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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**  
Committee on Trade and Investment**Sixth session**

Bangkok, 13–15 March 2019

**Annotated provisional agenda**

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the sixth session of the Committee on Trade and Investment (section I) and the annotations to the provisional agenda (section II).

**I. Provisional agenda**

1. Opening of the session:
  - (a) Opening statements;
  - (b) Election of the bureau;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2018:
  - (a) Review of recent trends and developments;
  - (b) Implications of rising protectionism, including trade wars, on regional trade and investment.
3. Navigating non-tariff measures for sustainable development.
4. Promoting cross-border paperless trade in Asia and the Pacific.
5. Leveraging e-commerce for graduation of least developed countries.
6. Promoting sustainable investment and business.
7. Engaging the business sector in promoting sustainable development.
8. Recent activities of the secretariat and associated results pertaining to trade and investment under the subprogramme on trade, investment and innovation.
9. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme on trade, investment and innovation in trade and investment and the strategic direction of the Committee on Trade and Investment.

10. Consideration of draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its seventy-fifth session.
11. Other matters.
12. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixth session.

## **II. Annotations**

### **1. Opening of the session**

#### **(a) Opening statements**

The tentative programme for the opening of the session will be available online at [www.unescap.org/events/committee-trade-and-investment-sixth-session](http://www.unescap.org/events/committee-trade-and-investment-sixth-session).

#### **(b) Election of the bureau**

The list of participants will be available online at [www.unescap.org/events/committee-trade-and-investment-sixth-session](http://www.unescap.org/events/committee-trade-and-investment-sixth-session).

The Committee will elect a chair and a vice-chair.

#### **(c) Adoption of the agenda**

##### **Documentation**

Annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/CTI/2019/L.1/Rev.1)

##### **Annotation**

The Committee may wish to adopt the provisional agenda, subject to such changes as may be necessary.

### **2. Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2018**

#### **(a) Review of recent trends and developments**

#### **(b) Implications of rising protectionism, including trade wars, on regional trade and investment**

##### **Documentation**

Summary of the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2018 (ESCAP/CTI/2019/1)

##### **Annotation**

The Committee will have before it document ESCAP/CTI/2019/1 containing the summary of the *Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2018*. This report is a recurrent publication that includes descriptions of recent trends in trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region and highlights of issues that require the attention of policymakers. To the current Committee session, the *2018 Report*, in addition to trend analysis on trade in goods, services and foreign direct investment, provides a discussion on the implications of rising protectionism and trade wars on regional trade and investment, especially for least developed countries and from the perspective of the operations of global

value chains. In the future, the trend analysis will be discontinued to focus on substantive issues.

After a presentation by the secretariat, a panel of four to five experts from governments, academia and the private sector will present their views and discuss the implications of and recommended policy responses to rising protectionism and trade wars in the region and the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in that regard.

### **3. Navigating non-tariff measures for sustainable development**

#### **Documentation**

Navigating non-tariff measures for sustainable development  
(ESCAP/CTI/2019/2)

#### **Annotation**

Trade and investment are viewed as key means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While applied tariffs have decreased, use of non-tariff measures has risen sharply over the past two decades, in particular technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Non-tariff measures often have legitimate purposes, such as protection of health and the environment, however, many ESCAP members are concerned that such measures may be used as protectionist tools and non-transparent barriers to trade. Accordingly, to support evidence-based policymaking, in the *Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2019*, there will be an analysis of the rise of non-tariff measures with focus on Asia and the Pacific and a review of the costs and benefits associated with such measures from a sustainable development perspective. In addition, some good practices will be identified to ensure that they serve their legitimate social or environmental purpose while not unnecessarily and negatively affecting trade and investment. Preliminary findings on this topic are presented in document ESCAP/CTI/2019/2 for which feedback is sought from member States on priorities for research.

After a presentation by the secretariat, a panel of three to four experts consisting of representatives of academia, government officials and the private sector will discuss the findings of the document and make recommendations for the focus of and identifying priorities for research in this area in the upcoming *Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2019*.

### **4. Promoting cross-border paperless trade in Asia and the Pacific**

#### **Documentation**

Promoting cross-border paperless trade in Asia and the Pacific  
(ESCAP/CTI/2019/3)

#### **Annotation**

Cross-border paperless trade, by streamlining trade processes and documentary requirements, is estimated to add more than \$250 billion in export potential to the region, with all other things being equal. In document ESCAP/CTI/2019/3, the current status of implementation of paperless trade in the region is presented along with an update on the implementation of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia

and the Pacific and an overview of the related support provided by the secretariat to member States.

