



REPORT (2017) OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report covers the work of the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) in 2017. An overview is provided of the work of the CTD's Regular Session, the Dedicated Session on the Monitoring Mechanism on Special and Differential Treatment, the Dedicated Sessions on Regional Trade Agreements and Small Economies, the CTD's work on Aid for Trade, and the work of the Sub-Committee on Least Developed Countries.¹

2 REGULAR SESSION

2.1. The CTD in Regular Session held four formal meetings on 27 January and 14 March (101st Session), 17 May (102nd Session), 21 June (103rd Session) and 15 November 2017 (104th Session). The minutes of these meetings are contained in documents WT/COMTD/M/101, WT/COMTD/M/102, WT/COMTD/M/103 and WT/COMTD/M/104², respectively.

2.2. Members agreed to continue to invite a number of intergovernmental organizations on an ad hoc meeting-by-meeting basis. A full list of intergovernmental organizations with observer status in the Committee is contained in document WT/COMTD/W/22/Rev.8. The CTD continues to have outstanding requests for observer status from the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting (GOIC), the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) and the Groupe de la Banque Africaine de Développement.

2.3. At the 102nd Session, the Committee elected Ambassador Monique Van Daalen (Netherlands) as the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Least Developed Countries for 2017. Ambassador Taonga Mushayavanhu (Zimbabwe) was elected Chairman of the CTD.

2.4. The principal areas addressed by the CTD in Regular Session during the period covered in this report included the following:

- technical cooperation and training;
- market access for developing and least developed countries;
- report of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO;
- trade and development - work in the Committee on the basis of the Chairman's concluding statement from the Eighth Ministerial Conference (MC8);
- Work Programme on Electronic Commerce;
- duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) market access for least developed countries (LDCs);
- participation of developing countries in the multilateral trading system.

2.1 Technical Cooperation and Training

2.5. At the 101st Session, the Committee considered the final report of the evaluation of the WTO's technical assistance (TA), prepared by Saana Consulting (WT/COMTD/89), along with the

¹ There were no meetings in 2017 of the CTD's Dedicated Session on Preferential Trade Arrangements. The Special Session of the CTD, dealing with the issue of special and differential treatment (S&D), has its own reporting channel.

² To be issued.

WTO management response to the evaluation (WT/COMTD/90). In the report, having assessed the Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact of the various WTO TA activities during the 2010-15 period, Saana Consulting formulated 28 recommendations directed to WTO Members and senior management, as well as to the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC) and other WTO divisions. The Director-General emphasized the usefulness of the report, and welcomed its finding that the WTO's TA was relevant, and aligned to the needs and priorities of beneficiaries. Members were invited to ensure that the discussion on the evaluation would feed into the process of preparation of the Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan for 2018 and 2019. At the 104th Session, the Committee took note of the 2016 Annual Performance Report on Technical Assistance and Training (WT/COMTD/W/225). According to the report, a total of 18,600 participants were trained during the year, representing an increase of 25% compared to 2015. The volume of activities and related expenses remained stable. Progress continued to be recorded towards the full implementation of a TA management system based on results. Work also continued to improve the substantive content of the TA offer. With regard to the evaluation of performance in 2016, the proportion of targets met increased by four percentage points relative to 2015, reaching 57%. A significant qualitative improvement in the results-based management approach was noted. Also at the 104th Session, the Committee adopted the Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan for 2018 and 2019 (WT/COMTD/W/227/Rev.1).

2.2 Market Access for Developing and Least Developed Countries

2.6. With respect to the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), the Committee considered at its 101st Session a submission (WT/COMTD/93) by LAIA member countries, as well as a communication from the Chairman of the CTD to LAIA (WT/COMTD/W/223). During the 103rd Session, discussion took place on the basis of a further communication from LAIA (WT/COMTD/W/224). The Chairman encouraged Members to continue to discuss the issues relating to the LAIA agreements with a view to finding a way forward. Also at the 103rd Session, the delegation of Uruguay introduced, under "Other Business", a notification under the Enabling Clause (WT/COMTD/N/53) circulated on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay, members of LAIA. Discussion on the notification took place at the 104th Session, and will continue at the next meeting.

