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A NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS' WORKSHOP ON WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION'S AGRICULTURE - NON- AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS NEGOTIATIONS

by

Federal Ministry of Commerce and industry

in collaboration with

**Trade Policy Research and Training Programme (TPRTP), Ibadan
International Lawyers and Economists against Poverty (ILEAP),
Canada International Centre for Trade and Sustainable development
(ICTSD), Geneva**

Background and Rationale

The Doha Development Round of negotiations which were launched in 2001 is advancing towards the critical stage of reaching consensus on many of the issues in the agenda. In particular, proposals have been submitted and debated by various negotiating groups in the different areas such as agriculture and non-agricultural products and services. In agriculture and non-Agricultural market access (NAMA) negotiations in particular, issues which relate to tariff and non-tariff barriers are in their various stages of finalisation. Before the suspension of negotiations in June 2006, the negotiations in agriculture and NAMA moved towards agreement on tariff reduction modalities, including the coefficients to be applied by developing and developed countries in the adopted simple Swiss formula while the ways to treat countries based on their level of development have been agreed, such as special products and special safeguard mechanisms, sensitive products, among others.

All countries in the negotiations, however, need to possess informed knowledge of how and the extent to which the various preliminary discussions and consensus as well as substantive proposals and probable agreements in the main areas will affect their countries, irrespective of which negotiating group they belong. The reason for the need to embark on individual countries' tariff simulation exercise to unravel the likely effects of tariff changes on revenue, welfare, trade flows, employment, and particularly industrial growth and development, consists mainly in the need to avoid imposing deductions that might arise from group analysis but which will not necessarily apply to individual countries in the group on these individual countries. It is in view of this primary objective that this workshop intends to bring together stakeholders to discuss studies undertaken to provide technical assistance and support for Nigeria to enable it consider its negotiation options and articulate its offensive and defensive interests in the negotiations on agriculture and Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA). This exercise is capable of facilitating expeditious and research-based negotiations options and the drawing up of Nigeria's schedule of commitments for agriculture and NAMA. In effect, the private sector needs to be made a significant partner in the deliberations to bring their practical experience to bear on the process of trade negotiations that will lead to binding obligations or rules.

These discussions will no doubt allude to another negotiating work on-going at the regional level in the context of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between West Africa and the EU.

Goal:

ILEAP and ICTSD jointly funded three studies on the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in Nigeria beginning from early 2007. The report will be presented in this workshop to provide avenue for rubbing minds on the studies findings. The reports will also serve as a reference material for the determination and identification of Nigeria's offensive and defensive strategies in the on-going agriculture and NMA negotiations.

Objectives:

The workshop objectives seek to:

- i. Acquaint participants with the development-oriented flexibilities of the emerging Doha Negotiation's Modalities in Agriculture and Non-Agricultural goods (NAMA);
- ii. Present Nigeria's Special Products to stakeholders for discussion and recommendations;
- iii. Provide avenue for discussion of Nigeria's Special Safeguard Mechanisms in Agriculture;
- iv. Discuss Nigeria's Negotiating positions in agriculture and Non-agriculture market access (NAMA); and

- v. Determine the offensive and defensive strategies for the negotiations in agriculture and NAMA and the alternative tariff schedules for post-Doha trade.

Participants are drawn from relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), members of the National Focal Point and non-state actors. The Private sector and public servants and researchers are brought together in the workshop to deliberate on the practicalities of the Doha Development Round. Because it is a meeting of private sector actors and policy makers facilitated by the academia, both private sector and public policy people who are in the best position to identify their trading and negotiating needs team up to articulate their concerns and interests and use these to determine the strategic options which Nigeria should consider and select for optimal post-negotiations trade. The TPRTP and the Ministry work together to organize the workshop.