Highlights of the fifth Joint NGO Briefing Series: a focus on the thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII)

On 22 February, the United Nations Information Service in Geneva (UNIS), the NGO Liaison Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) jointly organized an NGO briefing on the thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII), which will take place on 21-26 April 2012 in Doha, Qatar. Following welcome remarks by Alessandra Vellucci, Chief of the Press and External Relations Section of UNIS, the briefing featured a presentation by Richard Kozul-Wright on the substantive issues to be discussed at UNCTAD XIII; a presentation by Amel Haffouz on NGO participation in the Conference; and a presentation by Irene Musselli on the “Women in Development” high-level event at UNCTAD XIII. At the end of the session, Ricardo Espinosa briefed NGO participants on any other business relevant to Geneva-based NGOs.

UNCTAD XIII – thematic focus

UNCTAD XIII will focus on the overarching theme “Development-centred globalization: Towards inclusive and sustainable growth and development.” More specifically, participants will discuss ways to (1) enhance an enabling economic environment at all levels in support of inclusive and sustainable development; (2) strengthen all forms of cooperation and partnerships for trade and development, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation; (3) address persistent and emerging development challenges as related to their implications for trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development; and (4) promote investment, trade, entrepreneurship and related development policies to foster sustained economic growth for sustainable and inclusive development.

For more information on UNCTAD XIII, visit (http://unctadxiii.org/)

Presentation by Richard Kozul-Wright, Chief, Unit for Economic Cooperation and Integration among Developing Countries, UNCTAD

Richard Kozul-Wright reflected on the thematic focus of UNCTAD XIII and presented the key messages of UNCTAD’s Secretary-General’s report for the Conference, entitled “Development-led globalization: Towards sustainable and inclusive development paths.” He explained that the report highlights the changing realities that have characterized the world since UNCTAD XII took place in Accra in 2008, “turning the world upside down.” The financial and interrelated crises had far
reaching effects, resulting in an economic slowdown in advanced economies. The effects were aggravated by global challenges such as the food crisis, climate change and increased inequality. The key message of the Secretary-General’s report is therefore that we cannot adjust to the new realities by returning to business as usual.

Mr. Kozul-Wright continued by explaining that the past decades were characterized by finance-led globalization, and especially financial liberalization, financialization (a structural shift in the organization of economic activity along with changes in economic and political behaviour), and debt-driven growth. In the past, a heavy dependency on debt was seen as inevitable in the design of economic growth policies. It was “financializing or marginalizing.” Countries had no choice and had to follow “the dictates of the market.” The report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, however, does not agree with this non-democratic position and challenges it. For example, the report presents East Asia as a winner in economic terms, but mainly because the countries in this region did not follow the Washington Institutions, but had tailored programmes towards their needs.

The report calls for development-led globalization, which goes beyond a poverty agenda. It embraces economic diversification, growth, employment creation, redistribution, pro-investment heterodox macro-economic policies (incl. counter-cyclical policies, public investment, multiple trade-offs), the loosening of constraints, and the strengthening of linkages in support of cumulative increases in productivity, decent work and higher incomes. It also calls for a more prominent recognition of the importance of social protection. Social protection will need to be integrated within development policies.

Following some questions from the floor, Mr. Kozul-Wright also elaborated on the concept of “good governance,” explaining that he was not comfortable with this concept as the term “good” is normative. In other words, “good governance” for the Chinese has nothing to do with what Western countries are envisaging under the same terminology. He continued by explaining that the links between legal structures, democratic policies, and accountability are too complicated to be placed under the term “good governance,” noting that most advanced countries developed because they were not democratic. A much deeper discussion in that regard is needed, he concluded.

To access UNCTAD’s Secretary-General’s Report in one of the sixth UN languages, visit: http://unctadxiii.org/en/Pages/Report-of-the-SG.aspx

Presentation by Amel Haffouz, Chief, Civil Society and Outreach Unit, UNCTAD

Amel Haffouz highlighted that civil society participation in policy debate is essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable development. She was pleased to see strong civil society interest in UNCTAD XIII, noting that – at the time of the briefing – more than 140 civil society organizations had requested to be accredited to the Conference (in addition to the 200 organizations that already have observer status with UNCTAD).

