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Provisional agenda item 6(a)

FOLLOW-UP OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ORGANIZATION INTO A SPECIALIZED AGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

(a) Participation in the system’s coordination mechanisms

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General transmits to the Executive Council in the following document the report concerning WTO’s participation in the main coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system.
FOLLOW-UP OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ORGANIZATION INTO A SPECIALIZED AGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

(a) Participation in the system’s coordination mechanisms

Introduction

Ever since its inception in 1975, WTO has participated to some degree in the coordination mechanisms of the United Nations. Specifically in the “Agreement on Cooperation and Relationships between the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization”, in force since 22 November 1977, WTO and the United Nations agreed (Article III 2) that activities related to tourism should be coordinated within the United Nations system by the Economic and Social Council, (ECOSOC), while inter-Secretariat coordination should be ensured through the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). Reference was also made in Article VIII of the same Agreement to Statistical Services, with the United Nations recognizing WTO as “the appropriate Organization for the collection, analysis, publication, standardization and improvement of statistics within the sphere of the World Tourism Organization”. This has led to close and fruitful cooperation between WTO and the Statistical Commission (one of ECOSOC’s functional Commissions) and has resulted in recommendations on travel and tourism statistics prepared by WTO subsequently being submitted to the Statistical Commission for approval.

Following WTO’s transformation on 23 December 2003 into a United Nations Specialised Agency, WTO will logically participate to a greater extent in the coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system. This is in accordance with Article 2(1) of the 2003 “Agreement between the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization” which states that “In its relations with the United Nations, its organs and the agencies of the United Nations system, the World Tourism Organization recognizes the coordinating role, as well as the comprehensive responsibilities in promoting economic and social development, of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council under the Charter of the United Nations”.

In the following paragraphs the main coordination mechanisms are described and WTO’s participation highlighted.

Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)

The CEB is the forum that brings together, under the Chairmanship of the U.N. Secretary-General, the executive heads of 28 member Organizations including the Specialized Agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the World Trade Organization, and the various funds and programmes of the United Nations.
The CEB has been functioning, as the successor of the ACC, under its present title since 2001. It holds two annual meetings of about two days' duration in the spring and autumn of each year. The meetings are articulated in three parts: a regular session, which is currently preparing the 2005 Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Millennium Declaration; a private meeting for an exchange of views on recent political developments, and a retreat to help coordinate the work of the system. WTO was represented by the Secretary-General at the first regular session for 2004 of the CEB held at Vienna on 2-3 April 2004 the first time that WTO ‘s Executive Head has participated in the CEB. The central challenge of the CEB is to foster a sense of common purpose and collective identity among a group of linked but independent Organizations each with their own statutes and mandates, and to ensure that the activities of the U.N. system complement and reinforce each other.

**High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP)**

The HLCP has, since its establishment, held seven sessions. It addresses issues of strategic planning, policy and programme development and implementation. Its acts as a forum for inter-Agency dialogue and enables experiences on policy development and programming to be shared. The current chairman of HLCP is the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Mr. Lennart Bage.

WTO has already participated as an observer at previous HLCP sessions, being represented by the Deputy Secretary-General. WTO attended on 26-27 February 2004 the seventh HLCP session in Beirut as a full member of the Committee.

**High Level Committee on Management (HLCM)**

The HLCM acts on behalf of the CEB on matters affecting the administrative management of all member Organizations. It is entrusted with analyzing administrative management issues of common concern. Furthermore, HLCM identifies and promotes management reforms that will improve services provided to member States and increase efficiency and effectiveness throughout the United Nations system. The HLCM maintains a regular dialogue with staff representatives. Various sub-committees, or “networks”, concerned with safety and security, human resources, information technology and budget and finance report to the HLCM.

Because of the pivotal role played by the HLCM, WTO has been represented as an observer at most of the Committee’s sessions held so far, and participated as a full member at its 6th session held in London on 8 and 9 March 2004. Sessions are normally attended by the Director of Administration who is sometimes accompanied by the Chief of Personnel. The current chairperson of HLCM is the U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Management, Ms. Catherine Bertini.
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

WTO’s participation in ECOSOC follows on from the practice established under Article III of the 1977 Agreement whereby the Secretary-General of WTO was periodically invited to report to ECOSOC sessions concerning tourism or issues affecting tourism. In this regard, the “Global Code of Ethics” was, on 24 July 2001 considered by ECOSOC’S substantive session of 2001 which recommended to the U.N. General Assembly to adopt a resolution taking note with interest of the “Global Code of Ethics” and encouraging WTO to “promote effective follow up of the Global Code of Ethics, with the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the tourism sector”. This draft resolution was, subsequently adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on 21 December 2001. Furthermore, as the Members of the Council are aware, ECOSOC was closely involved in the process of WTO’s transformation from a Related Agency to a Specialized Agency of the United Nations. Now, given WTO’s new status, it is to be expected that WTO will participate more intensively in the work of this body.

