUCTION

The collective and individual ability to make policy choices, negotiate, collaborate, manage conflicts and implement trade rules is necessary to obtain full benefits from a country's membership in the WTO or other trading arrangements. Technical assistance (TA) responds to these needs. It helps, for instance, an Algerian diplomat to negotiate his country's WTO accession, an Indonesian civil servant to prepare a legislative proposal on copyrights, or a Mali exporter to understand business implications of the WTO Agreement on Textiles.

Over the last five years, and particularly in the aftermath of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle in 1999, governments and multilateral agencies, including the WTO, have spent millions of dollars on trade-related TA projects. The funds seem impressive, but are they enough? Is the money wisely spent? Because of the growing needs and the limited amount of resources at disposal, the effectiveness of technical assistance programmes in delivering tangible results has become an issue of utmost importance.

Technical assistance has been extensively discussed in specialised fora. What is at stake? What should be done? What is the 'best practice' in trade-related technical assistance? As in many areas, progress is not a matter of changing inadequate or 'wrong' approaches, but of changing approaches and ideas, which may have been perfectly right but are now obsolete.

There is no shortage of documents and studies dealing with technical assistance in trade policy (see annotated bibliography). The WTO itself is currently rethinking its TA strategy, as are several other organisations. This paper offers a complementary perspective based on interviews with 30 specialists in the area. It begins with an overview of recent trends and needs for technical assistance. It examines processes through which such services are designed, implemented and assessed and reports on expert views on how things could be improved. Annex I provides a comparative table of trade-related technical assistance by major agencies, while Annexes II, III and IV offer an overview of TA projects by the WTO, the ITC, UNCTAD and the World Bank, as well as relevant initiatives by civil society actors. The research methodology is presented in Annex V, and Annex VI contains the Doha Ministerial Declaration (14 November 2001)

### 1. THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

'Capacity-building', 'capacity development', 'technical co-operation' and 'institution-building' are fashionable terms in development aid circles. But what do they mean, and how do they relate to the current trends in professional training, consulting and aid? This study starts by considering the basic concepts of technical assistance in trade policy. What does it do and what should it do, and what approaches, resources and processes are most desirable?

#### 1.1. The Service of Technical Assistance

Trade-related technical assistance covers assistance in trade promotion and in trade policy. This study centres on the latter field since that is the focus of the WTO's TA activities.

Technical assistance is a service. In trade policy, such a service may be defined as an activity or a performance, which enhances know-how, improves networks and increases the ability to conduct optimal trade policies. As described in Table 1, technical assistance comes in many different forms, which are important in the creation of value in the delivery process.

**Table 1**  
**The Distinctive Features of Technical Assistance and Their Implications**

| <i>Types of Technical Assistance</i>                            | <i>Implications</i>  |
|---|--|
| Service   | Providers, beneficiaries and donors are involved in creating value and thus share the responsibility for the programme's success.                              |
| Public service  | The beneficiary does not pay for the service, which means that 'local ownership' may be a critical issue.  |
| 'High touch' service  | The provider-beneficiary relationship is an important determinant of the programme's quality.  |
| International service   | TA has to fit into a larger context of foreign aid activities. Inter-cultural aspects may be important.  |
| A service largely (but not exclusively) targeted at governments | Particularities of administrative tradition, political systems and motivation of public institutions (and their employees) should be taken into consideration. |

Technical assistance builds human capacity through training, improved research skills, meeting demands of policy-makers for studies or negotiating proposals and special expertise. This assistance involves donors, service providers, policy-makers and public administration, the business community, mass media and civil society. It delivers such services as: (i) seminars, workshops, courses and technical missions, (ii) manuals, guides, documents, data, software and hardware, (iii) assistance to on-line networks to facilitate access to information and dialogue, (iv) research and consulting (v) creation of goodwill (vi) support in management of trade policy schemes and institutions, and (vii) project administration. It requires teamwork to respond to meet this diversity of needs, as well as co-operation among providers to optimise value through the creation of synergies and economies of scale.

The areas covered by the WTO Secretariat are listed in Table 2 and are more extensively described in Annex II.

**Table 2**  
**Areas Covered by the Technical Co-operation Activities of the WTO Secretariat**

| <i>WTO Agreements</i>  | <i>Special Requirements and Publics</i>   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreements on Agriculture and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures</li> <li>• General Agreement on Trade in Services</li> <li>• Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs)</li> <li>• Market access issues</li> <li>• Technical barriers to trade</li> <li>• Rules</li> <li>• WTO institutional matters</li> </ul> | Assistance related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessions</li> <li>• Notifications</li> <li>• Trade policy reviews</li> <li>• Dispute settlement</li> <li>• WTO Reference Centres</li> <li>• University courses</li> <li>• Trade Policy Courses</li> <li>• Joint Programmes: the Integrated Framework and the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme for selected African and Least-Developed Countries (JITAP).</li> </ul> |

Source: Listing provided by the WTO Secretariat for the purpose of this study; see Annex II for further details.

## 1.2. The Changing Nature of Technical Assistance

The approach to technical assistance has evolved in stages, as presented in Table 3. After a timid start in the 1940s and 1950s (stage 1), technical co-operation programmes provided by international and national agencies became more structured, formal and systematic in the 1960s (stage 2). The nature and scope of technical assistance continued to develop rapidly in the 1980s and the 1990s under the pressure of changing attitudes towards international aid, calls for more ‘customer-orientation’, fascination with networks and markets for public services. The introduction of personal computers and the Internet in some ways liberated TA activities from central structures. New terms were introduced in order to respond to that change and to designate innovative spirit and new models. In recent bureaucratic jargon, the cumbersome phrases ‘capacity-building’ or ‘capacity development’ have come into vogue in an effort to make the recipients feel that the assistance is more beneficiary-oriented.

**Table 3**  
**The Changing Focus of Technical Assistance in Trade Policy**

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Stage 1:</b><br/><b>Ad hoc technical assistance.</b> Focus on single ad hoc missions. TA is often provided as a hit-and run-activity, frequently with paternalistic overtones. The emphasis is on transferring solutions with the underlying assumption that low-income countries should follow the development model of industrialised economies (1945 – late 1950s).</p>  |
| <p><b>Stage 2:</b><br/><b>Technical co-operation.</b> TA acquires more conceptual and comprehensive underpinnings. It is conceived as an integral part of international development aid and delivered by specialised agencies. Trade-related TA activities are initiated or reinforced by the GATT, UNCTAD, the ITC, the World Bank, OECD and national agencies, as well as NGOs. The time scale is usually short and beneficiaries have limited involvement in programme design. Quality is mainly evaluated by the providers themselves, if at all.</p>   |
| <p><b>Stage 3:</b><br/><b>‘Capacity-building’</b> gains ground as an innovative concept and TA strategies are developed from the broader perspective of a sustainable development. The approach is based on the assumption that technical assistance should be performed by networks involving a variety of actors, all of whom contribute skills and resources to the process, which relies on partnership with the beneficiaries and shared experience rather than ‘transferring solutions’. Beneficiary-orientation and long-term programmes are given higher priority. Quality is of concern to TA providers, beneficiaries and donors.</p> |

The WTO is currently evolving from the second stage listed above to the third. This means that traditional patterns of thinking are breaking down and that new attitudes, skills and procedures are needed to adjust to the change. The most significant characteristics of the ‘capacity-building’ approach are discussed below.

## 1.3. From Technical Co-operation to Capacity-building

The most important feature of the capacity-building model is probably ownership by the beneficiary. Capacity-building is based on a partnership where the whole is thought to be greater than the sum of the individual parts. In contrast to the vertical set-ups that were formally built for control, more attention is now paid to interaction in the assistance process and the creation of networks. This evolution is also part of a paradigm shift: technical assistance agencies are unfettering themselves from mechanical patterns and paternalism, and try to work with the organic concepts and networks more appropriate for our times. The main features of that shift are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**Technical Assistance in Trade Policy: Capacity-building vs. Traditional Approach**

| <i>Traditional Approach</i>  | <i>Capacity-building</i>  |
|--|---|
| The service is essentially conceived by the provider with a low degree of diversification and responsiveness to the beneficiary's particular needs.        | The service is beneficiary-driven and adjusted to the specific needs of the countries and publics concerned. Monitoring the programme's responsiveness to recipient needs is encouraged.  |
| Emphasis on transferring solutions from developed to developing countries.   | Building capabilities, i.e. creation of local skills, relationships and institutions capable of dealing with trade policy matters in developing countries.  |
| Focus on trade issues and little concern for implications of trade policy for environment, social protection or cultural identity.                         | Trade issues are analysed from the broader perspective of sustainable development.  |
| Beneficiaries essentially include governments and semi-public industry associations.   | Beneficiaries comprise governmental agencies, the private sector, academic institutions and members of civil society.   |
| Programmes are mainly conceived as single agency services. There is little scope for partnership. Limited use of human resources in the recipient country. | Multi-provider service. Partnerships with local institutions and beneficiaries are encouraged to exploit synergies and provide value. Local human resources are used whenever possible.   |
| The service offer is segmented essentially on the basis of location i.e. on a regional, sub-regional or national level.                                    | The service offer depends less on geography and is tailored according to the beneficiaries' interests, similar approaches in problem solving, scope for coalition building, etc. Distance learning and the Internet are extensively used.               |
| Emphasis on discretionary events. The provider's time horizon is limited and follow-up is not fully integrated into the programme.                         | Emphasis on relationships and durable interaction. Programmes are expected to develop progressively and to 'grow like a tree'.  |
| Little attention is paid to cross-cultural differences and to psychological or social distance between beneficiaries and providers.                        | Cross-cultural differences are recognised and integrated into the service concept. Teamwork is based on trust and involves both beneficiaries and providers. Efforts are made to reduce cultural and social distance between partners and participants. |
| Too much administration and not enough management. Bureaucratic imperatives are often given priority over beneficiary-orientation.                         | Pressure to reduce bureaucracy. Flexibility and enthusiasm are considered essential ingredients of success. Tensions between bureaucratic rules and common sense are arbitrated in a manner that benefits the overall programme objectives.             |

Efforts to incorporate the guiding principles of 'capacity-building' require a sense of experimentation, flexibility and openness to learning. In particular, it is necessary to revisit the assumptions, objectives and methodologies of TA programmes in order to seek a greater range of partnership across organisational boundaries, and to modify the organisational structure and culture of the institutions involved. Such things are easy to say, but difficult to do in practice.

## **2. THE NEEDS OF TRADE-RELATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The shift in scope and nature of technical assistance is due to the developments in the trading system, increased involvement of business and civil society in trade policy-making and a growing burden of regulation and compliance. What is the extent of that change and what is its challenge for beneficiaries, donors and providers?

### **2.1. Complexity**

WTO rules and principles establish a framework in which multilateral exchanges of goods, services and intellectual property take place. The WTO, which builds upon the old GATT, has developed into a system of great complexity. Although at the beginning essentially limited to

a tariff arrangement, over time the multilateral trading system has increasingly focused on non-tariff trade barriers and domestic policies with an impact on trade. There was a saying in the old GATT that when in doubt about the rules or procedures of the trading system you could always ask Dr Ake Lindèn, the chief legal council 'who knew everything'. No such person exists in the WTO Secretariat today. The Uruguay Round alone produced above 10'000 pages of documents and proposals, and resulted in some 24 new or revised trade agreements, as well as thousands of items in the WTO schedules of concessions.

Trade administrations in developing and transition economies are particularly affected by such complexity. Qualified personnel is not easily available and experience is lacking. Many good and ambitious people prefer the private sector, and information processing implies costs that low-income countries cannot easily afford. Return on effort is rarely justified for small or very poor economies. Technical assistance is needed to reduce transaction costs of WTO participation and to provide appropriate training and institution-building.

## 2.2 Implementation of the Single Undertaking

In contrast to the earlier series of multilateral trade negotiations, the Uruguay Round was a single undertaking. It implied that every country wishing to become a WTO Member had to sign on to virtually all WTO Agreements. The formula has proven particularly burdensome for developing nations, which lack the resources and the necessary institutional capacity to implement the new commitments, many of which are still being translated into domestic law. Indeed, implementation has become one of the most critical dimensions in the WTO, and technical assistance is seen as the main means to address developing countries' difficulties in this area. The numerous notification requirements of WTO Agreements impose another burden. Here, too, TA support is essential, especially to assist least-developed Members.

Promises of technical assistance and training were generously made but (unlike developing countries' commitments under the single undertaking) there was no firm obligation to implement them, and the technical assistance that was effectively offered was less generous than official speeches let understand. The integration of China, Russia and other emerging economies into the multilateral trading system creates an even greater need for technical assistance over the next two decades or so.

### **Box 1** **Technical Co-operation and Intellectual Property**

The Uruguay Round resulted in an ambitious set of rules in the area of intellectual property and many implementation problems arose in the context of the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs). Conceiving an intellectual property law that is relevant for the economy of a developing country and consistent with WTO rules is not an easy task; simply copying the model in place in a developed country will not do. The type of intellectual property that needs to be protected varies across countries, as does institutional capacity. Rather than develop a patent office along OECD lines it may be more appropriate to introduce mechanisms to protect the products of indigenous culture, such as music or crafts (Hoekman, Kosteci, 2001). How to do this in a most optimal manner requires research and trial and error experience. A review of three World Bank projects on intellectual property concluded that there was a considerable range of required reforms: improving administration (e.g., capacity to review applications, including computerised information systems and staff training), preparing new legislation (e.g., to extend intellectual property protection to plant varieties) and strengthening enforcement. The associated costs ranged from US\$4 million (for training only) to more than US\$30 million. In all three cases the projects addressed only a subset of the intellectual property issues that rose in the WTO context (Finger and Schuler, 2000).

### 2.3. The Importance of Being Active in the WTO Network

The WTO is essentially a network organisation. The WTO Secretariat may be seen as the hub of a very large and dispersed network comprised of trade diplomats in Geneva, officials based in capitals, and business and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that seek to push their governments to safeguard their interests at the multilateral WTO forum.

Before the Uruguay Round, the GATT essentially focused on market access – its function was to harness the dynamics of reciprocal tariff concessions for the global good. Once the trade negotiations focused on rules, especially domestic policy and regulations, it became more difficult to make deals in the context of a single issue. Due to the ‘single undertaking’ approach of the Uruguay Round, negotiators needed to come up with a package that ensured gains for all players, including developing countries. As a result, the latter had to become proactive in the WTO, and some of them did. An indicator of such intensified participation is submissions made to WTO bodies. For example, in the run-up to the Seattle ministerial meeting alone, developing countries put forward more than 100 proposals in areas ranging from market access to new issues such as competition and investment policy (WTO, 2000). Developing country governments have also begun to use multilateral procedures to settle disputes much more frequently than in the past.

