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**United Nations Commission on
International Trade Law
Working Group I (MSMEs)
Thirty-third session
Vienna, 7–11 October 2019**

Annotated provisional agenda

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Preparation of legal standards in respect of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.
5. Other business.
6. Adoption of the report.

II. Composition of the Working Group

1. The Working Group is composed of all States members of the Commission, which are the following: Algeria (2025) Argentina (2022), Australia (2022), Austria (2022), Belarus (2022), Belgium (2025), Brazil (2022), Burundi (2022), Cameroon (2025), Canada (2025), Chile (2022), China (2025), Colombia (2022), Côte d'Ivoire (2025), Croatia (2025), Czechia (2022), Dominican Republic (2025), Ecuador (2025), Finland (2025), France (2025), Germany (2025), Ghana (2025), Honduras (2025), Hungary (2025), India (2022), Indonesia (2025), Iran (Islamic Republic of) (2022), Israel (2022), Italy (2022), Japan (2025), Kenya (2022), Kuwait (2019), Lebanon (2022), Lesotho (2022), Liberia (2019), Libya (2022), Malaysia (2025), Mali (2025), Mauritius (2022), Mexico (2025), Namibia (2019), Nigeria (2022), Pakistan (2022), Peru (2025), Philippines (2022), Poland (2022), Republic of Korea (2025), Romania (2022), Russian Federation (2025), Sierra Leone (2019), Singapore (2025), South Africa (2025), Spain (2022), Sri Lanka (2022), Switzerland (2025), Thailand (2022), Turkey (2022), Uganda (2022), Ukraine (2025), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2025), United States of America (2022), Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (2022), Vietnam (2025) and Zimbabwe (2025). The term of the membership expires on the last day prior to the beginning of the annual session of the Commission in the year indicated in parentheses.



2. States not members of the Commission and international governmental organizations may attend the session as observers and participate in the deliberations. In addition, invited international non-governmental organizations may attend the session as observers and represent the views of their organizations on matters where the organization concerned has expertise or international experience so as to facilitate the deliberations at the session.

III. Annotations to agenda items

Item 1. Opening of the session

3. The thirty-third session of Working Group I is scheduled to be held at the Vienna International Centre from 7 to 11 October 2019. The meeting hours will be from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 2 to 5 p.m., except on Monday, 7 October 2019, when the session will commence at 10 a.m.

Item 2. Election of officers

4. In accordance with its practice at previous sessions, the Working Group may wish to elect a Chair and a Rapporteur.

Item 4. Preparation of legal standards in respect of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

1. Background information

(a) Current mandate of Working Group I

5. At its forty-second session, in 2009, the Commission requested the Secretariat to prepare a study including an assessment of the legal and regulatory issues at stake in the field of microfinance.¹ Following discussion of the study at its forty-third session, in 2010, the Commission agreed that the Secretariat should convene a colloquium to explore the legal and regulatory issues surrounding microfinance that fell within the mandate of UNCITRAL. The colloquium, held in January 2011, resulted in a number of findings for future consideration² as well as recommendations on work that UNCITRAL might usefully undertake in the field of microfinance.³ The Commission, at its forty-fourth session, in 2011, chose the following topics for in-depth study by the Secretariat: secured finance, dispute resolution and electronic currency (e-money). At that session, the Commission also agreed to include microfinance as an item for its future work.⁴

6. Following discussion of the study⁵ at its forty-fifth session, in 2012, the Commission agreed to hold one or more colloquiums on microfinance and related matters, as a matter of priority, with a focus on several topics related to creating an enabling legal environment for micro-businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises, including facilitating simplified business incorporation and registration.⁶

7. The second colloquium on microfinance⁷ was held in Vienna in January 2013. At its forty-sixth session, in 2013, the Commission took note of the broad consensus among participants at the colloquium to recommend that a Working Group be

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/64/17)*, paras. 432–433.

² See [A/CN.9/727](#).

³ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/65/17)*, paras. 274–280.

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/66/17)*, paras. 241–246.

⁵ See [A/CN.9/756](#).

⁶ For a list of topics that were to be the focus of the colloquiums, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/67/17)*, paras. 124–126.