2.7. As concerns other regional trade agreements (RTAs), notifications under the Enabling Clause were made concerning Egypt's accession to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (WT/COMTD/N/51), the Agreement between India and Thailand (WT/COMTD/N/54) and the Agreement between MERCOSUR and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) (WT/COMTD/N/55).

2.8. The RTA notifications concerning the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Customs Union, the ASEAN-Korea Agreement and the India-Korea Agreement remained on the CTD's agenda during 2017. The communication from China, Egypt and India titled "Systemic and Specific Issues arising out of the Dual Notification of the GCC Customs Union" (WT/COMTD/W/175) also remained on the agenda. A number of interventions were made on both substance and procedure. Divergent views were expressed on how to deal with the issues relating to the RTAs notified under both the Enabling Clause and GATT Article XXIV and their implications.

2.9. With regard to preferential trade arrangements (PTAs), the United States made a notification of its trade preference scheme for Nepal (WT/COMTD/N/52).

2.3 Report of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO

2.10. The Joint Advisory Group (JAG) on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) held its 51st Session on 10 July 2017. The report on that meeting is contained in document ITC/AG(LI)/268. Ambassador Frances Mary Lisson (Australia), the Chairperson of the JAG, presented the report to the CTD at its 104th Session. The Committee took note of the report and forwarded it to the General Council for adoption.

2.4 Trade and Development - Work in the Committee on the basis of the Chairman's Concluding Statement from the Eighth Ministerial Conference

2.11. At the Eighth Ministerial Conference (MC8), Ministers, *inter alia*, reaffirmed the positive link between trade and development and called for focused work in the CTD. Ministers called on Members to fully operationalize the mandate of the CTD as a focal point for development work. The Committee continued its discussions at the 101st, 103rd and 104th Sessions on the two outstanding proposals for work under the MC8 mandate. One proposal – by Barbados, Belize, China, Cuba, Ecuador, India and the African Group (WT/COMTD/W/208) – is for the CTD to report on development-related activities and development issues raised in other WTO bodies. The other remaining proposal – by China, Cuba, Ecuador, India and the African Group – is for the CTD to make a recommendation to the parties to RTAs to submit their notification and information requirements jointly. The Chairman encouraged continued engagement among Members in order to make progress on these proposals.

2.5 Work Programme on Electronic Commerce

2.12. Four communications relating to the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce were considered at the 101st Session. The first communication (JOB/DEV/39/Rev.1) was circulated by China and Pakistan; the second communication (JOB/DEV/41) was from Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay; the co-sponsors of the third communication (JOB/DEV/42) were Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, the European Union, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Montenegro, Paraguay, Singapore and Turkey. The fourth communication (JOB/DEV/43) was submitted by Brunei Darussalam; Colombia; Costa Rica; Hong Kong, China; Israel; Malaysia; Mexico; Nigeria; Pakistan; Panama; Qatar; Seychelles; Singapore and Turkey. Discussion under this agenda item continued at the 103rd and 104th Sessions. A communication from China (JOB/DEV/49) was considered at the 104th Session.

2.6 Duty-Free and Quota-Free Market Access for LDCs

2.13. An item concerning DFQF market access for LDCs was listed on the agendas of the 101st, 103rd and 104th Sessions. The Committee was informed of some updates with respect to the provision of DFQF market access to LDCs. Cambodia – the Coordinator of the LDC Group – recalled that the Group had submitted, in November 2016, a revised proposal concerning the draft terms of reference for a Secretariat study on DFQF implementation (WT/COMTD/W/218/Rev.1). A number of delegations recalled their concerns with the proposal. At the 104th Session, the Committee conducted its annual review of the steps taken to provide DFQF market access to LDCs. It was not possible for the Secretariat to issue its report on Members' DFQF market access for LDCs, as mandated in the Bali Ministerial Decision (WT/MIN(13)/44 – WT/L/919), because of divergent views among some Members on the scope and coverage of the report.

2.7 Participation of developing countries in the multilateral trading system

2.14. In order to assist the Committee with its requirement to keep under continuous review the participation of developing country Members in the multilateral trading system, the Secretariat prepared a report (WT/COMTD/W/230) highlighting salient features concerning the participation of developing economies in the global trading system. The findings of the report were presented to the Committee at its 104th Session. The Committee took note of the report.