However, while countries such as Brazil, Egypt, India, Thailand or Pakistan are very active, many least-developed Members, especially African countries, are not represented in Geneva and do not participate in the WTO. This explains why no Sub-Saharan countries (other than South Africa) appear in the list of dispute settlement cases. Several initiatives have been set up to address these problems (see Boxes 2 and 3). Even when countries do have a delegation at the WTO, the deliberations, consultations and TA needs in the area of trade policy often do not attract much attention in capitals. Representatives are left to operate without instructions and the positions taken by delegations do not always reflect the reality in their home country. A former delegate of one of the emerging economies noted: ‘During the entire duration of the Uruguay Round, our Geneva-based WTO team received *two* instructions from our capital.’

#### Box 2

##### Advisory Centre on WTO Law

<http://www.acwl.ch/>

The Advisory Centre on WTO Law, established during the 1999 Seattle Ministerial Conference, is situated in Geneva as an international organisation, independent from the WTO. Under the leadership of its Executive Director Frieder Roessler, the Centre will provide legal counselling on WTO law matters to developing country and economy-in-transition Members of the Centre and all least developed countries (LDCs). It will also provide legal support throughout dispute settlement proceedings in the WTO. The Centre thus functions essentially as a law office specialised in WTO law. In addition, the Centre will offer training on WTO jurisprudence on a regular basis. Intern and trainee programmes will be developed for government officials from developing country Members and LDCs.

The Centre - launched on 17 July and officially opened on 5 October 2001- has a General Assembly, a Management Board and an Executive Director. The General Assembly, composed of the representatives of the Members and the LDCs, meets at least twice a year to oversee the functioning of the Centre and to adopt the annual budget. The Management Board takes the decisions necessary to ensure an efficient and effective operation of the Centre and reports to the General Assembly. The Board consists of four members, serving in their personal capacity and selected on the basis of their professional qualifications, a representative from the LDCs and the Executive Director *ex officio*. The Executive Director represents the Centre externally, appoints staff and external consultants, and manages the day-to-day operations.

**Box 3****The Agency for International Trade Information and Co-operation (AITIC)**

Measures taken by Switzerland in the field of assistance to trade policy focus, on one hand, on support for poorer developing countries and countries in transition in Geneva and, on the other hand, on support for such countries in their capitals (about USD 4.2 million a year are spent on trade policy assistance out of USD 13.3 million for all trade-related technical co-operation). The main programme element with a 'Geneva-focus' is the financing of the Agency for International Trade Information and Co-operation (AITIC). The AITIC's goal is to help delegates of less-advantaged countries in Geneva (or neighbouring capitals) through personalised assistance on trade-related issues with a view to enable them to take a more active part in the work of the WTO and other trade-related institutions established in Geneva. The Swiss government also co-finances different programmes of the Geneva-based Graduate Institute for International Studies, which aims to create an interface between academics and trade negotiators on WTO-related issues, as well as courses on 'International Economic Law, Dispute Settlement and International Organisations' at the Academy of International Economic Law and Dispute Settlement of the University of Geneva.

**2.4. Accession Negotiations Are a Cumbersome Process**

The WTO's complex and cumbersome accession procedures further intensify the need for TA services. There were 142 Members of the WTO in October 2001, with another 29 seeking accession. Most of those in the accession queue are developing and transition economies, which need assistance with the complicated process. Another important challenge confronting the WTO in the near future is to ensure that expansion of the membership does not erode the rules of the system through the lack of implementation.

**2.5. Involving More Actors in Decision-making**

As a result of the Uruguay Round, developing countries must revise or adopt new legislation, train judges in the application of WTO-compatible rules, and ensure that customs and other enforcement authorities understand their country's WTO commitments and have the capacity to apply them. Trade policy on the national level is formulated by an ensemble of government departments and agencies interacting with consultative bodies, interest groups and experts providing assistance through research and analysis. As many developing and transition economies seek to reinforce their institutions in a pluralistic society, their decision-making processes in the area of trade policy are increasingly based on effective relationships with many audiences or civil society. Effective decision-making depends on analytical input into the process. Given the absence of resources in many developing country trade ministries, it is important to involve local expertise in think tanks and academic institutions in preparing positions on issues.

Encouraging greater interaction between the various communities in developing countries and government agencies is an objective of a number of projects supported by multilateral organisations and national institutions (see Box 4). Greater efforts are also required to ensure that the agenda of future multilateral trade negotiations embodies items that are of vital interest to developing countries, recognising that interests will vary across countries. Research and analysis should be carried out on what should be pursued in trade negotiations (Tekere, 2000).

**Box 4**  
**Centre for Trade Policy and Law**  
<http://www.carleton.ca/ctpl/>

The Canadian Centre for Trade Policy and Law (CTPL) was established in 1989 to promote public understanding of trade and investment policy issues, conduct independent analysis and research on trade policy and legal issues, and foster the development of trade policy professionals and practitioners. CTPL is jointly sponsored by The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University, and the Faculty of Law (Common Law and Civil Law) at the University of Ottawa. Supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and other funding agencies, the Centre provides public and private sector specialists in developing countries and transition economies with expert advice and specialised training on a number of international economic and trade policy and legal issues.

**Monitoring the Impacts of the Uruguay Round in Bangladesh**

Funded by CIDA, this is a three-year project designed to improve the trade policy analytical capacity in Bangladesh (September 1999 – December 2002). CTPL is collaborating with the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a research institute and think-tank in Dhaka, in order to provide strategic advice and training and analysis in the area of WTO implementation issues and emerging multilateral and regional trade issues. The project consists of four main components: development of infrastructure; research and analysis; training of human resources; and publication of research results. To a large extent, the development of CPD's infrastructure capacity (trade information resources and Internet systems) will be the platform from which the research and analytical activities will follow. In terms of impact, the project is expected to build CPD's capacity for independent economic analysis, to provide strategic advice to policy makers in Bangladesh, strengthen dialogue between government, civil society and the private sector on trade issues, and to facilitate the adjustment of Bangladesh to the WTO trade regime. It should significantly improve the analysis, formulation and implementation of appropriate trade policies in Bangladesh so as to optimise the country's participation in the multilateral trading system.

In brief, the multilateral trading system cannot function properly without adequate technical assistance. The needs are enormous and they are likely to grow. What was sufficient for the old GATT is not enough for the WTO with its enlarged scope of issues, complex negotiations and a trend towards a quasi-universal membership. The needs have intensified and technical assistance should be given resources and a solid institutional footing in order to respond to that challenge.

### **3. WHAT STRATEGY FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

All multilateral agencies recognise that strategy formulation is critical for the success of TA activities. The WTO has to develop a strategy on technical assistance, starting with the goals, the means and the priorities. It should also acknowledge its limitations in this field, and define its position with respect to other providers of trade policy-related technical assistance.

#### **3.1. Commitments of Donor Countries**

The WTO donor countries decide the principles on which they operate and the amount of funding that they are ready to offer for various activities. It is an increasingly popular view that developed trading nations should reinforce their support for trade-related TA and that firm commitments in that area are required. Several experts suggest that, in retrospect, it was a mistake not to include firm TA commitments in the WTO Agreements (see Box 5). As one expert noted: *Most of the WTO provisions calling for special and differential (S&D) treatment and technical assistance are 'best endeavour' promises which are not binding on donor countries. No disputes can be initiated by a developing nation on the basis of non-delivery of technical assistance promises. The same cannot be said of the commitments that developing*

*countries made – these are binding. In many cases transition periods were negotiated, but implementation of commitments was not made conditional on obtaining adequate financial and technical assistance.*

**Box 5**  
**Technical Assistance Commitments in WTO Agreements**

In the run-up to the Seattle ministerial meeting, which virtually coincided with the end of the five-year transition periods granted to developing countries under many key Agreements, it became clear that many developing countries were not in position to implement their obligations with regard to customs valuation, standards, investment rules or intellectual property protection (Hoekman, Kostecki, 2001). In that context, three experts interviewed for this study said that implementation of Agreements that require significant investment in ‘bricks and mortar’ and training should be made conditional on the provision of assistance by donor countries. One way to make this linkage formal would be to seek agreement that no legal basis for a WTO dispute exists if adequate assistance has not been provided for implementation.

Donors used to channel support for trade-related technical assistance mainly through governmental organisations – multilateral, regional and national. This approach is being progressively abandoned. On the provider side, an emerging market for trade-related TA comprises both governmental institutions and a wide range of NGOs, research institutes, foundations and consulting and training firms. Among the beneficiaries are governmental agencies, business associations and members of civil society, mass media and the like.

There also is a converging set of principles on which the major TA donors seem to agree. Support is given to encourage outward-orientation and markets, enhanced competitiveness and private sector growth within developing countries. Donors favour a comprehensive approach (integrating trade policy in wider macro-economic and social objectives) with tailor-made offers corresponding to specific needs and based on partner country ownership. Finally, they prefer capacity-building to aid-dependence and want higher standards in the management of programme design, resource allocation, implementation and follow-up.

### **3.2. Comparative Advantage of the WTO Secretariat**

While the TA projects of other multilateral agencies are broader in scope (see Table 5), the WTO’s current technical assistance focuses on implementation issues and has the reputation of being ‘neutral’. Emphasis is put on operational and institutional aspects, and on assistance in the areas of notifications, trade policy reviews and dispute settlement.

The relatively narrow scope of the WTO’s technical assistance seems justified. The economic theory of education makes a distinction between know-how that is specific to a given organisation (and of little value elsewhere) and know-how which has a universal market value. In-house training, the theory suggests, is particularly appropriate to transmit organisation-specific know-how, whereas arms-length training institutions do a better job in offering more general know-how. Since the WTO Secretariat has other priorities than training or consulting, there is a weak rationale for it to engage in a broader range of TA activities. As noted by one of the interviewees: *Technical co-operation is not a central activity of the WTO Secretariat. The WTO is a negotiating forum and the main priority of the Secretariat is to service negotiations, meetings and the dispute settlement process. Nevertheless, unique expertise is available in the Secretariat to deal with the implementation of WTO Agreements and advising developing countries on their rights and obligations in the WTO system. There is also an important option of hands-on training that the WTO Secretariat may provide.*

**Table 5**  
**The Main Features of Technical Assistance in Trade Policy**

| <i>Organisation</i> | <i>Main Features of Technical Assistance Activities</i>   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>WTO</b>          | Emphasis on the WTO Agreements. Neutral and factual information on the WTO rights and obligations of developing countries and progress in trade negotiations. Training and consulting to assist developing country Members in applying the Agreements and using the WTO mechanisms.   |
| <b>UNCTAD</b>       | Advocacy of developing country interests. Analysis of trade policy options in the larger context of economic development. Training and support in trade negotiations (not only the WTO) and implementation of commitments.  |
| <b>ITC</b>          | Emphasis on enterprise-oriented aspects of trade policy such as business implications of the WTO and regional Agreements, private sector involvement in trade policy and management of regulation-related issues by businesses. Hands-on training, assistance in data collection, analysis and institutional matters to favour private sector capability in trade policy-making, managing of regulatory issues in trade and compliance. |
| <b>World Bank</b>   | WTO issues are considered in a broader economic and social context of development and investment-related policies. Creation and dissemination of a core knowledge base that integrates relevant conceptual frameworks, practical tools and lessons of experience. Training and research, capacity-building and networking to link think tanks and trade policy makers.  |

**Table 6**  
**Expert Views on Pros and Cons of the WTO's In-house Technical Assistance Services**

| <i>Pros</i>   | <i>Cons</i>  |
|---|--|
| Proximity to WTO activities and negotiations. An opportunity for hands-on training in WTO.  | The bureaucratic nature of the WTO Secretariat with its hierarchical structure and pressures on the part of Member States may reduce efficiency, enthusiasm, creativity and the quality of the TA service. |
| Involvement of the WTO staff knowledgeable about institutional issues and familiar with the process of trade negotiations.  | The TA services are partly 'paralysed' by the requirement of neutrality.   |
| Experience of working with a multilateral and multicultural environment, neutrality.  | TA is a lower priority for the WTO Secretariat than servicing meetings.  |
| High professional standards of the staff in dealing with WTO-related issues, strong reputation of the WTO and less conflict of interest with the recipient country than in the case of bilateral aid. | 'WTO-centred' view of trade problems. Little know-how in the area of training and limited incentive for innovation and co-operation with other TA institutions. TA tends to be too dispersed.              |
| Easy access to decision-makers in Member countries. Prestige. Attention of mass media.  | Trade diplomats with little expertise in training and consulting formulate TA strategy (see page 14).  |

Source: Based on in-depth interviews with a group of experts (for the research methodology see Annex V).

Overall, the experts agreed that the Secretariat was making a valid and unique contribution by providing ‘instruction for WTO use’-type of technical assistance, but they also noted that in several areas the WTO’s TA activities might be reinforced: legal advice in dispute settlement; assistance and training for developing countries’ involvement in the WTO; and more trade policy courses. It was also suggested that the WTO should make additional efforts to adjust its TA to the modern vision of capacity-building. The most urgent changes concerned: a need for firm commitments on the part of donors to support TA activities; a more flexible and integrated institutional structure to increase strategic leadership; reduced bureaucracy; and a change in WTO culture in order to empower the TA staff to innovate and take initiative.

### 3.3. The Mission

The technical assistance mission of a multilateral agency is determined by its general goals. At the WTO, the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) and the Sub-committee on Least-developed Countries play a central role in the development of the TA strategy.

Certain experts, however, maintain that the CTD, whose members have conflicting interests and no expertise in TA is unable to come up with a ‘clear and consistent assistance strategy’. The CTD is composed of government representatives with know-how in trade policy matters but less familiarity with training or capacity-building. In addition, the leadership of the WTO Secretariat in introducing ideas and ‘structuring the Members thinking’ is limited by the fact that the staff includes very few recognised experts in professional training and consulting.

In practice, the technical assistance staff co-ordinates activities on an *ad hoc* basis, balancing the demands by countries and the WTO’s operational divisions. The programme lacks a clear strategy spelling out what WTO is really able to do with its limited resources and what third parties should deliver. Such a strategy is currently under elaboration, and many interviewees hoped that substantial improvements would take place. In this context, some experts commented on the need to streamline the procedures and to improve them. Well-defined technical assistance objectives would allow all concerned institutions to manage their activities correctly to fulfil those objectives. An expert noted, however, that the approach was not without danger: *We should not assume that a technical assistance programme is of good quality because it has clearly formulated its objectives and because it is well administered. Technical assistance is about people, and a successful programme is one that creates appropriate dynamics of social change, which is complex and necessarily subjective.*

#### Box 6

##### Establishing a Mission Statement for the WTO’s Technical Assistance

The usual steps of strategy formulation consist of the establishment of a mission or purpose statement, a strategic review (which involves an audit of partner institutions and/or competitors, benchmarking, analysis of beneficiary needs and of donor criteria) and internal analysis of the providing agency itself. The WTO’s technical assistance mission statement might explicitly reflect the institution’s underlying beliefs, values, aspirations and strategies with respect to capacity-building. As a focus on beneficiaries is pivotal to capacity-building, that orientation might be highlighted (i.e. instead of a product-oriented focus on seminars, training programmes and the like, the statement could reflect beneficiaries’ needs in language that communicates enthusiasm and entrepreneurship rather than reinforces a bureaucratic image). A mission statement would not have to comprise all the WTO or its Secretariat since it could well be developed for divisional level. An important advantage of such a statement would be to communicate the relationship aspect of capacity-building (enthusiasm and proximity between network members), which is usually lost in the dry and formal plans for technical co-operation activities.

