INTERNATIONAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Announcement in Brief

Course Type: Short Term Course
Programme Area: International Trade
Date: 16 – 27 April 2018
Duration: 2 Weeks
Language: Bilingual (English & French)
Location: Dakar, Senegal
Fee: $2,500 (Excluding air travel and subsistence costs)
Scholarships: Yes (IDEP offers a limited number of partial and full scholarships)

Application Deadline: 9 March, 2018

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1 IDEP strongly encourages and supports the participation of suitably qualified female officials in its capacity development and training programme.
Africa’s level of participation in global trade has been the object of considerable concern among domestic and international policy makers. Central to this concern are the twin issues of how to significantly increase the continent’s share of international commerce and ensure that this is done on terms that are more just, remunerative, and developmental. Over the period since the entry of African countries into the existing international economic system, their share of international trade has remained insignificant in terms of volume. The commodities which they trade have mostly taken the form of raw agricultural goods and minerals. Commentators have also noted the narrow, non-diversified export base operated by most countries. Furthermore, the continent has remained overwhelming dependent on imports to satisfy its needs for processed goods. Recent years have witnessed the emergence of new developing country exports in primary commodity domains where African countries were hitherto dominant, threatening a further erosion of the continent’s share of global commodity markets. The continent is also exposed to trade-based illicit transfers of capital that compound the problem of capital flight from the region.

Although at a period in time, trade policy played a major role in the revenue-boosting efforts of African governments and the strategy for industrial development which they articulated, recent pressures for the liberalisation of trade and the adoption of an open economy model have meant the effective decoupling of trade from broader national development policies. Instead, emphasis has been placed on the pursuit of measures by the continent’s more powerful trading partners for improving African access to their markets over a defined time-frame. These proposals are more often than not embedded in a variety of special partnership or trade agreements. They offer a possibility of preferential access for African exports, including light manufactured products, but on terms which are often so stringent that few countries are able to meet them. Moreover, the productive sectors of African economies have been mired over the years in a deep-seated crisis which carries consequences for the continent’s capacity to take advantage of market access concessions. Still, African countries continue to participate in the framework offered by the World Trade Organization (WTO) for the negotiation of international trade relations, attempting to use the various bargaining rounds to press their interest in the revival and deepening of a trade-development nexus.

Few will disagree that Africa is the one region of the world that benefits the least from the historic and existing international trading system. The rules-based and level playing ground which the WTO framework offers may have its uses, particularly for weaker members of the international economic system, but it should not be doubted that international trade is not so much about charity as the pursuit of hard interests, and the question remains as to whether the same rules should apply uniformly and in the same measure to rich and poor countries in a world of multiple asymmetries. The provision within the rules of the WTO for time-specific special and differential treatment may offer some temporary reprieve and space for adjustment to poorer countries that are required to adopt the same trade policy regimes as the richer and more powerful countries but they do not provide the long-term solution to the multiple challenges which most African governments must tackle in order to be more effective players in the international economic system. Multilateral and bilateral donors may offer aid for trade but such aid always takes the existing international trading framework as given and employs it as a starting point for addressing the needs of recipient states. Yet, part of the concern of African countries is that the existing international trading arrangement does not adequately cater for their development concerns. It is clear that African countries themselves will need to revamp their trade policies and make significant investments in their negotiating capacities in order to begin to get the international trading system to work better and more effectively for them and their development.

The course will particularly dwell on the Continental Free Trade Exchange (CFTA), which is part of the Agenda 2063 and planned to be launched on 2017.
Thousands of dollars had been mobilized, aiming at financing pioneers projects in goods and services exchanges, investments and intellectual property.

The Continental Free Trade Exchange will cover the liberalization of prices, original rules, dispute settlement process, an easing of trade and customs procedures. It is expected with its implementation an increase of competitiveness of manufactured goods through the exploitation of the potential of economies in a broader continental market.

It is as well expected from the CFTA, a contribution to the diversification and transformation of African economies, improvement of resources allocation, reduction of prices in the countries and the achievement of a less vulnerable position to external trade crisis.

