

## Concept Note

### EGM on Regional Integration and the APTA 19 November 2013, UNCC

#### Background and Objectives

- A new economic and trade regionalism is sweeping Asia and the Pacific region, motivated not only by the persistent crisis in developed economies, but also by the search for efficiency-seeking industrial restructuring linking comparative advantages across borders in highly integrated supply chains.
- Facilitated by the politically-neutral ESCAP Secretariat, APTA membership is open to all developing member states of UNESCAP and its untapped potentials are huge especially in terms of expanding intra-regional trade and investment and in the context of South-South Trade, Investment and Development cooperation, by linking the five subregions of ESCAP.
- **The objectives of the EGM** would be three-fold:
  - 1) To review the perspectives on current regional integration trend, including regional perspectives on deeper regional integration;
  - 2) To re-examine the potential of APTA as a broader region-wide mechanism for regional economic integration. The outcomes of the two planned subregional meetings (Central Asia and the Pacific subregion) will be reported to the EGM;
  - 3) To report the outcome of the EGM on Regional Integration and the APTA to **the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the CTI and the First Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Integration** to be organized by ESCAP in Dec. 2013, UNCC.

#### Scope

- Invited participants:
  - Resource persons/experts: 3 (two senior consultants for the two subregional studies (Central Asia and the Pacific, respectively); and one senior consultant from ROK;
  - ADB representatives (e.g., Dr. Jay Menon) in charge of regional integration issues;
  - Representatives from SAARC (SAFTA) and ASEAN (AFTA), budget Permitting and if attending the CTI and the othe TI Week events;
  - APTASecretariat staff and interested ESCAP-wide staff (e.g., MPDD-Regional Integration Task Force team).
- Possible topics for discussion:
  - Best practices and policy lessons learned from other RTAs/FTAs on trade liberalization (lowering trade and non-tariff barriers / NTMs) to accelerate regional integration;
  - Linkage strategies with other Subregional Trade Agreements (SRTAs)/FTAs (e.g., AFTA, PICTA) to accelerate regional economic integration in the context of South-South trade and development cooperation.

#### Expected Outcomes

- Provide a pragmatic vision and a roadmap/blueprint for APTA as an effective mechanism for regional integration under the auspices of the ESCAP secretariat;
- Promote seamless connectivity and deepen regional integration through the APTA regional agreements on trade facilitation, trade in services and investment;
- Identify collaboration strategies with other SRTAs of the region to create positive synergy for Pan-Asian and Pacific integration.

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