### 3.4. Needs Assessment

Technical assistance agencies tend to offer ‘*what they have in stock*’ rather than what is needed (van Hove, Solignac-Lecomte, 1999). Nevertheless, there is a growing pressure to design and deliver programmes that respond to beneficiaries’ concerns, although processes and policies for assessing their needs vary considerably. Those differences are summarised below with respect to three major issues: How are needs assessed? Who assesses them? What needs are assessed and what are left out?

The ‘needs assessment’ may be conducted by the beneficiaries, the funding agency or third parties, or through an interactive process between all the parties concerned. The WTO Secretariat currently uses the interactive model, which involves its Technical Co-operation Division and the beneficiaries.

As explained by the WTO Secretariat, the needs for technical assistance ‘*are assessed in accordance with the basic principles of the technical assistance delivery programme, as approved by the Committee on Trade and Development*’ (WTO). The Secretariat perceives its technical assistance as ‘demand-driven’. It claims to exercise flexibility to tailor the technical activities to the needs and priorities of individual countries, groups of countries or regions. The approach is proactive in the sense that the Secretariat informs the potential beneficiaries of the existence, objectives and modes of delivery of its assistance. *A proactive approach is further encouraged by involving the beneficiaries in designing activities which encompass the identification of problems, difficulties and real needs* (WTO).

The instruments used for assessing needs may include surveys, interviews and interactive workshops. The needs assessment may also be based on consultations or unilateral decisions by the providers or donors. While at the time of writing the WTO’s technical assistance machinery made use of no special needs assessment mechanism (except for the IF and JITAP, see below), there is a growing awareness within the organisation that a needs assessment is a necessary element of an effective TA service, and new approaches and tools are currently being considered (WT/COMTD/W/72 and /73 and /74).

Most multilateral agencies claim to co-ordinate their needs assessments with other providers. The WTO Secretariat conducts periodic consultations with UNCTAD, the World Bank and the ITC. It also co-ordinates its activities with WIPO, ISO and certain donor countries. But are those co-ordination efforts fully effective? The experience of JITAP (the WTO/UNCTAD/ITC Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme for Selected African and Least-developed Countries) and the Integrated Framework (see Box 7) leaves room for some doubt (see also Annex II).

In practice, some experts consider that better monitoring mechanisms and transparency should be introduced and that an independent body of experts, rather than the provider, should perform the evaluation. An interviewee from a developing country noted: *Technical assistance is needed in certain areas and never satisfied. In other areas the needs are inflated because the provider is pushing for such events to take place. The recipient country agrees because there is no cost involved and at times because the local participants and organisers may get more per diem or may travel to attractive places for regional meetings.*

There were also comments suggesting that many of the TA programmes existed because they were offered and not because they were needed. An expert from transition economy said:

*There are too many seminars, conferences and workshops organised in our country by various international organisations, the EU, foreign institutions and our ministries. We have problems in finding participants willing to attend those meetings.*

#### **Box 7**

##### **The Integrated Framework**

<http://www.ldcs.org/>

The Integrated Framework (IF) for Trade-related Technical Assistance to LDCs was endorsed in October 1997 at the WTO High-level Meeting on Least-developed Countries' Trade Development. Under the framework, the ITC, the IMF, UNCTAD, UNDP, the World Bank and the WTO pooled their expertise in delivering trade-related technical assistance to LDCs. So far, this effort has involved the preparation of needs assessments by least-developed countries followed by so-called 'integrated responses' by the six agencies, indicating in which areas each could provide – or was providing – assistance. Gaps were to be filled by donor country pledges at 'round tables' that were to be organised for each of the LDCs by the agencies. Needs assessments were produced for 40 LDCs in the two-year period following the 1997 High-level Meeting. While the agencies' 'integrated responses' indicated little in the way of overlap or lack of co-ordination, they did reveal significant demand for additional assistance. Only five IF 'round tables' had been held by mid-2000, and in only one case (Uganda) did donors commit new funds (Hoekman, Kostecki 2001; for more information on JITAP and the IF, see Annex II.) Two additional round tables are scheduled for December 2001 (Mauritania) and June 2002 (Cambodia) under the new scheme agreed to by the heads of the international agencies in July 2001. These round tables will no longer focus exclusively on trade-related aspects, but will instead assess trade policy, trade-related technical assistance, and capacity-building needs in a broad development context.

##### **Need Assessment in Other Multilateral Organisations**

The International Trade Centre (ITC) bases its needs assessments on a two step approach: step one focuses on the identification of a country's needs and capacity gaps and step two on the programming of specific activities to implement the objectives identified in step one (ITC, 2000). In the case of the ITC's World Trade Net project the needs assessment is conducted by network members in each country with ITC support. The ITC provides general background information on WTO-related business needs. Priority needs of the business community in a specific country are discussed in national 'kick-off' meetings with all potential network members in that country (government officials, trade support and training providers and private sector organisations). Network members are expected to monitor WTO-related issues and their implications for business operations and development in their respective countries on a continuous basis, with feedback to the ITC and the other networks of the World Trade Net.

The World Bank uses rigorous needs assessment procedures in its trade-related TA programme. Moreover, the recipient country's team or the offices of the World Bank representatives help in identifying the problems to be addressed with technical assistance. The process of the needs assessment also comprises the statement of goals, indicates how the project's results will be evaluated and where to find additional information on the problem to be solved.

### **3.5. Programme Design**

Most agencies maintain a set of principles and procedures for defining the contents of their technical assistance programmes. A rather unique and well-defined methodological approach for programme design has recently been developed by the ITC. In the WTO, programme contents are defined on the basis of a three-year plan, which is adjusted each year following new requests. It is determined by the Secretariat on the basis of requests received from beneficiary countries, as well as the discussions in the Committee on Trade and Development. *'The main elements of the strategy which guide the programme definition are reflected in the Technical Cooperation Guidelines approved by the Committee on Trade and Development'*

(W/COMTD/8). Even though the three-year plan is the basic framework for implementing activities, a considerable part of technical assistance is designed and delivered on an *ad hoc* basis. The WTO argues that this flexibility is desirable because it permits to respond rapidly to unexpected requests and the urgency expressed by the beneficiaries.

A quick read through the technical co-operation plans suggests that beneficiary-orientation and relationship-building are not given high priority (see Box 8). In that context, several experts suggested that TA should be better adapted to the context of the recipient countries and that familiarity with the recipient's problems was often missing. Since each country is different and has different priorities, responses to needs have to be sequenced differently. The WTO's TA should involve more external and local experts (academics, training professionals) in order to gain in quality, relevance and dynamics. It should also multiply partnerships with numerous institutions and members of civil society to exploit synergies, diversify programmes and reduce costs.

**Box 8**  
**Expert Comments on TA Programme Design**

1. *The responsibility should lie, first of all, with beneficiary countries. These countries should see trade as a priority area for their development and they should include trade in their overall development projects.*
2. *We do not need any more seminars that explain to us that the WTO is good for humanity. It makes even less sense if such presentations are done by WTO staff that has to fly from far away to offer a few hours of general presentation. We feel that money for such events is poorly spent and that a better value would be provided by local experts or through teleconferencing.*
3. *When technical assistance is provided by a given organisation, it substantially predetermines the programme design. We need very specific training by experienced lawyers and businessmen, but these are difficult to get. The agency that approached us was clearly unable to offer such training. Nevertheless, the seminar took place, and companies deserted it immediately after the coffee break.*
4. *Technical assistance needs more partnerships with local institutions and a greater involvement of local experts in the programme delivery. Certain programmes of the World Bank and the ITC show how it may be done.*
5. *The WTO is not much concerned with cross-cultural differences in perception of such phenomena as globalisation, competition or free trade. Staff members of the WTO Secretariat have experience and personal sensibility to cross-cultural environment, yet as an institution, the Secretariat is very Anglo-Saxon in its approach and suffers from a syndrome of 'pensée unique'.*
6. *Little attention is paid to how humans with other experience, educational background and social status view things. The bad public image of the WTO is also due to the organisation's incapacity to communicate and to understand people on the other side of the fence.*
7. *'Best practice' of national machinery of trade policy-making, or capacity development for private sector involvement in trade policy are among the weaker aspects of WTO-related capacity-building. A sociological dimension is also totally forgotten and social implications of structural adjustment resulting from trade commitments are rarely discussed.*
8. *There is little concern for issues such as networking in trade diplomacy, management of the Geneva trade missions, the missions' relations with ministries, lobbying for trade policy and communication strategies (e.g. building the image of the WTO or promoting a specific trade policy option at home). Those problems are often discussed but little is offered in terms of more rigorous training or research.*

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

In theory, implementation is simple: you deliver the programme when, where, and how the recipients want it delivered. Making this happen is a complex matter indeed. Several issues of implementation and resource management are discussed below: financing of activities, selection of staff and participants, programme delivery and administration.

### 4.1. Financial Issues

At the WTO, the primary source of funding for technical co-operation is the organisation's regular budget (USD 81 million in 2001), which finances the Geneva-based trade policy courses and contains a budget line for technical co-operation missions to recipient countries (USD 16 million in 2001). More recently, extra-budgetary funding through Trust Funds (approaching USD 7 million) has become essential for meeting the growing needs of technical assistance, and a decision was reached on establishing a Global Trust Fund (GTF) to support technical assistance in the summer of 1999. OECD countries such as Switzerland, Norway and the Netherlands have contributed most to these funds. The allocation of resources among the potential beneficiaries of the WTO programmes is driven by identified needs and the orientations formulated by the CTD and, sometimes, by extra-budgetary donors. WTO staff is not permanently present in the field and their salaries are essentially paid from the WTO's regular budget.

There is little doubt that the TA activities of the WTO Secretariat are overstretched and under-financed and that the inadequacy of technical assistance funding has been a recurring concern both for the WTO Director-General and developing country delegations. Only the training division has sufficient budgetary resources (it limits itself to one product – the trade policy courses). The technical assistance division depends on extra-budgetary financing by a limited number of countries for a huge number of technical assistance activities. This encourages a hit-and-run approach, i.e. too much emphasis on *ad hoc* training seminars and not enough effort to ensure the sustainability of the capacities delivered.

With the creation of the GTF, an approach for managing Trust Funds was officially established. Partner institutions are encouraged to use their own or regionally available financial resources. The Asian Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank have contributed funds in the past, and are expected to provide financial support for activities in Asia and Africa in the future. Collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank and several sub-regional financial institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean has also been fruitful, and expressions of interest have already been received for future TA projects. The World Bank, UNDP, UNCTAD, the ITC, the WTO and other partner agencies have all contributed funds towards the Integrated Framework (Hoekman, KostECKI, 2001).

JITAP activities are financed from a common trust fund established between the three organisations involved (the WTO, UNCTAD and the ITC). Between seven and nine percent of total expenditures come from the regular budget, while the rest is financed through extra-budgetary resources. The ITC's technical co-operation programmes in WTO-related areas are funded by UNDP and voluntary contributions from individuals, governments and organisations (see also Box 9). Of the ITC's 1999–2000 budget of more than US\$40 million, over US\$1million was spent on WTO-related programmes.

According to some experts, the best way to make public service providers respond to the needs of their beneficiaries and ensure local ownership would be to ask beneficiary countries

or participants to contribute (at least partially) to the programme's funding or to put resources in the beneficiaries' hands and let them choose (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Such local financing (or the direct aid funding at the recipient's disposal) could cover a certain share (say 10-15 percent) of the programme's costs. That would force TA agencies to compete for contracts in developing countries. Putting resources in beneficiaries' hands may at first sound like a radical idea, but it is not. Such systems have been used for decades in professional training (vouchers, cash grants) and can also be found in foreign aid programmes.

#### Box 9

##### Funding of the ITC's World Tr@de World Net

<http://www.intracen.org/worldtradenet/>

The budget of the World Tr@de Net – the major trade policy-related project of the International Trade Centre – was in the range of US\$1 million in the financial year 2000/2001. This amount is also expected to be reached for the current financial year. Network participants contribute to the funding and members are encouraged to raise fees for their advisory and/or training services so as to become self-supportive in their activities. Counterpart organisations in World Tr@de Net countries contribute part of the local costs for training and information events and access to the necessary infrastructure for technical co-operation.

## 4.2. Management and Human Resources

WTO staff involved in technical assistance are mainly members of the Technical Co-operation Division, most of whom are dedicated civil servants. Our confidential interviews with 30 experts did not bring forth a single complaint concerning their professionalism, integrity and commitment, which is in itself a remarkable achievement. The programme staff is selected in close consultation with the national institution involved. The Technical Co-operation Division also consults with other Secretariat divisions before selecting personnel for particular activities, depending on the issues to be addressed and expertise needed. All Secretariat divisions concerned are involved in the selection process concerning curricula and background documentation. Unfortunately, the staff of the operational divisions has other priorities (serving committees, panels, etc.) and is not always available for TA assignments. One of the interviewed experts suggested: *The operational divisions of WTO should be strengthened. Staff with technical assistance as a main (not exclusive) task should be added to these divisions.* According to some experts, there is also a need for better human resource management. A training specialist made the following comment in this respect: *There is no modern human resource management within the WTO Secretariat, and staff members have little institutional incentive to engage in continuous education such as trainer's training or 'refreshment' university courses.*

One interviewee said: *Technical assistance and training are perceived as less important. The WTO can mobilise specialists on WTO Agreements, however, they are not always the best teachers nor are they necessarily familiar with a recipient country. Division chiefs are appointed because they are successful bureaucrats and not because they are experts in training.* Another expert noted: *I was able to participate in three WTO events in Asia and observed that the programmes were delivered by experienced and knowledgeable staff, but the speakers were boring, totally lacking enthusiasm and too descriptive. It might be partly due to the speakers' excessive neutrality, but lack of pedagogical skill also played a role.*

Finally, the WTO's technical assistance operates within the logic of a closed system. Co-operation with other agencies is limited. Consultants are rarely hired and there is an emphasis on in-house production. No doubt this affects the quality and the cost effectiveness of the service. In the words of one specialist: *A lot of money is spent on salaries of the permanent staff that largely deals with administration, but little funding is available to hire trainers or consultants. The fees offered to professional consultants are not competitive enough to get good people.*

### 4.3. Selection of Participants

Selection of participants is essential for the relevance and success of technical co-operation. As far as WTO seminars, workshops, technical missions, symposia, reference centres and conferences are concerned, the national institution involved usually selects the participants. The WTO Secretariat has little formal say in the selection process even though it is often consulted on the issue and provides advice and assistance in an informal manner. This may at times be a weakness since those who are directly involved in trade policy-making do not participate due to poor inter-agency co-ordination in the recipient government, time pressure, weak promotion or inappropriate selection criteria. *Targeting a group of beneficiaries is not the same thing as having the beneficiaries participate* (van Hove, Solignac-Lecomte, 1999).

