

UNCTAD/AB/Misc.1

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

**Report on the Meeting of the Advisory Body regarding paragraph 166
of the UNCTAD X Plan of Action**

Thursday, 27 September 2001



UNITED NATIONS

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Board, which was established in January 2001, held two preparatory meetings to review issues regarding the first of the training courses mandated by paragraph 166 of the UNCTAD X Plan of Action, which was adopted in Bangkok in February 2000.

2. That training course - on key issues on the international economic agenda was held in Geneva and Turin from 20 June to 17 July 2001. One introductory and six substantive modules were designed by the secretariat. The six substantive modules covered the following topics:

Interdependence and globalization. This explained the interface between various key aspects of the international economic environment and the implications for national policies and competitiveness.

International trade and development. This defined and evaluated the role of international trade in the development process, focusing on the links between the structure of a domestic economy and the impact of trade flows on development.

Finance and development. This analysed the main driving forces of international financial flows and the determinants of national policies of developing countries regarding development financing.

Investment and development. This defined and evaluated the role of investment in the development process and the linkages between investment and international trade.

National development strategies. This examined the tools that can be used at a domestic level to ensure the effective implementation of a development strategy.

Simulation of a national decision-making process. This module was designed to foster a better understanding of the complex process of policy-making at the national level in a rapidly changing global economic environment.

II. Meeting of the Advisory Body

3. The Advisory Body met on 27 September 2001, when the Secretary-General of UNCTAD presented the draft report, which is now contained in document UNCTAD/AB/1, on the implementation of paragraph 166 by the secretariat.

4. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD acknowledged that the training courses envisaged in the Plan of Action have potential for sharing the comprehensive knowledge that UNCTAD has acquired in various areas of trade, investment, technology and finance for development. The first training course had a rich curriculum in which the entirety of UNCTAD's work on development concerns was spelt out. Participants were satisfied with the training course, but were also

overwhelmed with the scope of the curriculum and the wealth of material presented to them. It is therefore necessary to understand how to refine the inputs to this first training course, so as to deliver future courses. There are several ways of capturing the essence of the first training course - through the preparation of handbooks or manuals, and a review of the taped material, which could assist in the preparation of future courses.

5. The Secretary-General was concerned that resources for the continuation of these courses be made available, including efforts to provide an understanding of what is achievable for the courses, the location where they can be delivered, and other constraints identified in the draft report produced by the secretariat. The team that was established for the organization and management of the training course will address these matters.

6. Further information on the training course, its conduct in Geneva and Turin, and the closing session, was given by Mr. R. Figueredo, Mr. P. Fröhler and Mr. M. Panicker. The preparations required over 25 resource persons from UNCTAD to spend an equivalent of about 30 man-months to put together this four-week training course, which encompassed all the major aspects of UNCTAD's work, including providing discussion groups on thematic subjects. Eighteen participants from developing countries attended the training course. Focal persons from the various Divisions at UNCTAD held several meetings in drawing up the six modules for the substantive content of the training course. This occurred while many resource persons were also preparing for Expert Meetings and/or Commission meetings, and the Trade and Development Board, as well as meeting deadlines for other work assigned to them in their respective Divisions. Meetings were also held to select participants. The subsequent management and organization of both participants and the conduct of the training course were also handled simultaneously by the team established for this purpose. The United Nations Training Centre in Turin was chosen over Geneva in order to cut costs, and to provide an environment where study and discussion could take place with the minimum interruption to participants and trainers.

7. The Advisory Body was informed of the recommendations drawn up by the secretariat on future training courses. A discussion took place on the continuation of these courses, where and how they could be held, including the curriculum, who the audience should be and how they could be funded.

III. Training course on key issues on the international economic agenda

8. The Advisory Body was informed of the overall organization and management of the training course, and the reaction of participants and trainers. There has been very positive feedback on this training course from participants and the sending department in their capitals. There was general agreement that the objectives set out in the notification, and especially the efforts made to transfer knowledge as envisaged under paragraph 166, were fully met during the training course. There was agreement also that the secretariat should now build upon the success of this course and indicate

how future courses will be organized and conducted, taking into account the constraints mentioned in the report.