⁷ See [A/CN.9/780](#); presentations made at the colloquium are available at https://uncitral.un.org/en/colloquia/microfinance/2013_colloquia.

established to address the legal aspects of creating an enabling environment for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Participants in the colloquium identified five broad areas where it was thought the Commission could provide guidance that would address the business cycle of MSMEs.⁸ The starting point could be guidance that allowed for simplified business start-up and operating procedures. Other topics to be taken up subsequently could include the following: (i) a system for resolving disputes between borrowers and lenders; (ii) effective access to financial services for MSMEs; (iii) guidance on ensuring access to credit; and (iv) insolvency of MSMEs through fast-track procedures and business rescue options. As to the form the Commission guidance could take, the Commission was further advised that a flexible tool, such as a legislative guide or a model law depending on the topics, would contribute to harmonizing efforts in this sector and provide momentum for reforms which would further encourage micro-business participation in the economy.

8. At its forty-sixth session (2013), the Commission also heard a proposal from the Government of Colombia⁹ that the Commission could create a mandate for a new Working Group focused on the life cycle of a business, particularly in relation to micro and small-sized enterprises. It was suggested that the Working Group could begin with the facilitation of simplified business incorporation and registration, following which it could continue with other matters, such as those discussed at the 2013 colloquium, in order to create an enabling legal environment for this type of business activity. After discussion, the Commission agreed that work on reducing the legal obstacles faced by MSMEs throughout their life cycle, in particular, in developing economies, should be added to the work programme of the Commission, and that such work should begin with a focus on the legal questions surrounding the simplification of incorporation.¹⁰ That mandate was reaffirmed by the Commission at its forty-seventh to fifty-second sessions, in 2014 to 2019, respectively.¹¹

(b) Topics on the agenda of the Working Group

9. At its twenty-second session (New York, 10 to 14 February 2014), Working Group I (MSMEs) commenced its work according to the mandate received from the Commission. Based upon the issues raised in working paper [A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.82](#), the Working Group engaged in preliminary discussions in respect of a number of broad issues relating to the development of a legal text on simplified incorporation.¹² Business registration was also said to be of particular relevance in the future deliberations of the Working Group.¹³

10. From its twenty-third session (Vienna, 17–21 November 2014) to its thirtieth session (New York, 12 to 16 March 2018), the Working Group proceeded to consider the legal issues surrounding the simplification of incorporation as well as good practices in business registration,¹⁴ both of which were said to reduce the legal obstacles encountered by MSMEs throughout their life cycle and in particular at business start-up. At its thirtieth session, the Working Group agreed to transmit to the

⁸ See [A/CN.9/780](#), paras. 49–55.

⁹ See [A/CN.9/790](#).

¹⁰ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/68/17)*, para. 321.

¹¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/69/17)*, para. 134; *ibid.*, *Seventieth Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/70/17)*, paras. 225 and 340; *ibid.*, *Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/71/17)*, para. 347; and *ibid.*, *Seventy-second Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/72/17)*, para. 235; *Seventy-third Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/73/17)*, para. 112; *Seventy-fourth Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/74/17)* in preparation.

¹² See [A/CN.9/800](#), paras. 34–38 and 42–46.

¹³ *Ibid.*, paras. 47–50.

¹⁴ The Working Group engaged in deliberations on good practices in business registration at its twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions (see [A/CN.9/860](#) and [A/CN.9/866](#)), and twenty-eighth to thirtieth sessions (see [A/CN.9/900](#), [A/CN.9/928](#) and [A/CN.9/933](#)). At its twenty-fifth session, it was decided that such work should proceed along the lines of a concise legislative guide on key principles in business registration, without prejudice to considering other possible legislative texts at a later stage (see [A/CN.9/860](#), para. 72).

Commission for consideration and potential adoption at the fifty-first session of the Commission, in 2018, the text of the draft legislative guide on key principles of a business registry (A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.109) and an introductory document entitled “Reducing the legal obstacles faced by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)” (A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.110)¹⁵ intended to provide the overall context for work prepared by UNCITRAL in respect of MSMEs.¹⁶ At its fifty-first session (2018), the Commission adopted the draft legislative guide with a few revisions.¹⁷

(c) The draft legislative guide on an UNCITRAL Limited Liability Organization (UNLLO)

11. At its twenty-third session, the Working Group set the context for its discussion of the legal questions surrounding the simplification of incorporation. The Working Group heard a presentation by the Secretariat of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on its standard-setting activity to combat money-laundering, terrorist financing and other illicit activity,¹⁸ as well as presentations by States on possible alternative legislative models to assist MSMEs (A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.87).¹⁹ The Working Group then proceeded to explore the legal questions surrounding the simplification of incorporation by considering the issues outlined in the framework set out in working paper A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.86.²⁰

12. At its twenty-fourth session (New York, 13 to 17 April 2015), after resuming consideration of the issues outlined in working paper A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.86, the Working Group decided that it should continue its work by considering the first six articles of the draft model law and commentary thereon contained in working paper A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.89, without prejudice to the final form of the legislative text, which had not yet been decided. Further to a proposal from several delegations, the Working Group agreed to discuss the issues included in working paper A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.89 bearing in mind the general principles outlined in the proposal, including the “think small first” approach, and to prioritize those aspects of the draft text in working paper A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.89 that were the most relevant for simplified business entities. The Working Group also agreed that it would discuss the alternative models introduced in working paper A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.87 at a later stage.