## **5. Leveraging e-commerce for graduation of least developed countries**

### **Documentation**

Leveraging e-commerce for graduation of least developed countries (ESCAP/CTI/2019/4)

### **Annotation**

The current status and required policies and legal and regulatory framework in support of digital trade and e-commerce tools are presented in document ESCAP/CTI/2019/4. E-commerce has emerged as a valuable tool for individuals, rural smallholders and micro and small enterprises to engage in trade through a convenient platform. By expanding trade opportunities, e-commerce also helps in addressing often high market and product concentration of a country's exports and imports. As such, it may also contribute to the graduation process of least developed countries. However, many developing countries, especially least developed countries, are not yet sufficiently participating in or benefiting from e-commerce because of the challenges associated with, for example, information and communications technology infrastructure, logistics, trade facilitation, legal frameworks, e-payments, access to e-commerce platforms, skills and human capacity. To promote e-commerce, those challenges need to be dealt with, including, for example, by using a partnership approach encompassing all stakeholders of e-commerce. The document contains a discussion of the status, concerns and recommended actions at national and regional levels in support of digital trade and e-commerce, especially in the context of graduation of least developed countries.

## **6. Promoting sustainable investment and business**

### **Documentation**

Promoting sustainable investment and business (ESCAP/CTI/2019/5)

### **Annotation**

The importance for companies, including multinational enterprises, to adopt and practise principles related to responsible business conduct in order to optimize their contributions to sustainable development is stressed in document ESCAP/CTI/2019/5. In that context, the document contains a review of recent developments with regard to rebalancing international investment agreements with a view to emphasizing the need for sustainable investment. The document also contains a discussion on the need to develop indicators for monitoring and assessing the extent to which companies are deemed to be responsible and sustainable and to what extent foreign direct investment actually contributes to sustainable development across its three dimensions, and the work of the secretariat in that area.

## **7. Engaging the business sector in promoting sustainable development**

### **Documentation**

Engaging the business sector in promoting sustainable development (ESCAP/CTI/2019/6)

**Annotation**

Document ESCAP/CTI/2019/6 includes a discussion of the recent reforms carried out by the secretariat to more actively engage the business sector in promoting sustainable development. Particular focus is placed on the activities of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network and its task forces, the outcome of the Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2018 and the plans for the Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2019.

**8. Recent activities of the secretariat and associated results pertaining to trade and investment under the subprogramme on trade, investment and innovation**

**Documentation**

Recent activities and priorities for future work of the secretariat in the area of trade and investment under the subprogramme on trade, investment and innovation (ESCAP/CTI/2019/7)

**Annotation**

Document ESCAP/CTI/2019/7 gives an overview of the activities of the secretariat related to the implementation of subprogramme 2 of the ESCAP programme of work on trade, investment and innovation and the results achieved in that regard since the seventy-fourth session of the Commission, held in May 2018. The activities and results to be discussed will be centred on three areas: research and analysis; capacity-building; and regional cooperation. The Committee shall note that the report on activities under the area of innovation was provided at the second session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation (August 2018).

**9. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme on trade, investment and innovation in trade and investment and the strategic direction of the Committee on Trade and Investment**

**Documentation**

Recent activities and priorities for future work of the secretariat in the area of trade and investment under the subprogramme on trade, investment and innovation (ESCAP/CTI/2019/7)

Strategic direction of the Committee on Trade and Investment (ESCAP/CTI/2019/8)

**Annotation**

Under this agenda item, the Committee will review the priorities outlined by the secretariat in document ESCAP/CTI/2019/7 for future activities in the area of trade and investment for the second half of 2019 and 2020. The Committee may also wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on incorporating the outcome of the Committee's deliberations into the secretariat's strategic planning process, including the preparation of the programme of work for 2020.

Document ESCAP/CTI/2019/8 contains a summary of suggestions for the strategic direction of the Committee after reviewing and updating recommendations made under a similar agenda item for the Committee at its fourth session, held in 2015. Those recommendations were made with a view

to making the Committee more effective, relevant and visible in promoting regional trade and investment for inclusive and sustainable development and in contributing towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in accordance with the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

**10. Consideration of draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its seventy-fifth session**

Member States may wish to circulate, in advance, proposals for or texts of draft resolutions on priority issues relating to trade and investment for consideration by the Commission at its seventy-fifth session.

**11. Other matters**

The Committee may wish to consider other matters brought to its attention.

**12. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixth session**

**Documentation**

Draft report (ESCAP/CTI/2019/L.2)

**Annotation**

The Committee may wish to consider and adopt the report on its sixth session for submission to the Commission at its seventy-fifth session, to be held in 2019.

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