WTO will attend for the first time as a Specialised Agency the next session of ECOSOC to be held in New York from 28 June to 23 July 2004. It is expected that the Secretary-General will attend the High Level Segment whose theme will be “Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010”.

The Operational Activities Segment of the same ECOSOC session is likely to be attended by the Chief of the new Technical Cooperation Service.

As indicated above, ECOSOC has established various functional Commissions of which two are of particular interest to WTO, namely the Statistical Commission and the Commission on Sustainable Development. The 35th session of the Statistical Commission was held in New York from 2 to 5 March 2004 and was attended by the Chief of the Statistics and Economic Measurement of Tourism Department. It will be recalled that, in March 2000, the U.N. Statistical Commission endorsed the Tourism Satellite Account. It can therefore be stated that the role of WTO in this area is well established and its contribution to the work of the Statistical Commission ongoing.

The 12th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was held in New York in April 2004 and was attended from the 14th to the 16th by the Chief of the Sustainable Development of Tourism Department. It is recalled that WTO cooperated closely with the Commission and with the United Nations Environment Programme, (UNEP) in the celebration of the International Year of Ecotourism in 2002.

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1 Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly pursuant to resolution 53/200 of 15 December 1998
WTO is following particularly closely the work of CSD in favour of small-island developing states because of the relevance of tourism to their economic and social development. Looking ahead, tourism is one of the themes scheduled to be taken up by the CSD in 2013.

**International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)**

Under Agenda Item 6 b), the Secretary-General reports on the ratification of the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the Statute of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) by WTO.

It should be mentioned that, following the visit of the Chairman of the ICSC, Mr. Mohsen Bel Hadj Amor, to Madrid in Spring 2003, WTO has been cooperating with the ICSC in carrying out a salary survey for General Service staff in Madrid.

Further details of the survey appear in document CE/73/4 b). Accordingly WTO will be invited to attend the next regular session of the Commission in July 2004 to present the conclusions of the survey and will attend subsequent sessions in accordance with Article 16 “Personnel Arrangements” of the 2003 “Agreement between the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization”.

As to the Joint Inspection Unit, its Chairman Mr. Armando Duque González, visited WTO Headquarters on 23 July 2003 to discuss WTO’s forthcoming participation in the mechanism. The JIU’s main aim is to provide an independent view of system organizations through inspection and evaluation. JIU aims at improving institutional management methods and enhancing coordination within the system.

**Meeting of Legal Advisers of Organizations of the United Nations System**

On 26 and 27 February 2004 the annual meeting of Legal Advisers of the Organizations of the United Nations system took place at UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

The meeting was chaired by the Legal Counsel of the United Nations, Under-Secretary-General Mr. Hans Corell. All the United Nations Specialised Agencies and many United Nations funds and programmes attended the meeting. Professor Alain Pellet, WTO’s Legal adviser, represented the Organization for the first time following WTO’s transformation into a Specialized Agency.
The deliberations of the meeting were essentially technical, but the WTO Legal Adviser, also took the opportunity to raise the subject of the difficulties resulting from the use by the World Trade Organization of the acronym WTO in English and BTO in Russian. The session chairman advised that this was a question concerning only the two Organizations involved and should be resolved by bilateral contacts.

**Other contacts with the system**

WTO’s Chief of Communications met members of the U.N. Communications Group during a visit to New York in April 2004. The aim was to increase cooperation with the Group, which belongs to the U.N.’s Department of Public Information, and to coordinate coverage by the various U.N. Specialized Agencies of the Millennium Development Goals.

WTO’s Chief of Publications regularly participates in informal meetings of sales officers representing not only U.N. but also Bretton Woods, OECD and European Institutions which take place on the occasion of major exhibitions and fairs. For a number of years now, WTO has shared space on the United Nations stand at the Frankfurt Book Fair held annually in Germany.

**Conclusions**

The present document does not attempt to describe in detail each one of the coordination mechanisms in which WTO participates. In addition to the general mechanisms mentioned here, which come under the aegis of the CEB, WTO coordinates its activities with those of other Specialised Agencies and programmes of the United Nations which have an interest in tourism, in particular, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNCTAD, WHO, FAO and the U.N. Regional Economic Commissions. These mechanisms were in many cases established several years ago when WTO concluded Cooperation Agreements or exchanged Letters of Understanding with the Agencies concerned. Now that WTO is a Specialized Agency, it is assured of closer cooperation with other Agencies and programmes of the United Nations. As in the past, coordination mechanisms serve the important function of eliminating duplication and overlap between WTO’s programmes and those of other agencies, of pooling resources as to attain mutually agreed objectives and of ensuring that the Organization is constantly updated concerning new techniques, methodologies and approaches to programme design and execution.