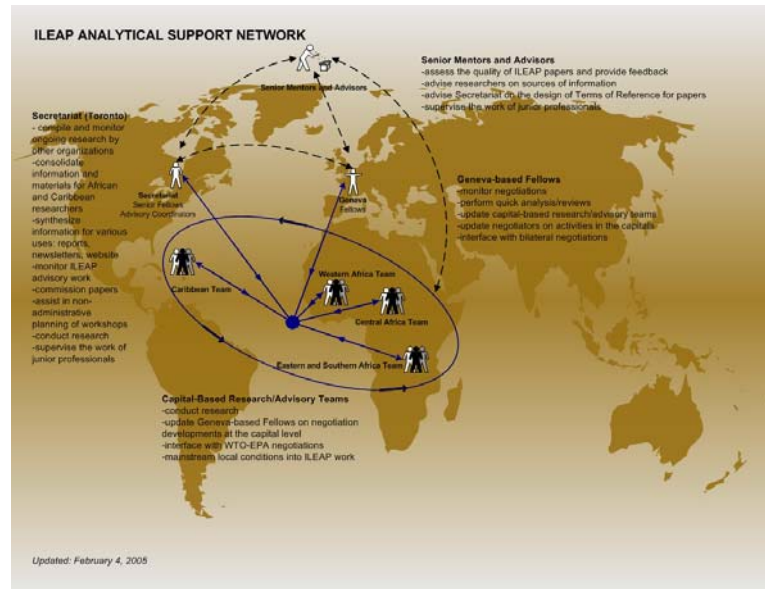


Mainstreaming Development in Trade: A Longer-term Approach to Developing Sustained Capacity

Arusha Hotel
P.O. Box 88
Arusha, TANZANIA
Tel: (00) 255 27 250 7777 / 8870 – 3
Fax: (00) 255 27 250 8889
Website: www.arushahotel.com
Arusha, Tanzania, 28-29 September 2006



International Lawyers and
Economists Against Poverty

1240 Bay Street, Suite 602
Toronto, ON Canada
M5R 2A7
Tel: 416-946-3107
Fax: 416-946-0797
ileap@ileap-jeicp.org
www.ileap-jeicp.org

This meeting is being held in response to the need to consider optimal delivery of trade-related technical assistance and ensure that beneficiary countries play a leading role in its articulation. It is intended to engage those involved in capacity building efforts to think collectively about the issues, to exchange information, experiences and curricula, and to discuss key concerns, in order to ensure that trade capacity building is targeted towards poverty alleviation.

This will involve looking at establishing linkages between research and training, to enable those with capacity to continue to develop it and keep up-to-date with ongoing research and negotiations. Taking a multidisciplinary-based approach will ensure that experts are well-versed in the diverse aspects (i.e. macroeconomics, law, political science, etc.) of trade policy.

Aide-Memoire

Efforts to approach trade from a development perspective have recently been attracting increased attention. Attempts to craft the WTO Doha negotiations as a 'development agenda' and EU commitments to focus on development in the ACP-EU EPA negotiations,¹ for instance, have been accompanied by a proliferation of academic, non-governmental and inter-governmental initiatives that aim to shed new light on the trade-development-poverty nexus. There is a growing consensus that trade liberalization on its own will not automatically lead to higher levels of human welfare, and that trade needs to be considered as part of broader development strategies. According to a 2004 report by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD),² "an exclusive focus on trade, which assumes that poverty is reduced through trade rather than through development, is likely to prove counter-productive. Rather, it is necessary to look at the relationship between trade and poverty from a development perspective."

If a development perspective is to be reflected in trade rules and trade negotiations, it is imperative that low-income countries are able to determine their own offensive and defensive agendas, and forward them at relevant fora. To do this, they must be equipped with sufficient long-term domestic capacity to research, analyze and engage effectively in a wide range of trade-related issues. However, developing countries – particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean – suffer a systemic and acute lack of capacity in the area of trade and development research and policy-making. This capacity deficit is characterized by grossly inadequate staffing of relevant government ministries and institutions, lack of qualified government personnel and scholars, insufficient academic institutions and opportunities, and inadequate coordination mechanisms both in capitals and during negotiation processes. The problem is not only circumscribed to negotiations, but also to policy formulation, strategizing the role of trade in development, and training the next generation of trade policy-makers in these regions.

A broad scope of trade-related technical assistance (TRTA) efforts have previously been undertaken or are already underway, while increasing commitments from donors in the area of 'Aid for Trade' indicate that more emphasis will be placed on such activities in future. Agreement at the Hong Kong WTO Ministerial to enhance the Integrated Framework and to explore how Aid for Trade can contribute to the development dimension of the Doha round presents opportunities for developing countries to determine the future direction of TRTA.

