

UNCTAD Public Symposium on “Responding to Global Crises: New Development Paths”

CUTS-UNCTAD Joint Breakout Session on

Is There a Role for the LDCs in Re-Shaping Global Economic Governance?

10 May 2010; 1400 – 1530hrs, Room XVIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

The recent spate of global crises affecting economic and financial stability, food and energy security, climate change and overall economic development have once again exposed the need to have effective, efficient, and equitable global economic governance to adequately address these critical challenges. Thus the calls for a substantive reform of the current global economic governance processes and structures have currently become louder. A key question in this regard is the role that the Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) can and should play in the debates on the reform of global economic governance and in re-shaping it to better reflect their own development needs and aspirations.

The LDCs face two formidable challenges related to global crises and global economic governance. On the one hand, they have hardly any capacity and resources to absorb the severe shocks emanating from international policy and institutional failures which can wipe out their scarce development gains. On the other, they remain marginalized in all the debates related to global economic governance reforms. Hence, while LDCs are the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of the crises, they remain least represented in the fora and mechanisms which are responsible for dealing with the crises.

Recognizing this, CUTS and UNCTAD have joined hands to organize a breakout session under the UNCTAD Public Symposium (Geneva; 10-11 May 2010) to discuss the possible role of LDCs in influencing the agenda on re-shaping global economic governance. The proposed session will attempt to identify the interests of the LDCs in relation to three important aspects of global economic governance, particularly which are related to: international trade, aid and finance, and climate change and access to technology. The three core themes will be scrutinized from the vantage point of the horizontal issues that will include: transparency, representativeness, accountability, and effectiveness.

Following are some of the specific questions that the panelists in the breakout session will focus on:

- Are the various discussions on global economic governance transparent, particularly to the absentee or marginal participants like LDCs? How can the transparency of these platforms be improved?
- Are the LDCs adequately represented in the fora for global economic governance? How can their representation be made more direct and substantive?

- To whom are the main fora and actors of global economic governance accountable? How can they be made more responsive to LDC development needs?
- What will be the impact of greater LDC participation on the effectiveness of global economic governance? Will it generate positive externalities for their national development?
- What national processes and structures need to be put in place to enhance the participation of the LDCs in the agenda setting debates for global economic governance?
- How can developed and non-LDC developing countries as well as relevant international development agencies contribute in building capacities and generating resources for the LDCs so that they can play an appropriate role in the ensuing reforms of the global economic governance?

CUTS and UNCTAD hope that a discussion on the above and other related questions in the breakout session will lead to a better understanding of LDC participation in global economic governance. It is also expected to generate ideas regarding ways and means of increasing LDC inputs into debates on global economic governance reform.

The basis of the session will be three thematic presentations by experts followed by a moderated discussion and a concluding summing up.

Programme

- 1400 Welcome and brief introduction by Moderator, **Debapriya Bhattacharya**, Special Adviser on LDCs, Office of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD
- 1405 Presentation by **H.E. Dr. Anthony Mothae Maruping**, Ambassador of Lesotho to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva on **“Role of the LDCs in international trading system”**
- 1415 Presentation by **Ahmed Abdel Latif**, Intellectual Property & Technology Programme Manager, ICTSD, on a panelist on **“Current debates on climate change and access to technology: The LDC perspectives”**
- 1425 Presentation by **Dirk Willem to Velde**, Director of Programmes, ODI, UK, on **“Evolving ODA regime and international financial architecture: What role do the LDCs play?”**
- 1435 Comments from the floor and general discussion

1520 Summary of discussion by the Moderator