An expert from a developing country noted: *It is not always easy to find willing participation in TA events. There is a lot of pressure within the government institutions concerned to have their staff participate in technical co-operation seminars, but after the morning session, many people disappear or junior employees are sent to fill the class.* Another interviewee pointed out that some of the civil servants attending training events were not primarily involved in trade policy-making. In addition, course participants may move on to jobs that are not trade-related, or quit the government for the private sector.

While national institutions choose the participants for in-country technical assistance events, the selection of participants for the WTO's Geneva-based training courses is conducted by the Secretariat on the basis of a list submitted by governments. It is not rare that three or four candidates are suggested for one place and the selection process tends to be rather competitive and seems to work well. However, one expert noted: *There is no formal monitoring mechanism to remain in contact with former WTO trainees. The WTO Secretariat simply does not know what its former trainees do, what their career pattern is and how the recruitment criteria should be modified to improve the impact.*

The ITC's World Tr@de Net project uses a future-oriented model of participant self-selection. The local networks are informal, based on personal interest and the wish to participate of individuals from relevant public and private sector organisations. To launch a network, an ITC counterpart organisation for previous WTO-related activities in a given country usually invites participants, with preference given to private sector organisations. The ITC also evaluates participants' work in the course of the programme, and the amount of ITC support for existing networks depends on the initiatives undertaken by the members of each network. Participants' commitment to and implementation of planned activities are thus directly reflected through the support that existing networks receive from the World Tr@de Net programme. Activities undertaken by each network are announced to all stakeholders through the World Tr@de Net website. The local business community is the ultimate judge of the relevance of the participants' work.

The World Bank attaches particular importance to the selection of participants and takes a pro-active stance in that matter. Certain World Bank projects maintain an evaluation scheme based on rewards for the best-performing participants and certification of course attendance.

#### 4.4. Programme Delivery

Ways to deliver the WTO's technical assistance are defined in the implementation modalities approved by the Committee on Trade and Development (WT/COMTD/29/Rev1). The relative importance of various delivery methods such as training courses, workshops, seminars, learning-by-doing, collaborative research and technical missions, is determined on the basis of needs and beneficiaries' preferences. Although the current approach tends to be rather traditional, the Secretariat is working on important improvements of its technical assistance activities (see the last annual evaluation report) and the discussion is likely to continue. Distance learning, computer-assisted and multimedia learning are not yet strong points, and new options such as e-learning on Intranet and the Internet are timidly used. Noticeable improvement in the quality and complexity of training took place in the WTO in the late 1990s and there seems to be awareness that further progress is desirable.

According to some experts, problem-based learning should be used rather than lectures and inspirational speeches. Computer-assisted learning and Internet-based networking should not be used to parrot presentations but to make the participants think, interact with each other, ask questions and form groups. The bricks-and-mortar trade policy courses in Geneva might be substantially shortened and focused on hands-on training and networking. Available funding could be used more effectively through Internet training, which would reach groups that are geographically dispersed and may even live in different time zones. System support might be provided from low-cost locations where high skills in economics, computer and the Internet are easily available, such as India, Brazil or another developing country.

Written materials form the most obvious kind of communication medium for beneficiaries of the WTO's technical assistance. The Technical Co-operation and Training Divisions prepare general and specialist training materials and *ad hoc* papers. The volume of material published in this form has increased enormously since the Uruguay Round and many documents are available on the Internet. The ITC, UNCTAD and the World Bank also do a useful job. One expert noted: *In my view, technical assistance providers should focus more on collecting existing materials in user-friendly data banks rather than producing the documentation themselves. Many excellent studies are available and, when needed, they might be simply supplemented by comments that reflect the official position.*

The WTO could involve a much broader range of participants in the programme to carry out research and develop training material and case studies. The World Bank and the ITC have conducted innovative work with seminar participants in recipient countries by initiating case writing and preparation of briefs.

Lectures and related types of face-to-face instruction seminars, round-table discussions or political events are another medium of in-service training. Greater use is now being made of seminars, working parties and other group activities that require a higher level of individual participation. Alongside these methods, case studies and simulation materials are beginning to be used more extensively. Among the advantages of such techniques are: the high degree of personal involvement they encourage; the 'realism' with which the problems are dealt; a

reduction in the didactic element (especially important in work with senior staff); and the opportunities for questions of theory and principle to arise in the discussion. Networks encourage multimedia approaches to in-service studies. Distance conference facilities have been progressively integrated in the TA programmes of the ITC, UNCTAD and the World Bank (see Box 10). The WTO is likely to make more frequent use of that option in the future.

**Box 10**  
**Distance Education at the ITC, UNCTAD and the World Bank**

Distance learning is now extending the work that TA agencies have long performed by bringing experts together for the discussion of issues of mutual concern. This method helps disseminate a wide range of new practices and ideas. Certain credit-bearing courses might be made available in co-operation with leading academic institutions through the Internet. Universities, colleges, training centres and organisations are now among the places where the trainers and TA specialists can pursue their education and seek to improve their qualifications.

Given the larger number of trainers on trade-related matters in developing countries there is also scope for locally based in-service education. As the current ITC programme World Tr@de Net shows, distance learning in 'training trainers' is a viable option. The September 2000 video-conferences on services for African and Asian countries have been a success. A new idea or principle may find more ready acceptance within a group of like-minded people than when it must make its way against the organisational conservatism of a particular institution. Department discussions, staff working parties and other forms of meetings provide opportunities for in-depth examination of matters of curriculum and organisation, facilitate younger members' access to the profession and help limit trainers' isolation. Organisations specialising in in-service education have the important merit of recognising that there is a gap between the ideas, techniques and approaches that trainers acquire as a result of their training and the application of these ideas and approaches within the trading system. With the growth of team teaching and interdisciplinary work, and the reinterpretation of the trainer's role as an organiser and manager of learning resources rather than a solo performer on the classroom stage. The importance of bridging this gap will become increasingly important for TA activities.

#### **4.5. Administration**

Administrative aspects are perceived as the main shortcomings of TA programmes both at the provider and the recipient end. Intergovernmental organisations spend too much (in some estimates considerably more than half of the total cost of activities) on administration and the salaries of those dealing essentially with administrative tasks. The problem – largely due to the complexity of rules and procedures currently in force in the United Nations system – is by no means specific to TA activities. An expert frustrated by the bureaucratic burden on the work of one of the agencies said: *Only 20 per cent of the staff are real professionals dealing with the content of the assistance work, and the remaining 80 percent are in administration and their purpose seems to be to make the task of the first 20 percent difficult*. A former head of one of the leading international technical assistance agencies also conceded that *'there was not much one could do given that the heavily bureaucratic UN rules and procedures were applicable.'*

## 5. OUTCOME EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

### 5.1. The Nature of the Evaluation Process

The evaluation process and the main evaluation criteria of the WTO's technical assistance are presented in a WTO document entitled *Framework of the Monitoring and Evaluating the WTO Technical Cooperation* (WT/COMTD/W/73). An annual evaluation report covering the main evaluation aspects is submitted to the CTD. The monitoring exercise is undertaken on a regular basis and reported systematically to senior management. The evaluation results are disseminated through monitoring and an evaluation database. They will also be disseminated through Intranet and the Internet in the near future. However, as of yet, there is no independent review process of the WTO technical assistance or training activities.

The areas of possible improvement and follow-up in technical assistance services are usually identified by TA administrators through discussions with the beneficiaries and WTO staff. A questionnaire is filled out at the end of each event in order to collect feedback from the participants on the relevance, the performance and the delivery methods of the TA. Neither the staff's nor the participants' performance is evaluated in the course of the programme.

A leading training specialist commented: *Evaluation is not a straightforward exercise in trade-related technical assistance activities. Technical assistance has multiple publics, objectives and constraints.*

Capacity-building programmes are evaluated on three main dimensions: (i) their technical utility (ii) their contribution to interactivity between the partners and individuals involved (at national and international levels) and (iii) the programmes' political acceptance. Several brief comments may be useful in that context. It was suggested that the development of closer relations between the various actors of the trade policy network be an important element included in the evaluation. Certain programmes provide a unique opportunity for the domestic actors dealing with trade policy matters to meet in a neutral forum and to discuss the main policy options. Numerous seminars provide a meeting point for trade policy actors from the region or enable participants to establish a relationship with experts in international organisations.

#### Box 11

##### Evaluation of the Integrated Framework

An independent review process exists for the Integrated Framework for Trade-related Assistance to Least-developed Countries (IF). A review released in June 2000 concluded that the programme had not been effective because needs assessments were not sufficiently embedded in the development plans and strategies of recipient countries, and because no additional funding had been allocated by donor countries to meet LDC needs. In response to the review, the six agencies proposed that much greater stress be placed on ensuring that trade policy, trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building needs are articulated in a broader development context to ensure that trade-related assistance needs are assessed alongside a country's other priorities. Insofar as trade concerns are identified as a priority area, the chances that the necessary resources will be made available to foster the necessary skills will increase, as will institutions and infrastructure for the effective integration of LDCs into the world economy. The agencies also proposed that donor support be sought for the creation of an Integrated Framework Trust Fund dedicated to helping LDCs to develop the necessary analytical and policy framework for mainstreaming trade into national development strategies, for developing programmes and projects, and for training and capacity-building (Hoekman, Kostecki, 2001).

Many consider the so-called ‘best practice’ approach a useful way to improve capacity-building programmes’ operational efficiency. However, best practice can be a double-edged sword. One of the experts consulted for this study pointed out that best practice was not a tool for strategy formulation because of the danger of its resulting in ‘too high a level of uniformity’: *Managers of technical co-operation must guard against transforming what is a purely process-related technique into the over-riding goal of their activities. When all institutions involved in capacity development try to play according to the same rules, there is less choice and less flexibility.* This is an interesting comment since the WTO’s technical assistance is often criticised for the lack of evaluation or formal needs assessment procedures. The herding instinct among the institutions concerned might be kept under control by ensuring a large diversity of markets for technical assistance.

Finally, one of the interviewed experts confronted with a pile of various evaluation reports, ‘good practices’ assessments, and handbooks for improvements, made the following general comment: *What I have learned over long years in government is that bureaucratic institutions, in spite of their strict rules, evaluation and red tape, pay little attention to what actually happens to the people that they are supposed to serve. Technical co-operation is not an exception to that rule.*

## 5.2. Follow-up

Even though there are no formal procedures in place, the WTO Secretariat claims that evaluation results are systematically taken into consideration and incorporated into future programmes or follow-up technical assistance activities. Possible follow-up events are often identified through discussions with the beneficiaries and the WTO’s TA staff.

There is no ongoing link among the participants and the Secretariat following the end of a technical co-operation programme. However, numerous contacts are maintained as needs arise. These are encouraged by the activities of the WTO Reference Centres and such communication tools as the WTO web page, e-mail and personal contacts with Secretariat staff. One expert noted: *Certain delegations push much more for follow-up events than others. At times I have a feeling that in the capitals concerned the number of seminars he/she is able to bring home also assesses the delegate’s performance.*

Information exchange and ongoing collaboration links are the most frequent form of follow-up. They are usually undertaken on an *ad hoc* basis and may be both formal and informal.

### Box 12 Evaluation in the World Tr@de Net

The evaluation questionnaire distributed by the ITC to the participants of its TA events encompasses, *inter alia*, an identification of possible follow-up for each activity. Follow-up activities are the essence and objective of the World Tr@de Net programme. As the programme is based on networking, continuous linkages are a prerequisite for its success. Collaborative links are encouraged in a number of ways: a website with relevant information, incentives such as invitations for Internet conferences, participation in regional meetings to exchange experiences, and/or workshops to introduce new WTO-related materials. Follow-up activities aim at strengthening local networks and support to their work. Forms of follow-up actions depend on the initiatives and the response of each national network. They include *ad hoc* communications, informal and formal exchange of information, ongoing collaboration links for future work and joint planning of activities.

Active networks are supported over a period of two to three years. A revolving fund has been created to ensure a minimum of continuing support for the provision of up-to-date information to network members.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The nature and scope of technical assistance in trade policy have been evolving rapidly due to the growing complexity of the world trading system and a greater involvement of developing countries and interest groups in trade policy-making. Technical assistance has also become a determining factor of developing countries' participation in the international trading regime and therefore is critical for a multilateral trade system supportive of development.

There was a time when the classic structure for technical co-operation seemed to work well. Donors were neither particularly difficult to attract nor too demanding, recipients were passive and captive; several large aid agencies dominated the offer. This formula made it possible for bureaucracies to come up with technical assistance projects that allowed TA providers to shield themselves from recipients, other agencies and even from segments of their own organisations. TA staff did what it was told; all decisions regarding what to do and how to do it were made by the 'top administration', whose directives filtered through numerous organisational layers. But, in the mid 1990s – thanks to the emergence of markets for assistance services, e-networks, a proactive civil society and pressures for rapid economic reforms – the situation radically changed.

In the new environment, the old TA concepts and institutional structures proved dysfunctional. Traditional patterns of thinking began to break down and technical assistance was increasingly seen as a service offered with donor support by a network of providers and recipients in developing countries engaged in an organic and long-term relationship. Innovative approaches based on ownership by the beneficiary, markets, multi-agency offers and networks gained ground. There now is a growing awareness that trade issues have to be seen in the broader perspective of sustainable development and that TA must be provided through partnerships and interactivity in order to build local skills and aptitudes rather than to 'transfer solutions'. 'Capacity-building', seen as a modern and effective approach, should rely on enthusiasm of an empowered staff free from bureaucratic constraints in order to provide beneficiary-oriented services.

This study suggests that technical assistance in trade policy should be given increased financial resources and that it should be based on an improved institutional footing. An option favoured by many is to make developing countries' implementation of WTO commitments conditional on obtaining adequate financial and technical assistance; indeed, in future trade negotiations developing countries are likely to insist on such a clause. There is also a growing awareness that the *modus operandi* of WTO-related technical assistance should be improved and based on the 'capacity-building' approach.

The WTO's technical co-operation is currently undergoing important changes, but will the reform be profound enough or will a piecemeal approach prevail? Is it realistic to assume that a true leadership in the beneficiary-oriented TA services may be provided by a 'neutral' WTO Secretariat whose main mission is to service meetings, support negotiations and dispute settlement? Obviously, the Secretariat has a major role to play in hands-on training of trade experts and diplomats; however, it is doubtful whether it can realistically become a driving force behind trade policy-related technical assistance. Capacity-building means that people come together as the occasion demands, rather than because a formal job description decrees it. In order to be effective, TA projects should increasingly be part of matrices, in which they could 'float'. A more streamlined structure is necessary to make the WTO's TA service work.

