



UN Economic and Social Commission  
For Western Asia

## **Third Forum on Arab Business Community and the WTO Agreements**

(Beirut: 2-3 July, 2008)

### **Information Note**

#### **I. Introduction**

As the issues of globalization and regional integration gain more attention since the establishment of the World Trade Organization and trade related negotiations that followed, regional organizations, governments and business communities are becoming more aware of the opportunities and challenges these issues present. In the aim to increase the awareness of the Arab business community on the latest developments concerning the World Trade Organization's negotiations and their respective implications, the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab countries and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in collaboration with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, are organizing the "Third Forum on Arab Business Community and the WTO Agreements". The Forum will be held in Beirut, Lebanon during the period 2-3 July, 2008.

During the two day discussions and deliberations, the Forum aims to provide a summary on the progress achieved in the on-going trade negotiations on "The Doha Development Agenda" since the convening of the "Second Forum on Arab Business Community and the WTO Agreements" held in 2004, and to provide a platform for representatives of the Arab business community to discuss issues of concern in the context of the WTO negotiations.

In this context, the Forum will concentrate on the following issues:

- Progress achieved in the on-going negotiations of the "Doha Development Agenda".
- Major issues of concern to the Arab business community in the context of the WTO negotiations.

- Arab business community and the recent international trends.
- Round table on the “new role of the Arab business community under the recent international developments”.

## ***II. Basic Information***

### **Date & Venue**

2-3 July, 2008  
Adnan Kassar Edifice for Arab Economy  
Boulevard Cité Sportive  
Beirut - Lebanon

### **Invited Parties**

1. Members of the Unions and Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries.
2. Members of the Joint Arab Foreign Chambers.
3. Representatives of the Concerned Ministries in Arab Countries.
4. Arab Businessmen and Businesswomen.
5. International Organizations: World Trade Organizations (WTO); The United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); World Customs Organization (WCO); International Trade Center (ITC); and World Bank.
6. Regional Organizations: League of Arab States; Arab Monetary Fund; Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization; Arab Organization for Agricultural Development; Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development, Saudi Development Fund, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, Abu Dhabi Development Fund and others.
7. UN Regional Commissions.

### **Languages**

Arabic and English.

### **Accommodation**

#### **Coral Beach Hotel and Resort\*\*\*\*\***

Special prices per night for participants:

Single Room	\$90.00
Double Room	\$100.00

The price includes breakfast and service charge but excludes 10% VAT.

Contact Person for Reservation: Miss Zeina Haddad

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The Forum welcomes the contribution of the participants either through submitting working papers or interventions in any of the Forum's sessions. In this context, please notify ESCWA and send the working paper not later than 16 June, 2008 to make the necessary arrangements.

## **Provisional Agenda**

1. Opening ceremony
2. World Trade Organization and progress in negotiations on the " Doha Development Agenda"
3. Topics of concern to the Arab business community in the context of World Trade Organization's negotiations.
  - a- Market access
  - b- Trade in services – financial services
  - c- Trade facilitation.
4. Arab business community and the recent international trends.
  - a- Regional and bilateral agreements.
  - b- European Neighborhood Policy.
5. Round table on the “new role of the Arab business community under the recent international developments”.
6. Closing remarks.