3 DEDICATED SESSION ON THE MONITORING MECHANISM ON SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT

3.1. The Dedicated Session on the Monitoring Mechanism on Special and Differential Treatment held two formal meetings during 2017, on 21 June [and on 15 November 2017], both chaired by Ambassador Taonga Mushayavanhu (Zimbabwe). The minutes of these meetings are contained in documents WT/COMTD/MMSDT/M/7 and WT/COMTD/MMSDT/M/8³, respectively. At the June Session, the Chairman brought to Members' attention paragraph 12 of the Bali Ministerial Decision establishing the Monitoring Mechanism (WT/MIN(13)/45 - WT/L/920), which states that "The Mechanism shall be reviewed three years after its first formal meeting, and thereafter as

³ To be issued.

necessary, taking into account its functioning and evolving circumstances". He also pointed out that, according to the Decision, the monitoring of special and differential provisions is to be undertaken on the basis of written inputs or submissions made by Members, as well as on the basis of reports from other WTO bodies to which submissions by Members could also be made. Since no written submissions had been received in the Monitoring Mechanism, he raised the question of how Members would wish to proceed with the mandated review under the circumstances. In the ensuing discussion, delegations expressed differing views on the matter. Some were of the view that Members should proceed with the review, while others felt that a review should only take place after concrete experience had been gained. Discussion on this matter continued at the November Session. The Chairman urged Members to come to a common understanding on how to proceed with the review.

4 DEDICATED SESSION ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

4.1. The 8th Dedicated Session on Regional Trade Agreements was held on 14 March 2017, and chaired by Ambassador Christopher Onyanga Aparr (Uganda). The minutes of the meeting are contained in document WT/COMTD/RTA/M/8. The Committee considered the Free Trade Agreement between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India (Goods) (WT/COMTD/N/35, WT/COMTD/N/35/Add.1, WT/COMTD/RTA/8/1, WT/COMTD/RTA/8/2), as per the provisions of the 14 December 2006 General Council Decision on a Transparency Mechanism for Regional Trade Agreements (WT/L/671).

5 DEDICATED SESSION ON SMALL ECONOMIES

5.1. In 2017, the CTD in Dedicated Session held two formal meetings on the Work Programme on Small Economies. The meetings, on 17 May and 7 November were chaired by Ambassador Taonga Mushayavanhu (Zimbabwe). The minutes of these meetings are contained in documents WT/COMTD/SE/M/34 and WT/COMTD/SE/M/35⁴. At the 34th Dedicated Session, The Small and Vulnerable Economies (SVE) Group introduced document WT/COMTD/SE/W/35, which presented a summary of the conclusions of the discussions held by the Dedicated Session in 2015 and 2016 based on document WT/COMTD/SE/W/31 "Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Small Economies when Linking into Global Value Chains in Trade in Goods and Services" prepared by the Secretariat. Also, following the Ministerial Decision on the Work Programme on Small Economies (WT/MIN(15)/40 – WT/L/975) made in Nairobi in 2015, the Secretariat introduced document WT/COMTD/SE/W/34, "Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Small Economies in their Efforts to Reduce Trade Costs, Particularly in the Area of Trade Facilitation". This paper drew on the Aid-for-Trade Monitoring Evaluation (M&E) exercise of 2015 to analyse best practices and policy approaches to enhance productive capacity and export competitiveness. Members were also briefed by a representative of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) on the matter of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and trade facilitation. Several SVEs shared their experiences in the area of trade facilitation. At this meeting, the Secretariat also introduced document WT/COMTD/SE/W/22/Rev.8, which kept a record of all matters concerning the Small Economies' Work Programme and included key proposals made in the negotiating groups and other WTO bodies. It also listed all decisions which had been taken concerning the Work Programme until MC10. At the 35th Dedicated Session, on 7 November, the Dedicated Session agreed to a proposal (WT/COMTD/SE/W/36/Rev.1) submitted by the SVE Group for a draft Ministerial Decision regarding the Work Programme on Small Economies. Also, Members adopted the Report to the General Council (WT/COMTD/SE/10) and agreed to forward it to the General Council for proposed action by Ministers at the Eleventh Ministerial Conference.

