Brainstorming Meeting of the LDC Group in the WTO

Operationalising the LDC Services Waiver
Draft Agenda

3 – 4 October 2013
World Meteorological Organisation (WMO),
7bis, avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland

3 October 2013

Plenary

09h00 to 09h10  Welcoming Remarks by the Organisers

09h10 to 09h30  Opening Remarks

H.E. Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Ambassador to WTO, Nepal
LDC Group Coordinator

H.E. Mr. Md. Abdul Hannan, Ambassador to WTO, Bangladesh
Focal point on services for LDC Group

09h30 to 10h00  Plenary Session I: The LDC Services Waiver in the WTO: Context, Legal Basis and Operationalisation. This session will put the services waiver discussion in the broader context of WTO law and negotiations on trade in services. It will provide an overview of the legal basis for the granting of trade preferences in services and the coverage of the Services Waiver adopted at the 2011 WTO Ministerial Conference. Finally it will identify practical steps that need to be taken in order to operationalise the waiver.

Hamid Mamdouh, WTO Secretariat
Hannes Schloemann, WTI Advisors

10h00 to 11h15  Plenary Session II: LDC Services Exports and Export Potentials. This session will provide an overview of LDCs current and potential services exports, based on the responses to the services waiver questionnaire distrib-
uted to all LDCs as well as existing empirical evidence. It will aim at identifying key services sectors and subsectors where LDCs have particular export interests, and reflect on obstacles and challenges they face in their export markets.

David Primack, ILEAP
Jane Drake-Brockman, ITC

Open discussion

11h15 to 11h45 Coffee/tea

11h45 to 13h00 **Plenary Session III: Thinking about Possible Preferences: What “Target Countries” are Doing.** This session will consider existing market access barriers and regulatory frameworks potentially affecting LDCs in critical export markets (e.g. EU, US or Canada). This discussion will be based on an assessment of existing MFN exemptions in GATS schedule of commitments, on services commitments undertaken by those countries in bilateral and regional agreements, and on an analysis of applied regimes in those countries. This will help identify possible meaningful preferences in sectors of particular interest to LDCs.

Hannes Schloemann, WTI Advisors
Sékou Falil Doumbouya, ILEAP

Open discussion

13h00 to 14h30 Lunch break

14h30 to 15h30 **Expert Panel: Ideas for Operationalising the LDC Services Waiver**

Chair: Christophe Bellmann, ICTSD

Discussants: Luis Abugattas (Jordan Services Modernisation Program (JSMP), Sherry Stephenson (ICTSD), Ramesh Chaitoo (ILEAP), Arti Grover (World Bank), Mario Marconini (Te- neo Strategy) (tbc)

Open discussion

15h30 to 16h00 **Introduction to Breakout Sessions in Groups.** During this session, organisers will introduce the methodology and expected outcomes of the subsequent breakout groups

16h00 to 18h00 **Breakout Sessions: Brainstorming in Breakout Groups on Priorities for LDC Services Exports and Potential Preferences**

18h30 Reception
4 October 2013

09h30 to 12h30  **Breakout Sessions: Brainstorming in Breakout Groups on Priorities for LDC Services Exports and Potential Preferences** (continued)

12h30 to 14h00  Lunch break

14h00 to 15h30  **Plenary Session IV: Presentations of Main Findings from Breakout Groups and Discussions.** *During this session, group moderators will report on their respective discussions. This will be followed by an open debate.*

15h30 to 16h00  Coffee/tea

16h00 to 17h15  **Plenary Session V: Reflections from LDC’s Trading Partners on Possibilities and Potentials for Engagement.** *This session will discuss options for moving forward in the operationalisation of the services waiver, including options for Bali and beyond with key LDC partner countries*

  Chair: H.E. Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Ambassador to WTO, Nepal

  LDC Group Coordinator

  Informal reflections from / brainstorming with representatives of potential preference granting countries

17h15 to 18h30  **Plenary Session VI: Conclusions and the Way Forward.** *This session will take stock of the meeting’s outcomes and discuss the way forward towards Bali and beyond, including options for a possible Bali ministerial decision on the services waiver.*