There is an emerging view that the WTO's technical assistance should rely on an arms-length organisation acting within terms of reference defined by the WTO but operating independently of the Secretariat. Such an arrangement would favour responsiveness, flexibility and interaction with local institutions in developing countries. It could more easily emphasise relationships and professionalism in training and consulting, create *ad hoc* alliances and better manage multi-functional teams than an in-house division of the WTO Secretariat. Moreover, an arms-length institution would be better equipped to decentralise and serve its networks in the developing world. Indeed, a lot of technical assistance activities can be done locally with greater involvement of developing country institutions or offered in the form of e-learning, the Internet and computer-assisted training programmes.

In summary, the WTO's technical assistance services need more autonomy and freedom from bureaucratic constraints. Staff should be empowered to take initiatives and build relationships with other service providers and the beneficiaries in developing countries. An entrepreneurial spirit and professionalism in the implementation of technical assistance would be encouraged by a change in the organisational structure, culture and stronger leadership by experienced capacity-building experts.

Modern techniques of quality management should be used to improve professional standards and favour effectiveness. The focus of technical assistance should remain on WTO issues; however, broader inter-cultural and social perspectives are also needed as background for the WTO-related debate. The trade policy training courses could be reinforced. More emphasis on practical aspects of managing trade missions in Geneva and their relations with national and multilateral networks for trade policy-making would be desirable.

The WTO might also want to become a leader in the use of e-networks, teleconferencing and computer-assisted training in trade policy. Its technical assistance could gain in effectiveness through better partnerships with a wider range of service providers, including not only the main multilateral agencies and regional and national governments, but also major training institutions, academia and civil society.

**ANNEX I: Comparative Table of the Service Process in Technical Assistance:  
ITC, UNCTAD, World Bank and WTO**

| <i>TA Provider</i> | <i>Strategy Formulation</i>  | <i>Needs Assessment</i>                 | <i>Programme Design</i>                           | <i>Financing</i>                             | <i>Selection of Participants</i>  | <i>Implementation</i>   | <i>Evaluation</i>                                  | <i>Follow-up</i>  |
|--------------------|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| ITC                | Outsiders are involved   | Formal process (kick-off meetings)      | Flexibility in adjusting to needs                 | Mainly donor countries                       | Recipient countries and self-selection by network members                                 | Interactive events include consultants and local resources; e-net is widely used                      | Evaluation by network members and external experts | Flexible, depending on the network                                  |
| UNCTAD             | Consultants do participate   | Formal process                          | Provider in consultation with the beneficiary     | Budget, donor countries, and private finance | Government nomination in consultation with UNCTAD   | Great diversity, consultants are involved   | Formal evaluation by external experts and UNCTAD   | Depending on the availability of funds                              |
| World Bank (WB)    | Extensive influence of leading outside experts in training and in trade policy | Formal process & informal consultations | Multi-party approach: WB, local partners, WB rep. | In-house funds and external grants           | Joint (provider-beneficiary) selection process  | Staff, external experts and local partners are involved; multiple delivery methods, e-net widely used | Formal evaluation in-house and by external experts | Depending on the evaluation of the initial event and general policy |
| WTO                | Only representatives of Member countries are involved                          | Informal consultations                  | Flexible but largely a standardised offer         | Budget, trust funds and donor countries      | Competitive selection for trade policy courses; government nomination for other TA events | Mainly staff and some local partners; interactivity is encouraged                                     | Evaluation by the CTD; reform is in process        | Informal; formal follow-up depends on the CTD                       |

## **ANNEX II: Technical Co-operation and Training Activities of the WTO Secretariat**

The WTO's technical assistance seeks to inform developing countries about their rights and obligations under the WTO Agreements, and to help them in implementing the Agreements and in using the WTO mechanisms. That assistance is focused on areas briefly discussed below.

### 1. WTO institutional matters and rules

Information on the institutional aspects of the WTO, its Agreements and monitoring them, negotiations and decision-making mechanisms is disseminated through numerous seminars. The aim is to give an overall picture of the WTO and to improve the understanding of current and forthcoming issues. To improve access to information and to develop ongoing contacts with national institutions, the Secretariat has set up Reference Centres in developing countries, provided training and assisted the Centres with documentation and computer equipment (for further details see page 29).

### 2. Agreements on Agriculture and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

For activities related to the Agreement on Agriculture, the Secretariat helps beneficiaries better understand their rights and obligations under the Agreement and respect the commitments they have undertaken in relation to market access, domestic subsidies, export subsidies, and sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

### 3. Market access issues

As regards customs duties, the beneficiary countries are helped to transpose the customs nomenclatures dating from before the conclusion of the Uruguay Round into the Harmonised System. Technical assistance on customs valuation focuses on training personnel, drawing up implementation measures, access to sources of information on customs valuation methodology and advice on applying the Agreement's provisions. (Other technical assistance needs concern areas such as import licensing, pre-shipment inspection, rules of origin, the supply of information for entry into the WTO Integrated Data Base, etc.)

### 4. Technical barriers to trade

The main focus of assistance regarding technical barriers to trade is on implementation and obligations relating to the adaptation of national legislative and institutional frameworks. The Secretariat helps beneficiaries to develop international standards and introduce them at the national level. It also helps identify potential institutional improvements that would enhance the quality of certification laboratories and consequently make recognition abroad easier.

### 5. Rules

This area includes assistance to Member countries and countries seeking accession in drafting WTO-consistent trade remedy legislation, with a detailed examination of and written comments on laws and regulations. It also includes assistance for the installation or improvement of national trade remedy systems and their conformity with WTO provisions.

The technical assistance programme on rules also includes:

- Consultations with delegations regarding the interpretation and application of the relevant Agreements;
- Information on rule implementation practices in various countries and preparation of model legislation for countries setting up trade remedy investigation schemes;
- Training in conducting investigations;
- Contingent trade remedy database;
- Assistance to developing countries whose subsidy regimes are exempt from WTO disciplines under transition periods, in particular through the identification of subsidies programmes that might be prohibited when the transition period expires; and
- Assistance to the preparation of notifications concerning trade remedies and rules.

### 6. General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)

The Secretariat helps beneficiaries through its information exchange programme, overall and sectoral assessments of trade in services, and the establishment of guidelines and negotiating procedures.

## 7. Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs)

In the area of trade-related intellectual property rights, the WTO's technical assistance aims to

- Facilitate implementation;
- Assist in drawing up laws and regulations; and
- Provide aid in the creation or strengthening of national intellectual property organisations, including staff training.

## 8. Accessions

The Secretariat gives countries seeking accession advice of a general nature and explains the advantages of the multilateral trading system. It provides practical and technical information on the accession procedure and technical assistance in specific areas that are the subject of negotiations, both systemic and market access-related. The Secretariat is also called upon to help countries seeking accession to prepare memorandums and schedules of concessions.

## 9. Notifications

Several developing countries find it particularly difficult to meet their notification obligations under most WTO Agreements. The Secretariat facilitates understanding of the system and notification provisions through seminars, workshops and technical missions. A handbook has been drawn up to assist Member countries in carrying out their notification obligations under the Agreements with a focus on the relevant procedures. This handbook can be accessed electronically. Within the Secretariat, there are enquiry points that can be contacted by e-mail to respond, *inter alia*, to any questions that may be raised by Members.

## 10. Trade policy reviews

Developing countries are given technical assistance in preparing their trade policy review reports.

## 11. Special assistance relating to the settlement of disputes

Legal assistance to Members involved in WTO disputes is particularly important to developing countries. Article 27.2 of the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU) states that the WTO Secretariat shall provide legal advice and assistance to developing country Members, and legal experts within the Technical Co-operation Division offer such advisory services to all developing WTO Members. Since the establishment of the WTO in 1995, legal advice has been given to developing WTO Members in more than seventy distinct cases. The assistance covered, *inter alia*, advice to countries on their legal rights and obligations under the disputed Agreement; assessment of a Member's potential of successfully initiating or defending an action under any of the covered Agreements, legal research and comments on submissions prepared by Members' lawyers.

In accordance with DSU Article 27.3, the Technical Co-operation Division, jointly with the Legal Affairs Division, organises special training courses on dispute settlement procedures and practices on a regular basis. The objective of these courses is to enhance understanding of the DSU and to help lawyers effectively advise their governments on all matters relating to the implementation and application of the DSU.

The course programme includes a general presentation on the GATT/WTO system, followed by detailed presentations on dispute settlement procedures and practices. The courses also have an important practical component, which requires active involvement and interaction with participants through case studies and simulated panel exercises. Fifteen such courses have been organised in Geneva between 1994 and 2000. In view of the high demand for attendance at these courses, the WTO Secretariat has increased the number of courses held in Geneva each year from two to three.

## 12. WTO Reference Centres

The WTO Reference Centre programme originally started as a component of the WTO/UNCTAD/ITC JITAP programme (see next page). The establishment of the Integrated Framework (including special assistance to small-island developing countries) gave the programme a boost, and by the end of 1999, WTO Reference Centres had been set up in sixty-eight countries. Under this programme, the WTO provides computer equipment, ensures Internet access, and provides training on accessing the wealth of information on the WTO website and digital carriers developed by the WTO. In practice, this means access to, *inter alia*, the Document Dissemination Facility, which features all official WTO documents. In the coming years, the programme will be extended to other developing Members who have serious difficulties in obtaining computer equipment and training in the high technology tools required for their effective participation in the WTO. The Reference Centre programme is funded by extra-budgetary financial contributions from WTO Members.

### 13. University Courses

The WTO is deepening its existing links and establishing new links with universities that offer international trade courses. The initiative is expected to come from the interested university. In response, the WTO provides documentation and arranges for occasional visits by a WTO staff member when on a mission to that country.

### 14. Trade Policy Courses

The WTO Secretariat organises three regular trade policy courses a year. Each course usually lasts for 12 weeks, takes place at the WTO in Geneva, and is conducted alternatively in English, French and Spanish. On average, 24 officials from developing and transition economies take part in each course. The objective is to widen participants' understanding of trade policy matters, the multilateral trading system, international trade law and the functioning of the WTO. The knowledge acquired in the regular courses is expected to allow participants to improve the effectiveness of their work in their national administration and to promote a more active participation of their countries in the work of the WTO (WTO, 1999). Internet: [www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org).

### 15. Joint Programmes

The WTO secretariat provides some of its technical assistance services in co-operation with specialised organisations such as UNCTAD, WIPO, the World Customs Organisation, ISO, the Codex Alimentarius, the World Bank, etc. It also works together with a range of other international economic organisations, including the OECD and regional trading arrangements in the Third World, as well as a number of national and international non-governmental organisations. Two joint programmes are presented below: the Integrated Framework and JITAP.

#### 15.1. The Integrated Framework

At the 1996 Singapore Ministerial Conference, ministers committed themselves to addressing the problem of increasing marginalisation of least-developed countries (LDCs) in world trade, and to working towards greater coherence in international economic policy-making and improved co-operation among agencies in providing technical assistance. Ministers agreed to a Plan of Action for LDCs, which envisaged closer co-operation between the WTO and other multilateral agencies. To implement the plan, an Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least-developed Countries (IF) was established. It was endorsed in October 1997, at a WTO High Level Meeting for LDCs, where it was decided that six agencies – the ITC, the IMF, UNCTAD, UNDP, the World Bank and the WTO – would take joint responsibility for the implementation of the framework for delivering trade-related technical assistance to LDCs.

Among the Integrated Framework's objectives was addressing least-developed countries' needs regarding inadequacies in the implementation of the 'best endeavour' assistance provisions in the Uruguay Round Agreements. The WTO Secretariat did not have the necessary financial resources or the expertise to offer assistance to LDCs on the required scale, and developed countries were not willing to provide the necessary funds either to the WTO or on a bilateral basis. Nor were they willing to revisit the substantive obligations that had been negotiated in the Uruguay Round with which LDCs were to comply after transition periods. The IF may thus be seen as an attempt to square the circle by shifting the problem to development-oriented agencies that had access to financial resources, including the IMF, UNDP and the World Bank. Proponents also argued that the IF would help reduce duplication of effort among the agencies and generate information on specific needs for trade-related technical assistance services (World Bank, 2000 and UNCTAD 2000).

The IF did little to address the underlying causes of the implementation problems of LDCs, in part because it did not address the disconnect between the WTO Agreements and the development priorities of LDCs (Finger and Schuler, 2000; Winters, 2000). Its major weaknesses were the lack of clear criteria for success, insufficient recipient commitment to the programme and poor co-ordination with bilateral donors, not enough attention paid to institutional cycles and conflicting objectives among the donors.

#### 15.2. JITAP

The Heads of the WTO, UNCTAD and the ITC launched the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme for selected African and Least-developed Countries (JITAP) at Midrand (South Africa) in 1996. The implementation of JITAP commenced in the last quarter of 1997 and has concentrated on eight African countries in the area of capacity-building. An expansion of the programme to other African countries is being considered. Like the Integrated Framework, JITAP aims to develop the human and institutional capacity of beneficiary countries and to foster their integration in the multilateral trading system.

## **ANNEX III: Technical Assistance of UNCTAD, ITC and the World Bank**

### 1. UNCTAD

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is the focal point within the UN system for the integrated treatment of development issues in the area of trade, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. The organisation has been offering technical co-operation support to developing and transition economies, including programmes on trade-related issues. Such activities are mainly financed from UNCTAD's operational budget (approximately US\$50 million), which is drawn from the United Nations regular budget. Funding for UNCTAD's trade-related technical co-operation comes from UNDP, individual donor countries, the European Commission, development financing institutions (particularly the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank) and a number of foundations. Principal bilateral donors include Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the US (UNCTAD web page). Increasingly, though, developing countries themselves are financing UNCTAD technical co-operation activities in their own countries. In the year 2000, UNCTAD was implementing two major trade-related assistance programmes for an annual delivery of some US\$1 million and a series of more specific projects that contain certain trade-related features (see also: [www.unctad.org](http://www.unctad.org)).

#### 1.1. An overview of trade-related programmes

Many of UNCTAD's technical co-operation programmes directly or indirectly address questions related to trade policy. Among the programmes presented under the rubric International Trade included are:

- The 'Positive Agenda' – UNCTAD's support to developing countries for preparations for future multilateral trade negotiations;
- Trade policy and negotiations;
- Competition policy and control of restrictive business practices;
- The Generalised System of Preferences and other trade laws;
- Services for development;
- Commodity policy, including MICAS;
- Asycuda – a computerised customs management system which covers most foreign trade procedures;
- Trade efficiency: The Trade Point Programme;
- Trade information: TRAINS;
- Developing human resources for trade: the TRAINFORTRADE Programme; and
- Economic integration of developing countries.

Some of the programmes above focus on improving export market opportunities for developing countries' firms, including the commodity sector, and on improving the efficiency and cutting down the costs of export and import transactions.

UNCTAD is very actively involved in assisting governments in the WTO accession process and in negotiations of regional trading arrangements, capacity development for trade negotiations and assisting developing countries and countries in transition in preparing for future trade negotiations.