6 AID FOR TRADE

6.1. The CTD held its 39th, 40th, and 41st sessions on Aid for Trade in 2017, on 10 February, 31 May, and 07 November, respectively. At each session, Members reviewed the implementation of the 2016-2017 biennial work programme – a work programme that was finalized at the 36th Session of the CTD Aid for Trade on 15 February 2016.⁵ Ambassador Christopher Onyanga Aparr (Uganda) chaired the February meeting, and Ambassador Taonga Mushayavanhu (Zimbabwe) chaired the meetings in May and November. The minutes of the meetings are

⁴ To be issued.

⁵ WT/COMTD/AFT/W/60.

contained in documents WT/COMTD/AFT/M/39, WT/COMTD/AFT/M/40 and WT/COMTD/AFT/M/41⁶, respectively. The 2017 Global Review of Aid for Trade was held on 11 – 13 July 2017. Aid for Trade was also included as an agenda item for discussion at the General Council on 26 July 2017.

6.2. Two dedicated thematic workshops were held under the auspices of the CTD as follows: "Aid for Trade, Trade Costs Indices and Design and Implementation of Policies to Reduce Trade Costs" on 10 February 2017, which served to review new and existing trade cost indices and examined how they are being integrated into Aid-for-Trade programming; and "Results of the 2017 Aid for Trade Monitoring and Evaluation Exercise" on 30 May 2017 which previewed the draft Aid for Trade at a Glance publication, titled "Promoting Trade, Inclusiveness and Connectivity for Sustainable Development". Reports on the workshops were given at the CTD Aid-for-Trade formal sessions.

6.3. At the 39th Session, Botswana reported on a new Aid-for-Trade strategy (developed in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat) to drive its national export growth and to improve its international competitiveness. Ambassador Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) discussed implementation of the Vienna and Istanbul Programmes of Action, gave a statement highlighting the constraints by LDCs, landlocked countries and small economies in relation to energy infrastructure, sustainable agricultural development, transit infrastructure and private sector development. Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Korea, and the United States updated the CTD, pursuant to their recent Trade Policy Reviews. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), ITC, African Development Bank (AfDB), World Bank Group (WBG) provided updates on their activities and the EIF announced its plans to hold a replenishment conference in 2018. The WTO Secretariat gave an overview of responses to the Aid-for-Trade M&E Exercise. One-hundred and eleven responses to the self-assessment questionnaire and 158 case stories had been received at that time. The structure and planning process for the Global Review was discussed. India (supported by Bangladesh and Cameroon) expressed concerns about declining engagement in the M&E exercise, the additionality of Aid-for-Trade finance, and suggested a holistic review of the Aid-for-Trade M&E exercise to be undertaken by the General Council and the CTD that would also examine the periodicity of Global Reviews.

6.4. At the 40th Session, the WTO Secretariat discussed preparations for the Aid for Trade Global Review 2017 noting that the closing plenary session would be an opportunity for Members to express views on the future direction of the Aid-for-Trade Initiative. The WBG announced its Umbrella Facility for Trade; a new vehicle for supporting the Bank's advisory work on global and regional trade issues. Japan, Mexico and Switzerland made statements pursuant to their recent Trade Policy Reviews and the WTO Secretariat reported on three regional activities on Aid for Trade held in Dakar, Senegal for Africa; Incheon, Korea for Asia and the Pacific; and Miami, USA for the Caribbean. The US provided an update on the work of the Standards Alliance, a public-private partnership between USAID and the American National Standards Institute, designed to provide capacity-building assistance to developing countries, specifically related to implementation of the Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement. Benin and Cameroon requested donors to take into account concerns regarding the regional balance of Aid-for-Trade flows, alignment of support to partner country needs, focusing on closing the digital divide and addressing rural-urban connectivity issues. Cameroon requested a workshop on industrial policy and the sharing of experiences/best practices on the type of policies countries could utilize to benefit from the growing digital economy.

6.5. The Aid for Trade Global Review took place from 11-13 July 2017, and featured a total of 55 sessions. The Vice-President of The Gambia, 24 ministers and 11 heads of international organizations attended the Global Review, together with a number of deputy ministers and vice-presidents of international organizations. Various reports were launched at the Aid for Trade Global Review 2017, including the joint OECD-WTO publication "Promoting Trade, Connectivity and Inclusiveness for Sustainable Development". The opening session featured a keynote intervention by WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo, the Heads of the Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), UNCTAD and ITC, the involvement of Vice Presidents of multilateral development banks (AfDB, Asian Development Bank

⁶ To be issued.