Proposed Action

In order that these opportunities to develop an effective Aid for Trade agenda are not missed, beneficiary countries must not only be involved in setting TRTA priorities, they must play a leading role in their articulation. To enable such involvement, this note proposes a focused gathering of key actors in development and trade capacity building.

The conference on 'Mainstreaming Development in Trade – A Longer-term Approach to Developing Sustained Capacity' is geared toward addressing how best to meet the need for development-oriented trade capacity building. It will explore how to ensure effective representation of the interests of developing countries in trade negotiations such that their involvement translates into poverty alleviation and the enhancement of overall welfare, particularly in least-advantaged regions such as Africa and the Caribbean. The conference will gather those who are engaged in capacity building efforts to think collectively about the issues, to exchange information, experiences and curricula, and to discuss key concerns – regardless of who eventually carries out the TRTA activities. To ensure TRTA activities are targeted towards poverty alleviation rather than just trade liberalization *per se*, the conference would further seek to tap into the latest thinking on growth and development, with attention to low-income countries, particularly those in Africa and the Caribbean.

¹ EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson committed in February 2005 to reshaping the ongoing EPA negotiation process in a way "that would benchmark it against development goals."

² UNCTAD (2004). The Least Developed Countries Report 2004 – Linking International Trade with Poverty Reduction, United Nations publication, sales no. E.04.II.D.27, Geneva.

The conference will focus on creating a longer-term strategy for capacity development. This will involve looking at establishing linkages between research and training, to enable those with the capacity to continue to develop it and keep up-to-date with ongoing research and negotiations. Taking a multidisciplinary-based approach will ensure that experts are well-versed in the diverse aspects of trade policy-making (i.e. macroeconomics, law, political science).

Objectives

The short- and long-term objectives of the conference are:

Short-term

- Bring a development-oriented perspective to those delivering trade capacity building.
- Navigate the diverse field of delivery of technical assistance from IGOs, NGOs and academia, draw lessons from their implementation and help beneficiaries get the best from each.
- Identify beneficiary needs in trade policy and economic and legal capacity building.
- Provide a forum for participants to exchange information, curricula, and materials relating to existing capacity building programmes.
- Provide access to new ways of thinking about the role of trade policy in the elaboration and implementation of beneficiary countries' development strategies.
- Bridge the gap between academic research on trade, and trade policy-making.

Long-term

- Support coalition-building amongst developing countries to pursue their shared objectives.
- Develop sufficient capacity and confidence in beneficiary countries' ability to influence the trade agenda.
- Develop a network of lawyers and economists to assist trade ministries address discrete technical areas of trade negotiations.

Challenges

The meeting will aim to address a number of longer-term challenges:

- The missing link between trade and poverty reduction.
- Weak knowledge bases at governmental and other institutional levels.
- Weak institutional framework for continued learning after graduation.
- Inadequate curricula and a disconnect between disciplines that prevents fuller consideration of development in trade policy-making.
- Weak institutions for using existing knowledge for policymaking (research-policy nexus).
- Weak institutions for broad-based policy making, consensus-building and experience sharing.
- Weak administrative structures and inadequate institutional capacity to support more personnel.

Questions to consider

The conference will seek to answer some broad yet recurring questions:

- How can the development dimension be integrated into trade policy capacity building?
- Who is conducting trade capacity building?
- Who are and who could / should be the beneficiaries?
- What type of activities should be included in trade policy capacity building?

- Is the quantity, content and reach of capacity building activities adequate? If not, what more needs to be done?
- Are there gaps to address?
- What are the best practices in:
 - Delivery of development-focused training programmes?
 - Inter-regional collaboration?
- How can capacity building delivery be anticipative / proactive about meeting needs?
- What main lessons have we learned about the capacity needs of developing countries and about the effectiveness of the current delivery systems?
- How can we best facilitate the training of a new generation of trade experts in the South?
- What type of capacity building is best suited for each need?
- Where and how is capacity best delivered (i.e. at the academic, civil society, government, and regional levels)?
- How do we go about building up interdisciplinarity amongst those in the legal and economics professions? And between trade policy-makers and development policy-makers?
- What are the long-term problems that need to be addressed? Are they being addressed?

Date

28-29 September 2006

Participants

The meeting will maintain a focus on African and Caribbean participants. Participants and speakers will include:

- Those engaged in relevant university and other training and capacity building activities;
- Development experts familiar with the linkages between growth, development, poverty reduction and trade;
- Trade negotiators;
- Potential beneficiaries (not necessarily students but those who need trained students – missions, regional organizations, national governments, etc.);
- Donors involved in longer-term institutional support (bilateral and multilateral);

Venue

Arusha, Tanzania

