

**STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNCTAD AT THE
TBT COMMITTEE MEETING OF 1 JULY 2004**

Agenda Item 5: Technical Cooperation

The following document, dated 29 June 2004, is being circulated at the request of the UNCTAD.

1. The UNCTAD secretariat and Inmetro (the National Institute of Metrology, Standardization and Industrial Quality, Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade of Brazil) jointly held a pre-UNCTAD XI workshop in Rio de Janeiro on 7 and 8 June 2004. This workshop reviewed the results of exploratory activities and examined the concept and modalities of a Consultative Task Force on Environmental Requirements and Market Access for Developing Countries. Some 75 experts from a range of developed and developing countries, representing trade, environment and industry ministries, governmental, private-sector and NGO standardization organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and large and small-sized companies, participated in the workshop.

2. Participants were of the view that a more holistic and development-oriented approach to the interface of environmental requirements and market access for developing countries was required, one that should include an integrated analysis of policy and capacity-constraints issues at three levels: at the international level outside the WTO, at the WTO level and at the national and local levels in developing countries. The complexity of the interplay between policy and capacity-building measures required a strategic and proactive response by exporting developing countries, rather than a merely reactive, "fire-fighting" approach, and more efficient public-private dialogue and cooperation. It also necessitated active collaboration by Governments and business associations in developed countries and a more coherent approach by donors. The Consultative Task Force could make specific contributions in this regard.

3. It was concluded that exploratory activities had been very helpful in guiding the discussion on the added value and focus of the activities of the Task Force. Representatives of a number of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and NGOs expressed their willingness to actively participate in relevant activities of the Task Force. This provides a good basis for starting the implementation of a small number of well-defined and focused activities of the Consultative Task Force.

4. Participants agreed that the functions of the Task Force should be well defined, targeted, pragmatic, and not duplicative, with a view to adding value in areas of mutual interest of the parties concerned. In this context, the Consultative Task Force could provide the "missing link" between existing mechanisms and initiatives to address specific policy and capacity gaps. It should facilitate constructive dialogue, fully coordinated with concerned stakeholders, on (a) sector-specific experience in the preparation, adoption and implementation of regulations and standards and the related examination of possible trade implications for developing countries; (b) the development of holistic, proactive strategies in developing countries that effectively respond to environmental

requirements in key export markets; (c) improved access to and dissemination of information on environmental requirements, including private-sector requirements; and (d) a regular exchange of information among international organizations, bilateral donors, private-sector associations and NGOs on those of their activities that are relevant for the Task Force.

5. The Consultative Task Force will provide an umbrella for well-structured and focused dialogue and networking on relevant issues at the interface of environmental requirements and market access for developing countries. Under its umbrella, the Task Force may consider launching some specific, well-defined and time-limited project activities, whose results will aid the substantive debate in the Task Force. The Task Force will regularly review the efficiency of project activities and decide on their continuation or termination, or on a change in the course of action.

6. The Consultative Task Force will start as a collaborative effort among a core group of supportive partners, including Governments, relevant intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and concerned NGOs from developed and developing countries, but will be open to other interested stakeholders. The Task Force and time-limited thematic activities under its umbrella will be implemented as a project-based activity.

7. The activities of the Consultative Task Force are not intended to “second-guess” the legitimacy and objectives of environmental requirements. Rather, they will analyse and discuss ways of overcoming specific developing country problems regarding the development and implementation of, as well as adjustment to, such measures.

8. The draft report of the Rio meeting has been circulated among workshop participants and will be revised in the light of the feedback the UNCTAD secretariat receives. The revised report will be posted on UNCTAD’s trade, environment and development website in two or three weeks.

9. Finally, the UNCTAD is planning to hold the first substantive meeting of the Consultative Task Force back-to-back with the next TBT Committee meeting. This meeting would then be held on Friday, 5 November 2004 and (for half a day) on Saturday, 6 November 2004 in Geneva. The objective of the meeting is to develop the work programme of the Task Force for 2005, including the prioritization of issues and the definition of the breadth and depth of related activities.
