Global Facilitation Partnership for Trade and Transport (GFP)
Meeting of the GFP Steering Committee

September 23, 2014, 2:30pm
Meeting Room B, United Nations Conference Center, Bangkok, Thailand

Participants
José María Rubiato, UNCTAD
Tom Butterly, UNECE (via audio conference)
Edward Clarence-Smith, UNIDO
Toshihiko Osawa, WCO
Kazunari Igarashi, WCO
Gerard McLinden, World Bank
Christina Busch, World Bank

Guests
Yann Duval, UNESCAP
Maame Agyeben, UNESCAP

No participant from the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) was able to join, but prior to the meeting Donia Hammami (ICC) sent regards to all participants and affirmed ICC’s wish to get involved more strongly in GFP again in the future.

1. Opening and introduction

By Gerard McLinden, World Bank

2. Discussion and vote on pending applications for GFP core partner

Christina Busch: The International Network of Customs Universities (INCU) applied for membership as a GFP core partner. UNCTAD, UNECE, WCO and World Bank gave their approval in writing prior to the Steering Committee meeting.
UNIDO voted yes during the Steering Committee meeting.
Update: ICC gave their approval in writing on September 23 after the Steering Committee meeting. INCU will thus become a core partner of the GFP as of September 23, 2014. The website will be updated accordingly shortly.

3. GFP Annual Meeting 2014/2015

After a hiatus in 2013 due to staff changes at the World Bank, the next GFP Annual Meeting shall take place either at the end of 2014 or in the first half of 2015. All participants agreed that the next Annual Meeting should have a well thought-out theme, options for private sector participation and ways to include participants from developing countries.
Tom Butterly: UNECE will host the UN CEFACFT Forum in Geneva in April 2015, with more than 50% private sector participation and a focus on public-private partnerships => potentially a good opportunity to hold a concurrent GFP Meeting.

Gerard McLinden: Desirable to have ICC as a core player at the Annual Meeting to ensure private sector participation. Same goes for ITC (GFP core partner).

Yann Duval: Standing proposal from UN ESCAP to hold the GFP Annual Meeting together with the APTFF (fall of each year), similar to previous GFP Meetings in Colombo and Kuala Lumpur. This presupposes that ESCAP will be supported by the GFP Secretariat and core partners, in the sense that all Steering Committee partners commit well in advance (six months prior) to sending speakers to the Meeting.

Tom Butterly: Each full GFP Annual Meeting requires lots of preparation. A joint approach is much easier than for one organization alone. For example: UNECE and UNCTAD could host the next Meeting, perhaps together with other UN Commissions, or with the WB Geneva Office. Need funds to sponsor participants from developing countries.

Gerard McLinden: Probably a good idea to design the GFP Annual Meeting as an GFP/Annex D++ event, with focus on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The TFA will dominate the TF agenda in the next months regardless of ratification status. Focusing on the TFA would offer an opportunity to bring in Regional Development Banks. Normally GFP Annual Meetings are hosted alongside another event, but this could be a stand-alone event.

Toshihiko Osawa: Should WTO be invited and if so in what role? Advisable to include WTO if the Annual Meeting’s topic is the TFA.

Gerard McLinden: Formal role for WTO unlikely, but participation desirable.

The participants agreed on the following points:
- Hold another GFP Annual Meeting in the near future
- Theme: „TFA ++“
- Include Annex D++ partners, regional development banks and other partners
- Bring in ITC and ICC to include private sector
- Best location: Geneva
- Date: Between March and May 2015
- Principal organizers: UNCTAD and UNECE
- The GFP secretariat will coordinate the organization with UNCTAD and UNECE

4. A.O.B.

Gerard McLinden: Suggestion to make the new coordination website TFACoordination.org available to donors. Do other Steering Committee members agree?

UNIDO, UNESCAP, UNECE, WCO: Yes, at least for access to information since it’s all public domain information. Also give donors access to the internal coordination group on the TFACoordination group page on the GFP website.

Gerard McLinden: José María Rubiato will retire from his post at UNCTAD on September 30, 2014. Speaking for Mona Haddad, Marc Juhel, Jean-Francois Arvis and all colleagues at the World Bank: A heartfelt „Thank you“ to José for his work on trade facilitation over the past years and best wishes for the future.