There is no doubt that UNCTAD's technical assistance has contributed to building developing countries' capacity in trade policy formulation and strengthened their negotiating capacities in the trading system. It helps developing countries to improve systems, procedures and capabilities for trade expansion, trade efficiency (Trade Point Network, customs, transportation), and to elaborate development-oriented trade strategies. An interesting dimension of the organisation's technical assistance is the promotion of trade co-operation among developing countries. While all regions of the globe are concerned by these programmes, particular attention is paid to the dramatic needs of African nations and of least-developed, land-locked and island countries.

As discussed above, UNCTAD provides an important contribution to two major inter-agency projects in the area of trade policy: the Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP) and the Integrated Framework (IF).

#### 1.2 The Commercial Diplomacy Programme

This programme encompasses two inter-linked areas: training for trade negotiations, and research and development on international trade issues. The main objective is to support a new generation of trade experts and negotiators of developing countries and transition economies. The programme relies on a network of national

and regional institutions such as secretariats of regional integration arrangements, universities, private sector think tanks, governmental training organisations, and the like. Its major activities include regional and sub-regional meetings to identify the main needs; short-term training courses and seminars; preparation of policy papers; and dissemination of training and research material. The programme's activities are implemented subject to availability of funds from donor governments, UNDP, interregional programmes and private donors.

In implementing its projects, UNCTAD works with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO), the World Bank, the WTO, and the regional UN economic commissions. It also collaborates with a wide range of economic co-operation organisations, including the OECD, regional integration groupings of developing countries and a number of national and international non-governmental organisations. Internet: [www.unctad.org](http://www.unctad.org)

While UNCTAD remains a relatively small agency in the area of trade-related technical co-operation, it attempts to play a vital and unique role by filling selected and strategic technical co-operation niches in the development and management of the international trade system. UNCTAD's plan for the future is to exploit its comparative advantages, ensure complementarity with the related work of other international organisations, intervene on strategic and catalytic grounds, and allow for the differentiated needs of developing countries with a particular focus on the least-developed countries (2000 statement by the Trade and Development Board).

## 2. The International Trade Centre (ITC)

The ITC is the technical co-operation arm of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for operational and enterprise-oriented aspects of international trade development. As it is the United Nations' focal point for technical co-operation in trade promotion, ITC works with developing and transition economies in setting up trade promotion programmes aimed at improving export and import operations.

The ITC's WTO-related technical co-operation activities are closely integrated with the six main areas of the Centre's specialisation: product and market development, trade support services, trade information, human resource development, international purchasing and supply management, and needs assessment and programme design for trade promotion. ITC specialists working in close liaison with local trade officials carry out such projects. Regional, sub-regional and national ITC projects on WTO-related issues often take the form of a broad-based package of services in order to expand local capacity and encourage the link between the WTO trading system and business community.

### 2.1. World Tr@de Net (WTN)

The ITC's largest special programme relating to WTO Agreements is the World Tr@de Net (1999-2001). Its main objective is to establish and strengthen national networks that actively support their business communities on WTO-related issues. Networking enhances the availability of relevant business advice and training on WTO-related questions through members who provide an active public/private sector interface that facilitates the formulation of national trade negotiation strategies. Networking also creates capacity for the continuous exchange of experiences and sustained working contacts among network members from different countries, with a view to find practical business solutions in the application of WTO Agreements. Typically, network members include WTO focal points in ministries, Trade Points, trade support institutions, business and trade associations, academia, the legal profession, specialised consultants and the press. Activities supporting the networks include workshops, seminars and discussions on business implications, the preparation of case studies and training packs, and training of trainers. In the interest of efficient networking, a balanced mix between more and less advanced developing countries and economies in transition has been targeted. As of now, 15 countries have joined the WTN. The WTN is a three-year programme and has an operational annual budget of US\$885,000.

Key achievements of the WTN programme include the publication of the *Business Guide to the World Trading System* (an update of the *Business Guide to the Uruguay Round*) – the only guide that describes the WTO framework from a business perspective, for use by enterprises, trade and industry associations, and business training and research institutions associated with foreign trade – and the recently launched series of video-conferences on specific issues regarding the multilateral trading system. Internet: [www.tracen.org](http://www.tracen.org)

## 2.2. Other Areas of the ITC's Technical Assistance

In addition to this comprehensive approach, the ITC provides more focused assistance in relation to the WTO Agreements on which it has accumulated years of related experience. Such activities refer in particular to: TBT/SPS, textiles, information technology, agriculture, services and government procurement. The most comprehensive approach with regard to the WTO Agreements is followed by the ITC under the JITAP programme in which the Centre is very actively involved (see above).

## 3. The World Bank

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) aims to strengthen the economies of poor nations by promoting the international flow of capital for productive purposes and assisting their development process. The World Bank provides technical assistance in all areas of trade. This work is undertaken both by the World Bank Institute, by various World Bank networks, as well as through country-specific programmes. The International Development Institute (IDI) in particular undertakes trade-related technical co-operation activities, which also cover WTO-relevant issues. The IDI's approach is much broader than that of other organisations, as the WTO is perceived as one of several instruments that developing countries may use to further their trade policy objectives.

### 3.1. An Overview

Provision of trade-related technical assistance is an organisation-wide activity, mostly undertaken as part of country assistance strategies developed in consultation with client countries by country management units. This is demand-driven, and often involves institutional strengthening and capacity-building needs identified in the context of project preparation. Modes of delivery are directly fitted to the needs of the intended beneficiaries. The following – non-exhaustive – types of assistance may be provided directly by the Bank or, more commonly, financed by the Bank or by trust funds: training courses (face-to-face or video conferencing); study tours; funding and identification of residential advisors; and economic and sector work (reports, advice and dialogue) on issues ranging from tariff reduction schedules and their potential impacts to assistance on drafting of trade-related legislation (e.g., a customs law). Sources of funding include grant funds given in trust to the World Bank by donor countries, institutional development funds, as well as project preparation facilities and loans (both for projects and for budgetary support).

The Finance and Private Sector Development Network of the World Bank assists countries in improving the business environment, thereby encouraging investment, and facilitating trade through improved logistics in ports and related transport infrastructure.

### 3.2. Global Integration and the New Trade Agenda

The World Bank Institute has a specific programme on Global Integration and the New Trade Agenda, which consists of four sets of related activities: training, policy services, products and a research/capacity-building programme. While the focus of the programme is global, particular emphasis is given to low-income countries. The courses and training are developed in partnership with regional, national and international institutions.

The key element in training is a modular course entitled Global Integration and the New Trade Agenda. Training is also provided through distance learning with the aid of video conferencing, a website and periodic electronic debates. The website contains all World Bank trade work generated by the Research Department and the World Bank Institute. It is linked to the joint World Bank/WTO Trade and Development website.

Policy services involve targeted seminars and workshops that focus on specific issues identified as important to a particular country or region by World Bank operations staff, the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PREM) network, partner organisations or client governments. Such services are demand-driven and will usually require support from country management units or regional sector heads.

Products include publications, teaching cases, background papers, software and databases. Special attention will be given to the development of teaching materials appropriate for distance learning in fiscal year 2001. The research/capacity-building programme is discussed in section 3.3(iii) below.

### 3.3. Specific World Bank programmes directly relevant to WTO agreements

#### *(i) Training courses organised by the World Bank Institute*

These usually comprise seminars or workshops ranging from a couple of days to two weeks, and may be delivered through distance learning techniques. The focus is primarily on the economics of trade policy (WTO rules are addressed where relevant). Courses may be organised at the request of country operations in the World Bank, a government entity or a learning centre that collaborates with the WBI. Beneficiaries include policy-makers, academics and business people in developing countries.

#### *(ii) Stand-alone ad hoc seminars focusing on the implications of WTO accession*

At the request of client countries and operations departments, the WBI and the Development Research Group (DGR) of the Bank may organise high-level policy seminars that focus on the economic consequences of WTO accession and the development of a national strategy to manage and benefit from the accession process. Such seminars have been organized primarily for countries in transition to a market economy.

#### *(iii) DRG/WBI Research and Capacity-building Project*

In 1999, a three-year research and capacity-building project was launched to help developing countries participate more effectively in the next round of WTO negotiations, which were expected to begin in the year 2000. The project is carried out in collaboration with various partner institutions, and receives support from the governments of the UK, Italy and the Netherlands, the World Bank and the Société Générale de Surveillance. It is complemented by the World Bank's Integrated Programme of Research and Capacity-building to enhance developing countries' participation in the WTO negotiations on agriculture. The latter involves research, policy analyses and capacity-building in order to identify and assess developing countries' interests and policy options on major issues, to articulate those interests effectively and to formulate negotiating objectives and strategies.

#### *(iv) Activities for least-developed countries*

The World Bank Group is actively involved in the Integrated Framework for Trade-related Assistance to Least-developed Countries (see Annex II 15.1). Internet: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

## **ANNEX IV: Other Initiatives in the Field of Capacity-building and Technical Co-operation**

### 1. OECD Donor Guidelines in Capacity Development for Trade

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/>

The Donor Guidelines in Capacity Development for Trade, commissioned by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), aim to provide guidance for donors by drawing on past experience in technical assistance and in trade-related activities. The Guidelines are intended for donor agencies, both in the field and at headquarters, as well as for the trade community.

This guidance includes:

- identification of the needs for and constraints to capacity development for trade;
- a 'roadmap' for effective donor policies and instruments to overcome those constraints;
- proposals for improving delivery and implementation of donor activities in the field; and
- preliminary guidance on impact evaluation indicators for trade capacity-building programmes.

The report is divided into two parts. Part I sets out principles of good practice in capacity development for trade, focusing in particular on how to enhance implementation through partnership approaches. Part II seeks to put trade development in the broader development co-operation context by identifying strategies and policies that donors can apply in order to address developing country needs in this area, and by looking at the evolution of trade-related activities.

The Guidelines were presented to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Senior Level Meeting in December 2000 and subsequently endorsed at the DAC High Level Meeting on 25-26 April 2001 (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/htm/trade.htm>). Just before the meeting, on 24 April, an Informal Brainstorming Session on Trade and Development was held which was based *inter alia* on the DAC Guidelines (<http://www.oecd.org/pdf/TradeDev.pdf>).

### 2. International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

[http://www.idrc.ca/index\\_e.html](http://www.idrc.ca/index_e.html); [http://www.idrc.ca/tec/index\\_e.html](http://www.idrc.ca/tec/index_e.html)

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a public corporation created by the Parliament of Canada to help researchers and communities in the developing world find solutions to their social, economic and environmental problems. In 1997, IDRC established the *Trade, Employment and Competitiveness Programme Initiative* to enable developing countries to participate more effectively in the global economy.

In particular, the Initiative aims to:

- improve developing countries' negotiation and bargaining skills;
- contribute to the design of instruments, processes and procedures that allow developing countries to better profit from global opportunities; and
- assist developing countries in promoting coherence between their domestic economic policies and their international trade policies.

To date, projects pursued or being developed under this initiative have focuses largely on emerging issues in international trade relations (e.g. labour standards, the environment, investment codes and trade in services), on domestic and regional policy responses to globalisation and on supporting a number of networks of economists in Africa and Latin America that include trade among their major preoccupations.

Example: Latin American Trade Network (LATN; [http://www.idrc.ca/tec/TEC\\_rp03e.htm](http://www.idrc.ca/tec/TEC_rp03e.htm))

This project provides critical and timely analysis of how international trade relations are evolving in the increasingly complex international economic environment. It pays particular attention to the Latin American region and has established a network of scholars to generate policy-relevant research in Latin America on leading issues in international trade relations. The objectives of LATN are to:

- promote an agenda relevant to both academic research and the policy-making environment;
- promote institutional linkages and co-operation so that the network can continue once project has ended; and
- harness existing research capacity and contribute to human resource development in the countries among which international trade negotiations take place.

The studies of this project may be grouped into three groups. Group 1 includes issues that overarch the project, such as bargaining in an environment of ever-changing coalitions; and systemic compatibilities given the multitude of regional and international agreements that now exist. Group 2 involves the examination of issues in world and regional trade agendas from a Latin American perspective. Topics include: managing international investment, labour standards, the environment, government procurement, competition policy, agriculture and services; rules of origin; dispute settlement; accommodating different levels of development; safeguards and countervailing and anti-dumping duties. Group 3 comprises studies that examine how national trade strategies improve the outcome of international trade negotiations. Initially, eight Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela) had been selected for detailed study.

Project results are being communicated to policy-makers, researchers and civil society via printed media (books, policy papers and newsletters), the Internet, project meetings, conferences and training courses.

### 3. Trade Knowledge Network (TKN)

<http://www.iisd.org/tkn/>

The Trade Knowledge Network (TKN) is part of the Trade Knowledge Initiative set up by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). It is aimed at building long-term capacity to address the issues of trade and sustainable development through increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the issues in developing country research institutions, non-governmental organisations and governments. The TKN links network members, and commissions and disseminates in-country research on trade and sustainable development, as well as consolidating existing research.

The project has three interrelated streams:

1. Research conducted by network members, and workshops in selected countries involving policy-makers in trade and environment ministries, environment and development NGOs, research institutes and business;
2. Research on cross-cutting international themes to supplement the country-specific research;
3. Construction and maintenance of a knowledge network on trade and sustainable development, linking research partners with each other and others (particularly existing networks such as the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development) under the umbrella of IISDnet.

During the first phase of the project, country studies and workshops were carried out in six countries or regions – Argentina, Central America, China, Pakistan, South Africa and Vietnam. Research partners in each of these countries or regions produced case studies on trade and sustainable development, focusing on specific sectors or tradable goods. The resulting research was combined with more generic materials on cross-cutting themes of international applicability including trade-related intellectual property rights and technology transfer, investment, government procurement, the Kyoto Protocol and WTO rules, and domestically prohibited goods. These workshops brought together policy-makers in trade and environment ministries, environment and development NGOs, research institutes, business and academia. They were intended to promote the ability to strategically address the country's national interests and act accordingly in the area of trade and sustainable development. The second phase of the project is now underway, repeating the process of the first phase, and adding Chile and Bangladesh to the network.

### 4. Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Initiative (SEATINI)

<http://www.seatini.org/>

The Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Initiative (SEATINI; based in Zimbabwe) is an African initiative to strengthen to continent's capacity to take a more effective part in the emerging global trading system and to better manage the process of globalisation. In particular, SEATINI aims to:

- Provide a space where Southern and Eastern African senior level policy makers can discuss matters of concern in a relatively free atmosphere (free from 'mandated' positions) and enhance their capacity to participate effectively in the WTO and future trade negotiations (three regional workshops have been held so far);
- Help build the long-term capacity of African countries in trade-related matters through building an information network using the electronic and print media;
- Help develop a documentation centre to build on institutional memory and learning;
- Monitor development in the area of trade and trade-related matters;
- Monitor and evaluate the results of African negotiations on trade and trade-related matters;

- Help raise awareness and highlight the concerns of the private sector and of civil society into trade-related matters; and
- Undertake scientific research into contemporary issues arising out of the demands of globalisation, the new multilateral trading regime, regionalism and national responses to these.