She further explained the preparatory activities for the Civil Society Forum, which is currently being organized by UNCTAD in partnership with the host civil society organization in Doha, the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), and with the
United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS). The Civil Society Forum, to take place from 17-27 April in Doha, is part of the official programme of UNCTAD XIII and is expected to produce a Civil Society Declaration, to be presented at the opening plenary of UNCTAD XIII.

On 7 March 2012, a preparatory hearing with civil society and the private sector is being organized. This hearing will give NGOs with UNCTAD observer status and NGOs accredited to UNCTAD XIII an opportunity to interact with Member States’ representatives and to provide inputs into the Conference draft negotiating text, which will be finalized and adopted in Doha, and serve as the mandate for UNCTAD for the four coming years. The outcome of the hearing will be summarized by the UNCTAD Secretariat and will be submitted as input into the discussions of the Preparatory Committee for UNCTAD XIII.

On 6 March, ahead of the hearing, a briefing on logistical aspects will be organized from 3pm-5pm in Room IV, Palais des Nations, Geneva.


Accredited NGOs to UNCTAD XIII that would like to organize side events in the context of the Civil Society Forum, should contact the secretariat of the host civil society organization in Doha at: www.csfunctad13.org

Presentation by Irene Musselli, Gender and Development Team, UNCTAD

Irene Musselli of UNCTAD’s Gender and Development Team spoke on the Women in Development high-level event that will take place during UNCTAD XIII, on 23 April 2012. This one-day event, to be chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser of Qatar, aims to give new prominence to the gender aspect in development policies. It also hopes to yield new insights on the relation between gender and macro-economic and trade policies; and to create new opportunities for institutional capacity building.

The event will consist of an interactive round table discussion – bringing together representatives from Member States, political figures, academia, civil society, media, and grassroots organizations – that will address four thematic issues. The morning session will have a macro-economic focus, while the afternoon session will have a more structural focus. The four themes include: (1) Macro-economic policy: Does gender matter?; (2) Trade, poverty and gender: New insights from a contextual, country-specific approach; (3) Agriculture, food security, intellectual property and gender considerations; and (4) Equality of opportunity versus equality of outcome: How to translate women’s educational gains into equal access to full employment and decent work? Each session will be followed by a question and answer session.

The expected outcomes of the event include an analytical report featuring keynote speeches and technical presentations; as well as an official statement that will be delivered to the plenary session of UNCTAD XIII and, hopefully politically endorsed. Moreover, the creation of a centre of excellence in women studies is envisaged in
collaboration with the partner of the event, the office of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser of Qatar.

To conclude the high-level event, the Empretec Women in Business Awards will be given to three women-owned businesses that have benefited from the business development services of the Empretec programme – an UNCTAD programme for the promotion of entrepreneurship that operates in 32 developing countries. For more information on the Awards, visit: http://unctadxiii.org/en/Pages/DisplaySession.aspx?sessionid=130


Any other business – Ricardo Espinosa

Ricardo Espinosa, Chief of the NGO Liaison Unit at UNOG, referred to the outcomes of the 2012 Regular Session of the Committee on NGOs, held from 30 January-8 February at UN Headquarters in New York. The Committee had recommended 158 NGOs for consultative status with ECOSOC. He especially underlined the importance for NGOs that already have ECOSOC status to send in their quadrennial reports, as failing to do so, could mean that the NGOs will lose their status.

For more information on the Committee on NGOs, visit: http://csonet.org/index.php?menu=105

He further spoke about the commemoration of International Women’s Day. On the occasion of this international day, UNOG, in partnership with the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) and the Association of Correspondents Accredited to the United Nations in Geneva (ACANU), is organizing a round table on Tuesday 6 March 2012 from 4.00 to 5.45 p.m. in Room XII at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, on the theme “Communicating to women on global issues.” More details on this event can be found attached to this summary document.