13. At its twenty-fifth session (Vienna, 19 to 23 October 2015), Working Group I resumed its deliberations on working paper A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.89 and considered Chapter VI on organization of the simplified business entity, Chapter VIII on dissolution and winding up, Chapter VII on restructuring, and draft article 35 on financial statements (contained in Chapter IX on miscellaneous matters).²¹

14. At its twenty-sixth session (New York, 4 to 8 April 2016), the Working Group first reviewed Chapter III on shares and capital, followed by Chapter V on shareholders’ meetings of working paper A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.89.²² Following its discussion of the issues contained in those chapters, the Working Group decided that the legislative text on a simplified business entity should be in the form of a legislative guide, and requested the Secretariat to prepare for discussion at a future session a

¹⁵ The two draft texts were transmitted to the Commission as they appeared in documents A/CN.9/940 and A/CN.9/941 respectively, which reflected the deliberations of the Working Group at its thirtieth session.

¹⁶ At its twenty-sixth session, the Working Group agreed that its MSME work should be accompanied by an introductory document that would provide an overarching framework for current and future work on MSMEs. An early draft of that document was included in working paper A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.92 and later on revised in working paper A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.107.

¹⁷ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-third Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/73/17)*, para. 111.

¹⁸ See A/CN.9/825, paras. 47–55.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, paras. 56–61.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, paras. 62–79.

²¹ See A/CN.9/860, paras. 76 to 96.

²² See A/CN.9/866, paras. 22 to 47.

draft legislative guide (consisting of recommendations and commentary) that reflected its policy discussions to date.²³

15. At its twenty-seventh session (Vienna, 3 to 7 October 2016), the Working Group considered the issues outlined in working papers [A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.99](#) and [Add.1](#) on an UNCITRAL limited liability organization (UNLLO), beginning with section A on general provisions (draft recommendations 1 to 6), section B on the formation of an UNLLO (draft recommendations 7 to 10), and section C on the organization of an UNLLO (draft recommendations 11 to 13). The Working Group also heard a short presentation of working paper [A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.94](#) on the French legislative approach known as an “Entrepreneur with Limited Liability” (or EIRL), which represented a possible alternative legislative model applicable to micro and small businesses.

16. At its twenty-eighth session (New York, 1 to 9 May 2017), the Working Group considered the following recommendations (and related commentary) of the draft legislative guide on an UNLLO (as it appeared in [A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.99](#) and [Add.1](#)): section D on managers (draft recommendations 14 to 16), section E on contributions (draft recommendations 17 and 18), and section F on distributions (draft recommendations 19 to 21). The Working Group also heard two proposals made by States: the first was a proposal for future work on contractual networks ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.102](#)), that was later presented to the Commission at its fiftieth session ([A/CN.9/925](#)); and the second being a proposal that the Working Group should attach model provisions on the dissolution and liquidation of MSMEs ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.104](#)) as an annex to the legislative guide on an UNLLO. In respect of the latter proposal, the Working Group agreed that any consideration by it of that proposal should first be subject to domestic consultations and that it could be considered at a future session of the Working Group in conjunction with its deliberations regarding recommendation 24 (and commentary) of the draft legislative guide on an UNLLO concerning issues related to dissolution and winding-up of an UNLLO.

17. After devoting its twenty-ninth (Vienna, 16 to 20 October 2017), and thirtieth (New York, 12 to 16 March 2018) sessions to consider the draft legislative guide on key principles of a business registry, the Working Group resumed its discussion on the draft legislative guide on an UNLLO at its thirty-first session (Vienna, 8 to 12 October 2018) at which it considered a revised draft of the guide (contained in [A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.112](#)) including changes arising from its deliberations at its twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth sessions. The following selected recommendations (and relevant commentary) were discussed: recommendations 7 to 12 (Sections B on formation and C on organization), save for recommendation 10; recommendation 15 (Section D on management) and recommendations 16 and 17 (Section E on ownership of the UNLLO and contributions by members).

