

## ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PARAGRAPH 32(I) OF THE DOHA MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

### Statement by UNCTAD at the Regular Session of the Committee on Trade and Environment of 28 October 2003

1. Recent UNCTAD activities on the effects of environmental measures on market access have focused on three clusters:

- (a) A series of sector-specific country case studies;
- (b) Exploratory activities on a Consultative Task Force on Environmental Requirements and International Trade as project-oriented activity;
- (c) The UNCTAD/FAO/IFOAM International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture.

2. Within the context of a UK-DFID-funded project on building capacity for improved policy making and negotiation on key trade and environment issues, UNCTAD has commissioned a series of country-case studies on environmental requirements, market access and export competitiveness for six Asian countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam), which focus on three sectors: leather and footwear, horticultural products and electronics. These studies are being discussed at national and sub-regional workshops and focus on three clusters of issues: (i) information gathering and dissemination on environmental requirements; (ii) current adjustment measures at national level to new environmental requirements in key export markets; and (iii) pro-active policies on environmental requirements and improved participation in pre-standard setting consultations in export markets. The studies and workshops will also review the opportunities for sub-regional co-operation, if considered appropriate.

3. The sector-specific country-cases studies will also feed into exploratory work that is being carried out by UNCTAD for a Consultative Task Force on Environmental Requirements and International Trade, as mandated by the last session of UNCTAD's Commission on Trade in Goods and Services and Commodities. UNCTAD is commissioning several studies that, *inter alia*, review the lessons that can be learned from existing early warning systems in developing countries on environmental/health standards in external markets and a study on the contours of an international clearing house mechanism for voluntary environmental and health requirements and its synergies with comparable existing public and private data bases. As a pre-UNCTAD XI event, UNCTAD and the National Institute of Metrology, Standardization and Industrial Quality (INMETRO) in Brazil are planning to hold an exploratory meeting in April 2004.

4. After its inauguration in February this year, the UNCTAD/FAO/IFOAM International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture held its second session in Geneva a week ago. The meeting reviewed drafts of various background papers on the costs and implications of lacking harmonization of public and private organic guarantee systems and international

approaches pursued in other sectors for implementing harmonization, equivalence and mutual recognition. The session discussed the further work programme of the International Task Force and decided to commission two additional studies: one on the short- and long-term prospects and specific methods for operationalizing harmonization, equivalence and mutual recognition in organic agriculture and a second study on the relationship between existing organic guarantee systems and the TBT Agreement.

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