OBJECTIVES

The overarching objective of the course is to contribute to the development of a critical mass of highly skilled middle and senior policy officials and decision makers who will be suitably or better equipped to design and manage trade policy for the development of their countries, sub-regions and the continent. More specifically, the course will provide training on trade negotiations, doing so on the basis primarily of the expressed interest of African governments to ensure that their international trade relations are fundamentally developmental.

The course will respond to the needs articulated by African governments for a corpus of skilled mid-level and senior personnel who are adequately equipped to design, implement and evaluate trade policies that dovetail with national and regional development needs and aspirations.

SKILLS TO BE IMPARTED

- An improved understanding by participants of the nature and workings international trading system and its potentialities for driving national and regional economic transformation;
- An enhancement of the negotiating capacity and techniques of trainees;
- A reinforcement of the capacity for the formulation, management, monitoring and evaluation of trade policies;
- A better understanding of the comparative experiences of other regions of the world and the lessons which they offer to the countries of Africa; and
- A broader capacity to prepare and/or assess draft trade agreements from a developmental point of view.

CONTENT

Among the themes which will be covered in the course towards the attainment of its objectives are: History, functioning, and rules of the contemporary international trading system; Types of trade negotiations; Negotiating within the WTO arrangement; Negotiating outside the WTO processes; Approaches to and tools of trade negotiations; Strategy and tactics in global trade negotiations; Core principles for African trade negotiators; and Simulating trade negotiation outcomes.
PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

The pedagogical approach will combine lectures, roundtables, and simulation exercises. It will emphasise practical applications through the use of case studies and group discussion. Group work will also be employed for peer learning and to impart knowledge and skills. Participants admitted into the training programme should be prepared to present short technical reports on specific themes covered in the course.

Furthermore, an effort is made to strike a balance between theory and practice. Special attention is, therefore, given to relevant policy and practical issues, and formal lectures are combined with case studies, group discussions, and an exchange of experiences among participants. At the end of each session, a comprehensive evaluation of the course is carried out to enable IDEP to continuously improve its capacity development and training activities.

Participants will be assessed throughout the programme by various experts/trainers. Based on overall performance for each participant, three (3) types of certificates will be awarded: (i) **Certificates of Competence** (with a classification of Excellent, Very Good or Good); (ii) **Certificates of Participation**; or (iii) **Certificates of Attendance**.

MODE OF DELIVERY

- **Language:** The course will be delivered in English and French (simultaneous interpretation services will be available).
- **Duration:** Two (2) weeks with a total number of 60 hours
- **Number of participants:** A total number of twenty-five (25) participants are admitted into each IDEP short course.
- **Resource persons:** The course will be delivered by a group of experts invited by IDEP to lead the programme. These resource persons are top-level professionals with a first-hand knowledge and experience of international trade negotiations, Africa’s trade policy challenges, and comparative examples from other regions of the world will deliver modules for the benefit of the participants in the course.

METHOD OF APPLICATION AND NOMINATIONS

Applications and nominations are on the basis of a form which all interested participants are expected to complete and send back to IDEP along with their CV and copies of the main pages of their passport. The forms are available on the IDEP website and can be downloaded for transmission by fax or as e-mail attachment. Alternatively, candidates can complete an online application form which also accessible on the IDEP Website. Candidates are advised to complete all the relevant sections of the forms as incomplete applications will not be processed.

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

- Middle and senior level policy officials and managers directly connected with or responsible for planning, designing, managing, monitoring and evaluating trade policy and development in their countries;
- Officials involved or in line for taking part in the negotiation of trade agreements on behalf of their governments.
COURSE TUITION & SCHOLARSHIPS

The cost of this course is USD 2,500 (this fee excludes air travel and subsistence costs). Please note that IDEP offers a limited number of partial and full scholarships to those admitted to participate in its programs. Thus, self-sponsored candidates are also encouraged to apply to this capacity development and training programme. Please note that priorities are given to self-sponsored applicants.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Deadline for Applications and Nominations: **Friday 9th March, 2018**
- Course Period: **16 – 27 April, 2018**

CONTACT INFORMATION

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**N.B.: IDEP strongly encourages and supports the participation of suitably qualified female officials in its capacity development and training programme.**