#### 5. International Development Law Institute (IDLI)

<http://www.idli.org/>

The International Development Law Institute (IDLI) is a public international organisation with its headquarters in Rome, Italy. IDLI was established by an international agreement, which has now been adhered to by 15 Members States. The Institute operated as a non-governmental organisation from 1983 until 1991, when it was converted to its present international status. IDLI's mandate is to promote the use of legal resources in the development process in developing and transition economy countries. It fulfils this mandate through training, technical assistance, research and publications.

IDLI, together with UK Department for International Development (DFID), organised, among other things, a brainstorming session on the theme of 'capacity-building for trade law specialists in developing countries' in May 2000. Some 20 participants came from governments (both donor and recipient), international organisations, academia, NGOs and private law firms. The brainstorming session resulted in the draft of a feasibility study, which is currently in the final stage of writing to determine:

- The feasibility of a system of Chairs in International Trade Law, and appropriate support programmes, within selected developing country academic organizations;
- The feasibility of the production, delivery and certification of a competency based training programme on international trade law in developing countries covering WTO and Regional Agreements/Jurisprudence, including dispute settlement as well as important aspects of the legal and regulatory regimes for major partners;
- The feasibility of a central resource center of international trade-law training manuals/materials, and the modalities for its establishment, operation and potential use by organizations in developing countries.

Another concrete follow-up was initiating a Trade Law Center (TRALAC) in Southern Africa, which already entered into its pilot year. There is merit in exploring the possibility of setting up similar Centres elsewhere in the world.

## ANNEX V: Methodology of the Interview Research

The following questions were asked in the in-depth interviews:

1. What should be *the vision* for capacity-building activities in trade policy over the years to come? What strategic changes in existing programmes are most urgently required and why?
2. Could you give specific examples of the best initiatives that improve the quality and relevance of capacity-building programmes in trade policy?
3. What are the most important strong points and shortcomings of the current technical co-operation and training activities of the WTO secretariat?
4. What specific innovations should be introduced to improve the WTO programmes in that area?

Selection of the experts:

A panel of three members – a former trade negotiator, an internationally recognised academic authority with experience in trade policy-making and technical assistance, and the author – chose the experts to be interviewed: The resulting non-probability sample was based on quotas respecting three criteria:

- (i) the sample had to comprise the beneficiaries, providers and donors (in equal proportions);
- (ii) the personalities had a first hand experience with TA programmes over the last five years, as well as familiarity with the WTO's work, but were *not* currently involved in the WTO's TA activities; and
- (iii) they were unanimously considered by the panel as leading authorities in international trade and training.

Fourteen personalities were identified for in-depth interviews (sample A). A convenience sample of twenty additional experts (sample B) was also selected for shorter interviews. For the convenience sample B, the criteria (iii) and the requirement of non-involvement in the WTO's technical assistance activities work were lifted. Only questions 2 and 3 were discussed with experts of the group B.

From the group A, three individuals could not be contacted and one refused to participate. Ten experts agreed to in-depth interviews based on the guidelines presented below. Transcripts of one interview could not be used because there was a clear anti-WTO bias, possibly for personal reasons. The interviewed personalities were guaranteed strict confidentiality. Six in-depth interviews of the group A (of more than 75 minutes) were conducted face-to face, three over the phone and one on the Internet. The interviews, their critical and the preparation of transcripts and the analysis of the material were conducted using standard operating procedures of scientific behavioural research (Kvale, 1996, Frey Oisi, 1995, Kress, 1979).

## ANNEX VI: Doha Ministerial Declaration

Adopted 14 November 2001, WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1 (emphases added)

1. The multilateral trading system embodied in the World Trade Organization has contributed significantly to economic growth, development and employment throughout the past fifty years. We are determined, particularly in the light of the global economic slowdown, to maintain the process of reform and liberalization of trade policies, thus ensuring that the system plays its full part in promoting recovery, growth and development. We therefore strongly reaffirm the principles and objectives set out in the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, and pledge to reject the use of protectionism.
2. International trade can play a major role in the promotion of economic development and the alleviation of poverty. We recognize the need for all our peoples to benefit from the increased opportunities and welfare gains that the multilateral trading system generates. The majority of WTO Members are developing countries. We seek to place their needs and interests at the heart of the Work Programme adopted in this Declaration. Recalling the Preamble to the Marrakesh Agreement, we shall continue to make positive efforts designed to ensure that developing countries, and especially the least-developed among them, secure a share in the growth of world trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development. In this context, enhanced market access, balanced rules, and well targeted, sustainably financed **technical assistance and capacity-building programmes** have important roles to play.
3. We recognize the particular vulnerability of the least-developed countries and the special structural difficulties they face in the global economy. We are committed to addressing the marginalization of least-developed countries in international trade and to improving their effective participation in the multilateral trading system. We recall the commitments made by Ministers at our meetings in Marrakesh, Singapore and Geneva, and by the international community at the Third UN Conference on Least-Developed Countries in Brussels, to help least-developed countries secure beneficial and meaningful integration into the multilateral trading system and the global economy. We are determined that the WTO will play its part in building effectively on these commitments under the Work Programme we are establishing.
4. We stress our commitment to the WTO as the unique forum for global trade rule-making and liberalization, while also recognizing that regional trade agreements can play an important role in promoting the liberalization and expansion of trade and in fostering development.
5. We are aware that the challenges Members face in a rapidly changing international environment cannot be addressed through measures taken in the trade field alone. We shall continue to work with the Bretton Woods institutions for greater coherence in global economic policy-making.
6. We strongly reaffirm our commitment to the objective of sustainable development, as stated in the Preamble to the Marrakesh Agreement. We are convinced that the aims of upholding and safeguarding an open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, and acting for the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development can and must be mutually supportive. We take note of the efforts by Members to conduct national environmental assessments of trade policies on a voluntary basis. We recognize that under WTO rules no country should be prevented from taking measures for the protection of human, animal or plant life or health, or of the environment at the levels it considers appropriate, subject to the requirement that they are not applied in a manner which would constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries where the same conditions prevail, or a disguised restriction on international trade, and are otherwise in accordance with the provisions of the WTO Agreements. We welcome the WTO's continued cooperation with UNEP and other inter-governmental environmental organizations. We encourage efforts to promote cooperation between the WTO and relevant international environmental and developmental organizations, especially in the lead-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2002.
7. We reaffirm the right of Members under the General Agreement on Trade in Services to regulate, and to introduce new regulations on, the supply of services.
8. We reaffirm our declaration made at the Singapore Ministerial Conference regarding internationally recognized core labour standards. We take note of work under way in the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the social dimension of globalization.

9. We note with particular satisfaction that this Conference has completed the WTO accession procedures for China and Chinese Taipei. We also welcome the accession as new Members, since our last Session, of Albania, Croatia, Georgia, Jordan, Lithuania, Moldova and Oman, and note the extensive market-access commitments already made by these countries on accession. These accessions will greatly strengthen the multilateral trading system, as will those of the 28 countries now negotiating their accession. We therefore attach great importance to concluding accession proceedings as quickly as possible. In particular, we are committed to accelerating the accession of least-developed countries.

10. Recognizing the challenges posed by an expanding WTO membership, we confirm our collective responsibility to ensure internal transparency and the effective participation of all Members. While emphasizing the intergovernmental character of the organization, we are committed to making the WTO's operations more transparent, including through more effective and prompt dissemination of information, and to improve dialogue with the public. We shall therefore at the national and multilateral levels continue to promote a better public understanding of the WTO and to communicate the benefits of a liberal, rules-based multilateral trading system.

11. In view of these considerations, we hereby agree to undertake the broad and balanced Work Programme set out below. This incorporates both an expanded negotiating agenda and other important decisions and activities necessary to address the challenges facing the multilateral trading system.

## **WORK PROGRAMME**

### **IMPLEMENTATION-RELATED ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

12. We attach the utmost importance to the implementation-related issues and concerns raised by Members and are determined to find appropriate solutions to them. In this connection, and having regard to the General Council Decisions of 3 May and 15 December 2000, we further adopt the Decision on Implementation-Related Issues and Concerns in document WT/MIN(01)/17 to address a number of implementation problems faced by Members. We agree that negotiations on outstanding implementation issues shall be an integral part of the Work Programme we are establishing, and that agreements reached at an early stage in these negotiations shall be treated in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 47 below. In this regard, we shall proceed as follows: (a) where we provide a specific negotiating mandate in this Declaration, the relevant implementation issues shall be addressed under that mandate; (b) the other outstanding implementation issues shall be addressed as a matter of priority by the relevant WTO bodies, which shall report to the Trade Negotiations Committee, established under paragraph 46 below, by the end of 2002 for appropriate action.

### **AGRICULTURE**

13. We recognize the work already undertaken in the negotiations initiated in early 2000 under Article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture, including the large number of negotiating proposals submitted on behalf of a total of 121 Members. We recall the long-term objective referred to in the Agreement to establish a fair and market-oriented trading system through a programme of fundamental reform encompassing strengthened rules and specific commitments on support and protection in order to correct and prevent restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets. We reconfirm our commitment to this programme. Building on the work carried out to date and without prejudging the outcome of the negotiations we commit ourselves to comprehensive negotiations aimed at: substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support. We agree that special and differential treatment for developing countries shall be an integral part of all elements of the negotiations and shall be embodied in the Schedules of concessions and commitments and as appropriate in the rules and disciplines to be negotiated, so as to be operationally effective and to enable developing countries to effectively take account of their development needs, including food security and rural development. We take note of the non-trade concerns reflected in the negotiating proposals submitted by Members and confirm that non-trade concerns will be taken into account in the negotiations as provided for in the Agreement on Agriculture.

14. Modalities for the further commitments, including provisions for special and differential treatment, shall be established no later than 31 March 2003. Participants shall submit their comprehensive draft Schedules based on these modalities no later than the date of the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference. The negotiations, including with respect to rules and disciplines and related legal texts, shall be concluded as part and at the date of conclusion of the negotiating agenda as a whole.

## SERVICES

15. The negotiations on trade in services shall be conducted with a view to promoting the economic growth of all trading partners and the development of developing and least-developed countries. We recognize the work already undertaken in the negotiations, initiated in January 2000 under Article XIX of the General Agreement on Trade in Services, and the large number of proposals submitted by Members on a wide range of sectors and several horizontal issues, as well as on movement of natural persons. We reaffirm the Guidelines and Procedures for the Negotiations adopted by the Council for Trade in Services on 28 March 2001 as the basis for continuing the negotiations, with a view to achieving the objectives of the General Agreement on Trade in Services, as stipulated in the Preamble, Article IV and Article XIX of that Agreement. Participants shall submit initial requests for specific commitments by 30 June 2002 and initial offers by 31 March 2003.

## MARKET ACCESS FOR NON-AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

16. We agree to negotiations which shall aim, by modalities to be agreed, to reduce or as appropriate eliminate tariffs, including the reduction or elimination of tariff peaks, high tariffs, and tariff escalation, as well as non-tariff barriers, in particular on products of export interest to developing countries. Product coverage shall be comprehensive and without *a priori* exclusions. The negotiations shall take fully into account the special needs and interests of developing and least-developed country participants, including through less than full reciprocity in reduction commitments, in accordance with the relevant provisions of Article XXVIII *bis* of GATT 1994 and the provisions cited in paragraph 50 below. To this end, the modalities to be agreed will include appropriate studies and capacity-building measures to assist least-developed countries to participate effectively in the negotiations.

## TRADE-RELATED ASPECTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

17. We stress the importance we attach to implementation and interpretation of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) in a manner supportive of public health, by promoting both access to existing medicines and research and development into new medicines and, in this connection, are adopting a separate Declaration.

18. With a view to completing the work started in the Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (Council for TRIPS) on the implementation of Article 23.4, we agree to negotiate the establishment of a multilateral system of notification and registration of geographical indications for wines and spirits by the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference. We note that issues related to the extension of the protection of geographical indications provided for in Article 23 to products other than wines and spirits will be addressed in the Council for TRIPS pursuant to paragraph 12 of this Declaration.

19. We instruct the Council for TRIPS, in pursuing its work programme including under the review of Article 27.3(b), the review of the implementation of the TRIPS Agreement under Article 71.1 and the work foreseen pursuant to paragraph 12 of this Declaration, to examine, *inter alia*, the relationship between the TRIPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity, the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore, and other relevant new developments raised by Members pursuant to Article 71.1. In undertaking this work, the TRIPS Council shall be guided by the objectives and principles set out in Articles 7 and 8 of the TRIPS Agreement and shall take fully into account the development dimension.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADE AND INVESTMENT

20. Recognizing the case for a multilateral framework to secure transparent, stable and predictable conditions for long-term cross-border investment, particularly foreign direct investment, that will contribute to the expansion of trade, and the need for enhanced **technical assistance and capacity-building** in this area as referred to in paragraph 21, we agree that negotiations will take place after the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on the basis of a decision to be taken, by explicit consensus, at that Session on modalities of negotiations.

21. We recognize the needs of developing and least-developed countries for enhanced support for **technical assistance and capacity building** in this area, including policy analysis and development so that they may better

evaluate the implications of closer multilateral cooperation for their development policies and objectives, and human and institutional development. To this end, we shall work in cooperation with other relevant intergovernmental organisations, including UNCTAD, and through appropriate regional and bilateral channels, to provide strengthened and adequately resourced assistance to respond to these needs.

22. In the period until the Fifth Session, further work in the Working Group on the Relationship Between Trade and Investment will focus on the clarification of: scope and definition; transparency; non-discrimination; modalities for pre-establishment commitments based on a GATS-type, positive list approach; development provisions; exceptions and balance-of-payments safeguards; consultation and the settlement of disputes between Members. Any framework should reflect in a balanced manner the interests of home and host countries, and take due account of the development policies and objectives of host governments as well as their right to regulate in the public interest. The special development, trade and financial needs of developing and least-developed countries should be taken into account as an integral part of any framework, which should enable Members to undertake obligations and commitments commensurate with their individual needs and circumstances. Due regard should be paid to other relevant WTO provisions. Account should be taken, as appropriate, of existing bilateral and regional arrangements on investment.

#### INTERACTION BETWEEN TRADE AND COMPETITION POLICY

23. Recognizing the case for a multilateral framework to enhance the contribution of competition policy to international trade and development, and the need for enhanced **technical assistance and capacity-building** in this area as referred to in paragraph 24, we agree that negotiations will take place after the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on the basis of a decision to be taken, by explicit consensus, at that Session on modalities of negotiations.

24. We recognize the needs of developing and least-developed countries for enhanced support for **technical assistance and capacity building** in this area, including policy analysis and development so that they may better evaluate the implications of closer multilateral cooperation for their development policies and objectives, and human and institutional development. To this end, we shall work in cooperation with other relevant intergovernmental organisations, including UNCTAD, and through appropriate regional and bilateral channels, to provide strengthened and adequately resourced assistance to respond to these needs.