(AsDB), European Development Bank (EBRD), International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the participation of senior officials from WBG, IADB and Germany (in its capacity as G20 chair). In his keynote remarks, Director-General Azevêdo reiterated the central role that trade plays in delivering growth, reducing poverty and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

6.6. At a thematic level, the Review was diverse – reflecting the broad range of topics that the Initiative seeks to address. Statements reflected this variety featuring issues such as digital and physical infrastructure, e-commerce, investment, inclusiveness (including women's economic empowerment), Micro, Small and Medium sized Enterprises (MSMEs), public-private partnership, supply-side capacity, trade facilitation, trade finance and achieving the SDGs. Sessions dedicated to Trade Facilitation topped the list of themes discussed with nine sessions in total. Digital Connectivity was also a prominent theme, featuring as the main topic of seven sessions and in the discussion of many other sessions. Financing needed to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals was the topic of a high-level panel on 11 July that featured a keynote speech from European Union Development Commissioner, Neven Mimica. Another topic that generated a lot of interest at the Global Review was women's economic empowerment. A joint UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-WTO publication on "Trade and Food Standards" was launched by WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and FAO Director-General Jose Graziano da Silva. The UN World Tourism Organization's year of Sustainable Tourism was marked by two sessions that highlighted the economic importance of the sector, in particular for LDCs.

6.7. Ideas of where to focus the Aid-for-Trade Initiative in future were profiled in two plenary sessions on the final day of the Aid for Trade Global Review 2017. The suggestion of focusing future work on the theme of "Economic Empowerment" emerged during the penultimate plenary session. This theme was also picked up in statements by delegations at the closing session, together with some other suggestions. Cameroon suggested that prior to the launch of the next Global Review there should be an appraisal of the M&E exercise. This point was echoed by Benin and further elaborated by India, arguing that the periodicity of global reviews should also be examined. A summary report of the Aid for Trade Global Review 2017 has been issued in document WT/COMTD/AFT/W/74.

6.8. Aid for Trade was discussed at the General Council on 26 July 2017. In his report of the Aid for Trade Global Review 2017, the Director-General noted since the start of the Initiative in 2006, almost 300 billion dollars has been disbursed in Aid for Trade support to 146 developing countries. He stressed the need to maintain focus on LDCs and for the Aid for Trade initiative to continue to go from strength to strength. Bearing in mind Members' views on future work, he noted the CTD Aid for Trade's role in facilitating discussions on a new biennial work programme and crystallizing the different themes that could be taken forward. The report of the July General Council debate is contained in document WT/GC/M/168.

6.9. At the 41st Session, the AsDB and the AfDB updated on their recent Aid-for-Trade programmes. The World Bank updated on the main messages for the IMF/World Bank Group annual meetings and highlighted initiatives launched to research and close the gender divide. The EIF noted new partnerships to help mobilize resources and highlighted their work in LDCs. Nigeria, EU, Brazil, Jamaica and Senegal on behalf of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) made statements pursuant to their recent Trade Policy Reviews.

6.10. Under the agenda item on Monitoring and Evaluation of Implementation and Development Effectiveness, the Chair provided initial thoughts on how to take forward the Aid-for-Trade Initiative. He suggested that a new work programme be elaborated on the basis of discussions with Members in informal and formal sessions, as necessary, with the aim of submitting a work programme, under his own responsibility, to the General Council early in 2018. He further elaborated that the review of Aid for Trade achievements foreseen in the 2016-2017 cycle would be carried forward into the new work programme. The Chairman also recalled that Aid for Trade had been cited in Members' submissions for MC11. He encouraged Members to maintain the political visibility of the initiative.