18. At its thirty-second session (New York, 25 to 29 March 2019),²⁴ the Working Group continued its discussion on the draft legislative guide on an UNLLO considering the issues included in working paper [A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.114](#). The Working Group first discussed several definitions included in the Terminology section, then proceeded to consider other aspects of the draft guide and to provide additional clarity on certain recommendations discussed at its previous session. The following recommendations and the relevant commentary were discussed: recommendation 9 (Section B on formation) recommendation 10 (Section C on organization), recommendations 11 to 16 (Section D on management of the UNLLO); and recommendation 17 (Section E on members’ share of and contributions to the UNLLO).

²³ Ibid., paras. 48 to 50.

²⁴ The first two days (25 and 26 March) of the thirty-second session were devoted to a colloquium on contractual networks and other forms of inter-firm cooperation (see [A/CN.9/991](#)). The Working Group convened from 27 to 29 March.

2. Documentation

19. The Working Group will have before it, and may wish to use as a basis for its consideration, the following documents: (a) a note prepared by the Secretariat for the current session of the Working Group containing a draft legislative guide on an UNCITRAL limited liability organization (UNLLO) ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.116](#)); and (b) such other documents as may be officially submitted by States after the date of this provisional agenda.

20. In planning the attendance of their representatives, States and interested organizations may also wish to consider the following background documents:

(a) Reports of Working Group I (MSMEs) on the work of its twenty-second to twenty-eighth sessions and of its thirty-first and thirty-second sessions ([A/CN.9/800](#), [A/CN.9/825](#), [A/CN.9/831](#), [A/CN.9/860](#), [A/CN.9/866](#), [A/CN.9/895](#), [A/CN.9/900](#), [A/CN.9/963](#) and [A/CN.9/968](#));

(b) Notes of the Secretariat on Features of simplified business incorporation regimes in selected States ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.82](#)); Legal questions surrounding the simplification of incorporation ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.86](#)); Draft model law on a single-member business entity ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.86/Add.1](#)); Draft model law on a simplified business entity ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.89](#)); Draft legislative guide on an UNCITRAL limited liability organization ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.99](#) and Add.1; [A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.112](#) and [A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.114](#));

(c) Observations by Colombia on the Colombian simplified corporation ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.83](#)); by Italy and France on Possible alternative legislative models for micro and small businesses ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.87](#)); by Germany ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.90](#)) providing additional information for the deliberations of the Working Group and by France ([A/CN.9/WG.I/WP.94](#)) on the individual entrepreneur with limited liability scheme; and

(d) Reports of the Commission (on the work of Working Group I) as follows: *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 17* ([A/68/17](#)), paragraphs 316–322; *Sixty-ninth Session* ([A/69/17](#)), paragraphs 131–134; *Seventieth Session* ([A/70/17](#)), paragraphs 220–225 and 339–340; *Seventy-first Session* ([A/71/17](#)), paragraphs 219–224; *Seventy-second Session* ([A/72/17](#)), paragraphs 230–235; *Seventy-third Session* ([A/73/17](#)), paragraphs 69–112; and *Seventy-fourth Session* ([A/74/17](#)), under preparation.

21. UNCITRAL documents are posted on the UNCITRAL website (<https://uncitral.un.org>) upon their issuance in all the official languages of the United Nations. Delegates may wish to check the availability of the documents by accessing the Working Group’s page in the “Working Documents” section of the UNCITRAL website.

Item 6. Adoption of the report

22. The Working Group may wish to adopt, at the close of its session, a report for submission to the fifty-third session of the Commission, scheduled to be held in New York, from 6 to 17 July 2020. The substance of the Working Group deliberations at its meeting on Friday morning will be summarily read out for the record and subsequently incorporated into the report.

IV. Scheduling of meetings

23. The Working Group’s thirty-third session will last for five working days. The Working Group may wish to note that, consistent with decisions taken made by the Commission at its thirty-fourth session,²⁵ the Working Group is expected to hold

²⁵ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 17* and Corrigendum ([A/56/17](#) and Corr.3), para. 381.

substantive deliberations during the first nine half-days (that is, from Monday to Friday morning). A draft report prepared by the Secretariat is to be adopted at the last meeting of the Working Group (on Friday afternoon). The main conclusions reached by the Working Group at its ninth meeting (on Friday morning) will be summarily read out for the record at the tenth meeting and subsequently incorporated into the report. The Working Group may wish to note that its thirty-fourth session will be held in New York and is tentatively scheduled from 23 to 27 March 2020.