9. There were requests from members of the Advisory Body that the impact of the training course on participants and their parent/sponsoring departments be monitored by the secretariat as mentioned in the draft report: participants will be requested to complete a questionnaire in about six months' time on how the course impacted on their jobs, and on the dissemination of knowledge and information to other colleagues. The parent/sponsoring departments should be requested to assess the value added by their staff to the work of the department.

10. The Advisory Body indicated its support for the holding of future courses. A debate ensued on the modalities of future training courses, and the related constraints facing the secretariat.

11. In terms of content and management of future courses, there was an understanding amongst delegates that a similar course cannot be undertaken again by the secretariat owing to resource constraints, the preparations required for such a course and the high participant-trainer ratio. Future courses should be specific in content, for example on WTO issues, while keeping in mind that sectoral and/or regional issues require to be addressed simultaneously. Similarly, trade and development work done at UNCTAD could form the overall basis of a training course, while providing linkages to sectoral issues to reflect interrelationships. The concept of UNCTAD's work and emphasis on development should be maintained in order to meet the objectives of knowledge transfer and hence the value added of such training courses. It was also agreed that the maximum impact of this training course could be achieved through the training of participants, who would then be able to disseminate the knowledge acquired to colleagues in their respective capitals.

12. Future courses should be of a longer duration to allow time for the assimilation of the course content, taking into account the availability of financial resources. With the experience gained in the design of this course, the secretariat should attempt to reduce the burden on trainers in the design of future courses. The Advisory Body welcomed the secretariat's initiative to produce a handbook and/or training manual based on the lectures and material provided by the trainers in this first training course.

13. There are currently no resources available to conduct a similar course for any number of participants in any of the developing regions. However, general agreement emerged that despite earlier considerations of this issue a second course similar to the first should be organized, provided that the required resources become available and that the number of participants is increased to 35 or 40. One option for funding could be that limited resources which might become available would cover half the number of participants (daily subsistence allowance (DSA) only, travel and DSA for participants from least developed countries), while the remainder would pay all costs for their attendance, including travel. A higher number of participants would considerably lower the participant-trainer ratio. The secretariat stated that funds for the holding of future courses might become available from the development account. The Advisory Body understands that the location of future courses would need to be considered in the light of the priority given by the development account to enhancing local and regional capacities. Some courses may be held in Geneva, taking into

account the fact that the secretariat might be able to conduct similar courses at lower costs elsewhere than in Geneva.

14. A final report to the Trade and Development Board will be made as soon as participants in the first training course provide feedback on the impact which the course has had on their work. This is expected to be completed six months after the end of the training course, i.e., in January 2002.

**Members of the Advisory Body and
list of participants at the meeting of the Advisory Body on
27 September 2001**

Members of the Advisory Body

H.E. Mr. Camilo Reyes Rodriguez, President	Colombia
Mr. Vladimir Malevich	Belarus
H.E. Mr. Qiao Zonghuai	China
H.E. Ms. Fayza Aboulnaga	Egypt
H.E. Mr. Fisseha Yimer Aboye	Ethiopia
H.E. Mr. Koichi Haraguchi	Japan
H.E. Mr. Nacem Benjelloun-Touimi	Morocco
H.E. Mr. Munir Akram	Pakistan
H.E. Mr. Samuel T. Ramel	Philippines
H.E. Mr. Vasily Sidorov	Russian Federation
H.E. Mr. Joaquin Pérez - Villanueva y Tovar	Spain
H.E. Mr. Pierre-Louis Girard	Switzerland
H.E. Mr. Simon W.J. Fuller	United Kingdom
H.E. Mr. Carlos Pérez del Castillo	Uruguay
H.E. Mr. Werner Corrales Leal	Venezuela

UNCTAD secretariat

Mr. Rubens Ricupero	Secretary-General
Mr. Carlos Fortin	Deputy Secretary-General
Mr. John Burley	
Mr. Reinaldo Figueredo	
Mr. Peter Froehler	
Mr. Awni Behnam	
Mr. Karma Tenzing	
Mr. Mohan Panicker	