7 SUB-COMMITTEE ON LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

7.1. In 2017, the Sub-Committee on Least Developed Countries (hereafter the Sub-Committee) held two formal meetings on 19 May (80th Session) and 3 October (81st Session), chaired by

Ambassador Monique Van Daalen (Netherlands). The minutes of the meetings are contained in documents WT/COMTD/LDC/M/80 and WT/COMTD/LDC/M/81, respectively. The Sub Committee took up the following subjects pursuant to the WTO Work Programme for the LDCs (WT/COMTD/LDC/11/Rev.1): (i) market access for LDCs; (ii) trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives for LDCs; and (iii) accession of LDCs. The Sub-Committee further considered a briefing by the Secretariat on arrangements to facilitate the participation of LDCs in the Eleventh Ministerial Conference (MC11). The delegation of Cambodia acted as the Coordinator of the LDC Group in 2017.

7.1 Market Access for LDCs

7.2. At the 80th Session, the Secretariat provided an update on recent trends in LDC trade, building on the information and analysis provided in the 2016 LDC market access Note (WT/COMTD/LDC/W/64 and WT/COMTD/LDC/W/64/Add.1). The LDCs took the opportunity to call on Members to increase efforts to implement Ministerial Decisions taken in favour of LDCs on preferential market access in goods and services. A Corrigendum (WT/COMTD/LDC/W/64/Corr.1) was issued in May 2017 to correctly reflect a header in Annex Table 6.

7.3. At the 81st Session, Members considered the 2017 LDC market access Note by the Secretariat (WT/COMTD/LDC/W/65). Members expressed appreciation for the information and analysis contained in the report, including on LDC trade in goods and particularly services. Subsequent to the meeting, the Secretariat issued a Revision (WT/COMTD/LDC/W/65/Rev.1) of the Note to take into account updated statistics on market access.

7.2 Trade-related Technical Assistance and Capacity-building Initiatives for LDCs

7.4. At the 80th Session, the Executive Secretariat of the EIF provided an update on recent progress in the EIF, including the finalization of the EIF Medium Term Strategic Plan 2016-2018 and on steps taken to mobilize further resources. The LDCs highlighted the importance of the EIF for the LDCs to sustainably develop through trade, and called on donors to contribute to the funding of Phase Two of the EIF.

7.5. At the same meeting, the Secretariat of the SSTDF briefed the Sub-Committee on the Facility's recent activities relating to LDCs, highlighting that the LDCs were benefitting from 65% of STDF project funds. The LDCs highlighted the importance of the STDF to build the capacity of the LDCs in implementing international SPS standards, and expressed appreciation to donors for their contributions to the STDF.

7.6. At the 81st Session, the Secretariat reported on WTO technical assistance and training provided to the LDCs, noting that the WTO continued giving priority to the LDCs. In 2016, the LDCs were invited to 72% of all technical-assistance activities organized by the Secretariat. The LDCs acknowledged the usefulness of these activities, in particular of the reference centre and internship programmes.

7.3 Accession of LDCs

7.7. At the 81st Session, the Secretariat made a presentation on the evolution of LDC accessions, the state of play in the accession working parties of the LDCs, assistance provided to acceding governments as well as post-accession support. The Secretariat also briefed Members on LDC-related accession events held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in March 2017 (WT/COMTD/LDC/25) and in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2017 (WT/COMTD/LDC/26). Seven LDCs are currently in the process of accession (Bhutan, Comoros, Sudan, Ethiopia, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, Timor-Leste). A number of acceding LDCs expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Secretariat as well as development partners, and called on Members to adhere to the LDC accession guidelines agreed to by Members.

7.4 Arrangements to Facilitate the Participation of LDCs in the Eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference

7.8. At the 80th Session, the Secretariat provided a briefing on the administrative and logistical arrangements by the Secretariat to facilitate the participation of LDCs in MC11. As per past

practice, a dedicated Trust Fund had been set up which would fund the participation of three officials from eligible LDCs. The LDCs called on Members to contribute to the Trust Fund in order to facilitate the participation of the LDCs in MC11.

7.5 Other Matters Considered by the Sub-Committee

7.9. At the 80th Session, UNIDO briefed the Sub-Committee on UNIDO's role in implementing the UN General Assembly resolution (A/RES/70/293, 25 July 2016) on the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2016-2025).

7.10. At the 81st Session, UNIDO informed the Sub-Committee that the next UNIDO LDC Ministerial Conference would be held in Vienna, Austria, from 23 to 24 November 2017. The theme of the Conference would be "Building Global Partnerships: Enhancing Growth and Inclusiveness in LDCs".