On 26 March, the Director-General of UNOG will meet with NGOs. The expected theme of this encounter will be the Secretary-General’s and the Director-General’s priorities for 2012. An invitation is forthcoming.

Mr. Espinosa further announced that a document entitled “NGO Focal Points of the UN Family in Geneva” has been published on the website of the NGO Liaison Unit: www.unog.ch/ngo. It is accessible by clicking on the link “NGO liaison.”

To conclude, Mr. Espinosa thanked those NGOs that responded to the Satisfactory Survey (December 2011). He noted that approximately 42% of the 350 NGOs that were requested to participate had indeed responded. The analysis of the results, the conclusions, and envisaged measures are forthcoming.
JOINT NGO BRIEFING SERIES

UNCTAD XIII - Development-centred globalization:
Towards inclusive and sustainable growth and development

Wednesday 22 February 2012, from 2:15pm to 3:30pm
Room III, Palais des Nations, Geneva

2:15 Welcome by Alessandra Vellucci, Chief,
Press and External Relations Section of the United Nations Information
Service in Geneva

2:20 Presentation by Richard Kozul-Wright, Chief, Unit for Economic
Cooperation and Integration among Developing Countries, UNCTAD,
on substantive issues to be discussed at UNCTAD XIII

2:35 Presentation by Amel Haffouz, Chief of the Civil Society and Outreach
Unit at UNCTAD on NGO participation in the Conference

2:50 Presentation by Irene Musselli, Gender and Development Team,
UNCTAD, on the “Women and Development” high-level event, to be
held in Doha

3:05 Questions and responses

3:15 Flash update from Ricardo Espinosa on any other business relevant to
Geneva-based NGOs

3:30 Close

“You understand, like no one else, the daily challenges faced by the
most vulnerable. You have the passion and networks to spread our
messages far and wide.”
United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
INVITATION

International Women’s Day

On the occasion of International Women's Day, the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), in partnership with the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) and the Association of Correspondents Accredited to the United Nations in Geneva (ACANU), will organize a round table on Tuesday 6 March 2012 from 4.00 to 5.45 p.m. in Room XII at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, on the theme "Communicating to women on global issues". A provisional programme of the event is attached.

This round table, held under the patronage of the Director General of UNOG, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, will be an opportunity to discuss the role of women's magazines and other media with a high female audience working in communication on major issues of our time. Editors in chief of female magazines, women journalists and United Nations officials have agreed to participate in this discussion, on a subject hitherto little discussed in United Nations bodies. They will also look to other media, whether traditional such as radio, or new, such as blogs and social networks etc. Practical recommendations will be outlined for the United Nations to produce targeted messages for the public and build bridges with media outlets that had sometimes been overlooked by the Organization up until this point.

Their remarks will be followed by a general debate with the audience. Interpretation in French and English will be provided.

All NGOs are cordially invited to attend the round table and participate in the on-line discussion which will precede it on the Facebook page of the United Nations Information Service (Facebook).

21 February 2012
Round Table

“Communicating to women on global issues”

Room XII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Tuesday, 6 March 2012

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

4.00 p.m. Welcome
- Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Director-General, UNOG
- Mr. Ridha Bouabid, Permanent Observer, International Organization of la Francophonie

4.10 p.m. Panel discussion
Moderator: Ms. Catherine Fiankan, journalist
- Dr. Thanh-Huyen Ballmer-Cao, Professor Emerita, University of Geneva
- Ms. Laurence Monsenego, Editor-in-chief, Amina
- Ms. Annick Chevillot, Editor-in-Chief, Femina
- Ms. Sylvie Lambelet, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Radio et Multimedia News, Radio Suisse Romande
- Ms. Najat Rochdi, Deputy Director, United Nations Development Programme, Geneva

5.15 p.m. Discussion with the audience

5.45 p.m. End