25. In the period until the Fifth Session, further work in the Working Group on the Interaction between Trade and Competition Policy will focus on the clarification of: core principles, including transparency, non-discrimination and procedural fairness, and provisions on hardcore cartels; modalities for voluntary cooperation; and support for progressive reinforcement of competition institutions in developing countries through capacity building. Full account shall be taken of the needs of developing and least-developed country participants and appropriate flexibility provided to address them.

#### TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

26. Recognizing the case for a multilateral agreement on transparency in government procurement and the need for enhanced **technical assistance and capacity building** in this area, we agree that negotiations will take place after the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on the basis of a decision to be taken, by explicit consensus, at that Session on modalities of negotiations. These negotiations will build on the progress made in the Working Group on Transparency in Government Procurement by that time and take into account participants' development priorities, especially those of least-developed country participants. Negotiations shall be limited to the transparency aspects and therefore will not restrict the scope for countries to give preferences to domestic supplies and suppliers. We commit ourselves to ensuring adequate **technical assistance and support for capacity building** both during the negotiations and after their conclusion.

#### TRADE FACILITATION

27. Recognizing the case for further expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit, and the need for enhanced **technical assistance and capacity building** in this area, we agree that negotiations will take place after the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on the basis of a decision to be taken, by explicit consensus, at that Session on modalities of negotiations. In the period until the Fifth Session, the Council for Trade in Goods shall review and as appropriate, clarify and improve relevant aspects of Articles V, VIII and X of the GATT 1994 and identify the trade facilitation needs and priorities of Members, in

particular developing and least-developed countries. We commit ourselves to ensuring adequate **technical assistance and support for capacity building** in this area.

#### WTO RULES

28. In the light of experience and of the increasing application of these instruments by Members, we agree to negotiations aimed at clarifying and improving disciplines under the Agreements on Implementation of Article VI of the GATT 1994 and on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, while preserving the basic concepts, principles and effectiveness of these Agreements and their instruments and objectives, and taking into account the needs of developing and least-developed participants. In the initial phase of the negotiations, participants will indicate the provisions, including disciplines on trade distorting practices, that they seek to clarify and improve in the subsequent phase. In the context of these negotiations, participants shall also aim to clarify and improve WTO disciplines on fisheries subsidies, taking into account the importance of this sector to developing countries. We note that fisheries subsidies are also referred to in paragraph 31.

29. We also agree to negotiations aimed at clarifying and improving disciplines and procedures under the existing WTO provisions applying to regional trade agreements. The negotiations shall take into account the developmental aspects of regional trade agreements.

#### DISPUTE SETTLEMENT UNDERSTANDING

30. We agree to negotiations on improvements and clarifications of the Dispute Settlement Understanding. The negotiations should be based on the work done thus far as well as any additional proposals by Members, and aim to agree on improvements and clarifications not later than May 2003, at which time we will take steps to ensure that the results enter into force as soon as possible thereafter.

#### TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT

31. With a view to enhancing the mutual supportiveness of trade and environment, we agree to negotiations, without prejudging their outcome, on:

- (i) the relationship between existing WTO rules and specific trade obligations set out in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). The negotiations shall be limited in scope to the applicability of such existing WTO rules as among parties to the MEA in question. The negotiations shall not prejudice the WTO rights of any Member that is not a party to the MEA in question;
- (ii) procedures for regular information exchange between MEA Secretariats and the relevant WTO committees, and the criteria for the granting of observer status;
- (iii) the reduction or, as appropriate, elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to environmental goods and services.

We note that fisheries subsidies form part of the negotiations provided for in paragraph 28.

32. We instruct the Committee on Trade and Environment, in pursuing work on all items on its agenda within its current terms of reference, to give particular attention to:

- (i) the effect of environmental measures on market access, especially in relation to developing countries, in particular the least-developed among them, and those situations in which the elimination or reduction of trade restrictions and distortions would benefit trade, the environment and development;
- (ii) the relevant provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights; and
- (iii) labelling requirements for environmental purposes.

Work on these issues should include the identification of any need to clarify relevant WTO rules. The Committee shall report to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference, and make recommendations, where appropriate, with respect to future action, including the desirability of negotiations. The outcome of this work as well as the negotiations carried out under paragraph 31(i) and (ii) shall be compatible with the open and non-

discriminatory nature of the multilateral trading system, shall not add to or diminish the rights and obligations of Members under existing WTO agreements, in particular the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, nor alter the balance of these rights and obligations, and will take into account the needs of developing and least-developed countries.

33. We recognize the importance of **technical assistance and capacity building** in the field of trade and environment to developing countries, in particular the least-developed among them. We also encourage that expertise and experience be shared with Members wishing to perform environmental reviews at the national level. A report shall be prepared on these activities for the Fifth Session.

#### ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

34. We take note of the work which has been done in the General Council and other relevant bodies since the Ministerial Declaration of 20 May 1998 and agree to continue the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce. The work to date demonstrates that electronic commerce creates new challenges and opportunities for trade for Members at all stages of development, and we recognize the importance of creating and maintaining an environment which is favourable to the future development of electronic commerce. We instruct the General Council to consider the most appropriate institutional arrangements for handling the Work Programme, and to report on further progress to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference. We declare that Members will maintain their current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions until the Fifth Session.

#### SMALL ECONOMIES

35. We agree to a work programme, under the auspices of the General Council, to examine issues relating to the trade of small economies. The objective of this work is to frame responses to the trade-related issues identified for the fuller integration of small, vulnerable economies into the multilateral trading system, and not to create a sub-category of WTO Members. The General Council shall review the work programme and make recommendations for action to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference.

#### TRADE, DEBT AND FINANCE

36. We agree to an examination, in a Working Group under the auspices of the General Council, of the relationship between trade, debt and finance, and of any possible recommendations on steps that might be taken within the mandate and competence of the WTO to enhance the capacity of the multilateral trading system to contribute to a durable solution to the problem of external indebtedness of developing and least-developed countries, and to strengthen the coherence of international trade and financial policies, with a view to safeguarding the multilateral trading system from the effects of financial and monetary instability. The General Council shall report to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on progress in the examination.

#### TRADE AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY

37. We agree to an examination, in a Working Group under the auspices of the General Council, of the relationship between trade and transfer of technology, and of any possible recommendations on steps that might be taken within the mandate of the WTO to increase flows of technology to developing countries. The General Council shall report to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on progress in the examination.

#### TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

38. We confirm that technical cooperation and capacity building are core elements of the development dimension of the multilateral trading system, and we welcome and endorse the New Strategy for WTO Technical Cooperation for Capacity Building, Growth and Integration. We instruct the Secretariat, in coordination with other relevant agencies, to support domestic efforts for mainstreaming trade into national plans for economic development and strategies for poverty reduction. The delivery of WTO technical assistance shall be designed to assist developing and least-developed countries and low-income countries in transition to adjust to WTO rules and disciplines, implement obligations and exercise the rights of membership, including drawing on the benefits of an open, rules-based multilateral trading system. Priority shall also be accorded to small, vulnerable, and transition economies, as well as to Members and Observers without representation in Geneva. We reaffirm our support for the valuable work of the International Trade Centre, which should be enhanced.

39. We underscore the urgent necessity for the effective coordinated delivery of technical assistance with bilateral donors, in the OECD Development Assistance Committee and relevant international and regional intergovernmental institutions, within a coherent policy framework and timetable. In the coordinated delivery of technical assistance, we instruct the Director-General to consult with the relevant agencies, bilateral donors and beneficiaries, to identify ways of enhancing and rationalizing the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least-Developed Countries and the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP).

40. We agree that there is a need for technical assistance to benefit from secure and predictable funding. We therefore instruct the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration to develop a plan for adoption by the General Council in December 2001 that will ensure long-term funding for WTO technical assistance at an overall level no lower than that of the current year and commensurate with the activities outlined above.

41. We have established firm commitments on technical cooperation and capacity building in various paragraphs in this Ministerial Declaration. We reaffirm these specific commitments contained in paragraphs 16, 21, 24, 26, 27, 33, 38-40, 42 and 43, and also reaffirm the understanding in paragraph 2 on the important role of sustainably financed technical assistance and capacity-building programmes. We instruct the Director-General to report to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference, with an interim report to the General Council in December 2002 on the implementation and adequacy of these commitments in the identified paragraphs.

#### LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

42. We acknowledge the seriousness of the concerns expressed by the least-developed countries (LDCs) in the Zanzibar Declaration adopted by their Ministers in July 2001. We recognize that the integration of the LDCs into the multilateral trading system requires meaningful market access, support for the diversification of their production and export base, and trade-related **technical assistance and capacity building**. We agree that the meaningful integration of LDCs into the trading system and the global economy will involve efforts by all WTO Members. We commit ourselves to the objective of duty-free, quota-free market access for products originating from LDCs. In this regard, we welcome the significant market access improvements by WTO Members in advance of the Third UN Conference on LDCs (LDC-III), in Brussels, May 2001. We further commit ourselves to consider additional measures for progressive improvements in market access for LDCs. Accession of LDCs remains a priority for the Membership. We agree to work to facilitate and accelerate negotiations with acceding LDCs. We instruct the Secretariat to reflect the priority we attach to LDCs' accessions in the annual plans for **technical assistance**. We reaffirm the commitments we undertook at LDC-III, and agree that the WTO should take into account, in designing its work programme for LDCs, the trade-related elements of the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action, consistent with the WTO's mandate, adopted at LDC-III. We instruct the Sub-Committee for Least-Developed Countries to design such a work programme and to report on the agreed work programme to the General Council at its first meeting in 2002.

43. We endorse the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least-Developed Countries (IF) as a viable model for LDCs' trade development. We urge development partners to significantly increase contributions to the IF Trust Fund and WTO extra-budgetary trust funds in favour of LDCs. We urge the core agencies, in coordination with development partners, to explore the enhancement of the IF with a view to addressing the supply-side constraints of LDCs and the extension of the model to all LDCs, following the review of the IF and the appraisal of the ongoing Pilot Scheme in selected LDCs. We request the Director-General, following coordination with heads of the other agencies, to provide an interim report to the General Council in December 2002 and a full report to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on all issues affecting LDCs.

#### SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT

44. We reaffirm that provisions for special and differential treatment are an integral part of the WTO Agreements. We note the concerns expressed regarding their operation in addressing specific constraints faced by developing countries, particularly least-developed countries. In that connection, we also note that some Members have proposed a Framework Agreement on Special and Differential Treatment (WT/GC/W/442). We therefore agree that all special and differential treatment provisions shall be reviewed with a view to strengthening them and making them more precise, effective and operational. In this connection, we endorse the work programme on special and differential treatment set out in the Decision on Implementation-Related Issues and Concerns.

## ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

45. The negotiations to be pursued under the terms of this Declaration shall be concluded not later than 1 January 2005. The Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference will take stock of progress in the negotiations, provide any necessary political guidance, and take decisions as necessary. When the results of the negotiations in all areas have been established, a Special Session of the Ministerial Conference will be held to take decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of those results.

46. The overall conduct of the negotiations shall be supervised by a Trade Negotiations Committee under the authority of the General Council. The Trade Negotiations Committee shall hold its first meeting not later than 31 January 2002. It shall establish appropriate negotiating mechanisms as required and supervise the progress of the negotiations.

47. With the exception of the improvements and clarifications of the Dispute Settlement Understanding, the conduct, conclusion and entry into force of the outcome of the negotiations shall be treated as parts of a single undertaking. However, agreements reached at an early stage may be implemented on a provisional or a definitive basis. Early agreements shall be taken into account in assessing the overall balance of the negotiations.

48. Negotiations shall be open to:

- (i) Members of the WTO; and
- (ii) States and separate customs territories currently in the process of accession and those that inform Members, at a regular meeting of the General Council, of their intention to negotiate the terms of their membership and for whom an accession working party is established.

Decisions on the outcomes of the negotiations shall be taken only by WTO Members.

49. The negotiations shall be conducted in a transparent manner among participants, in order to facilitate the effective participation of all. They shall be conducted with a view to ensuring benefits to all participants and to achieving an overall balance in the outcome of the negotiations.

50. The negotiations and the other aspects of the Work Programme shall take fully into account the principle of special and differential treatment for developing and least-developed countries embodied in: Part IV of the GATT 1994; the Decision of 28 November 1979 on Differential and More Favourable Treatment, Reciprocity and Fuller Participation of Developing Countries; the Uruguay Round Decision on Measures in Favour of Least-Developed Countries; and all other relevant WTO provisions.

51. The Committee on Trade and Development and the Committee on Trade and Environment shall, within their respective mandates, each act as a forum to identify and debate developmental and environmental aspects of the negotiations, in order to help achieve the objective of having sustainable development appropriately reflected.

52. Those elements of the Work Programme which do not involve negotiations are also accorded a high priority. They shall be pursued under the overall supervision of the General Council, which shall report on progress to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| AITIC   | Agency for Trade Information and Co-operation (Switzerland)  |
| CIDC    | Canadian International Development Consortium (Canada)   |
| CTD     | Committee on Trade and Development (WTO)   |
| DAC     | Development Assistance Committee of the OECD   |
| EU      | European Union   |
| GATS    | General Agreement on Trade in Services (WTO)   |
| GATT    | General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (WTO)   |
| IBRD    | International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)                                     |
| ICTSD   | International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development   |
| IDI     | International Development Institute (World Bank)   |
| IMF     | International Monetary Fund  |
| ISO     | International Standardisation Organization   |
| IUHEI   | The Graduate Institute of International Studies (Geneva)   |
| ITC     | International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO  |
| JITAP   | The Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme for Selected African and Least-developed Countries |
| LDCs    | Least-developed Countries  |
| NAFTA   | North American Free Trade Area   |
| NGO     | Non-governmental Organisation  |
| OECD    | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development   |
| TA      | Technical assistance   |
| TRIPs   | Trade-related Intellectual Property (in the WTO)   |
| UN      | United Nations   |
| UNCTAD: | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development   |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Programme   |
| UNEP    | United Nations Environmental Programme   |
| WCO     | World Customs Organization   |
| WIPO    | World Intellectual Property Organization   |
| WTO     | World Trade Organization   |

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Over the last six years, bilateral donors and multilateral agencies, including the World Trade Organization, have been mobilising increasingly more, though still limited, means for technical co-operation programmes in the field of trade policy. Considering the magnitude of needs in developing countries, particularly as we move towards new trade talks, and the limited amount of resources at disposal, the effectiveness of these programmes in delivering tangible results is becoming an issue of utmost importance. This study provides a short overview of policies and procedures used by major multilateral agencies when formulating, implementing and assessing capacity building programmes in the field of trade policy. The objective is not to advocate any specific model of technical co-operation but rather to pave the way for a much-needed international debate on trade policy related technical assistance. Based on the opinions of leading experts on capacity-building, the study thus evaluates the effectiveness of current technical assistance activities, and provides options for future programmes to implement the commitments for technical cooperation, made at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha.