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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
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Agenda item 9(d)

**FINANCING THE PARTICIPATION OF EXPERTS FROM DEVELOPING  
COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION  
IN UNCTAD EXPERT MEETINGS**

**Note by the UNCTAD secretariat**

## **Recent developments**

1. At its forty-fourth session, in May 2005, the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget recalled the guidelines adopted by the Trade and Development Board at its nineteenth special session on finding a long-term solution for predictable financing of the participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in UNCTAD intergovernmental expert meetings and recognized the need to adopt, as soon as possible, appropriate measures to improve the financing of experts in these expert meetings. The Working Party requested the Chairman of the Working Party to continue his consultations on this subject with a view to arriving at an appropriate solution within the next two months, and to report thereon to the President of the Trade and Development Board for appropriate consideration. The Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget also recommended the designation by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD of a focal point at an appropriately senior level, within existing resources, to be responsible for all matters related to financing of experts, including coordination of the UNCTAD divisions, and mobilization and tracking of contributions to the Trust Fund, and to report thereon to the Trade and Development Board. The Director of the Division of Management will act as focal point on this matter.

2. At the Board's thirty-seventh executive session, in July 2005, the President of the Board recalled the agreement reached at the consultations of the President on 20 July 2005, at which it was proposed that the issue of financing of experts be incorporated into the agenda of the regular session of the Board if a solution could not be found at the thirty-seventh executive session. It was decided that the financing of experts would be added to the agenda of the fifty-second session of the Board as sub-item 9(d), and the secretariat was requested to prepare a note containing an overview of the constraints, an update on the practices of other organizations as regards recourse to the regular budget to finance the travel and related costs of experts to participate in intergovernmental meetings (see annex), and, if possible, proposals for the way forward.

## **Overview of constraints**

3. At the Mid-term Review in Bangkok in April/May 2002, the Trade and Development Board established guidelines for the functioning of the intergovernmental machinery. With regard to financing the participation of experts in expert meetings, members agreed to find, by the end of 2002, a long-term solution for predictable financing of the participation of experts in intergovernmental expert meetings based on the principle of equitable geographical representation, beneficiary needs, in particular LDCs, and the expertise of the experts concerned. They agreed that approximately \$280,000 (at 2002 prices) per year would be required to cover the participation of 10 experts at each of the eight expert meetings in 2002 and 2003.

4. At its twentieth special session, in January 2003, the Board agreed that, on an experimental basis, participation of experts in UNCTAD expert meetings would be financed on the basis of extrabudgetary contributions.

5. The criteria established by the Board at its nineteenth special session referred to finding a long-term solution for predictable and regular financing of participation of experts in expert meetings. In this connection, it must be noted that extrabudgetary contributions have so far not been forthcoming on anything like the required scale and that the funds that have

been provided to date have been expended. It would thus appear that the experimental scheme based on extrabudgetary contributions agreed upon by the Board at its twentieth special session has not so far met the requirement of providing a long-term solution for predictable and regular financing of expert participation in expert meetings.

6. With a view to securing the necessary predictable funding, the secretariat sought funding for the travel and daily subsistence allowance of 10 experts to participate at each of the eight annual UNCTAD expert meetings through its 2006-2007 proposed programme budget submission to the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts in New York. The Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts explained that it was unable to support this request without an intergovernmental mandate providing for the financing of experts from developing countries in UNCTAD expert meetings, as per General Assembly resolution 1798 (XVII) of 11 December 1962, as amended by resolutions 2128 (XX), 2245 (XXI), 2489 (XXIII), 2491 (XXIX), 41/176, 41/213, 42/214, section VI of 42/225, section IX of 43/217 and section XIII of 45/248.

### **The way forward**

7. Following the forty-fourth session of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget, the secretariat sought further guidance on this issue from the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts. The latter confirmed that any solution involving the use of regular budget resources would need to accord with Regulation 5.9 and Rule 105.8 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and Methods of Evaluation. In accordance with Regulation 5.9, no council, commission or other competent body shall take a decision involving either a change in the programme budget approved by the General Assembly or the possible requirement of additional expenditure unless it has received and taken into account a report from the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of the proposal. Particular attention was drawn to paragraphs (a) and (c) of Rule 105.8, in which it is specified that the report on programme budget implications, should include, "(a) Modifications of the work programme that would be necessary should the proposed draft resolution, recommendation or decision be adopted, listing additions, changes or deletions to programmes, subprogrammes, outputs and activities" and "(c) in cases where it is proposed to finance such additional activities totally or partly through the redeployment of existing resources, an indication of the outputs or subprogrammes in the current work programme that would be changed, curtailed or terminated as a consequence".

8. In light of the above, Member States may wish to consider the following options:

- (a) The Board could reach consensus on the use of regular budget funds to finance the travel and daily subsistence allowance of 10 experts to participate at each of the eight annual UNCTAD expert meetings and request a report from the Secretary-General on the corresponding programme budget implications; it could then refer this decision and the report on programme budget implications to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly;
- (b) The Board could request the President of the Board to continue holding consultations on this matter with a view to encouraging member States and other donors to consider providing extrabudgetary funds to finance the travel and daily subsistence allowance of 10 experts to participate at each of the eight

annual UNCTAD expert meetings, and to report on the progress made regarding a long-term solution for predictable financing of the participation of experts at UNCTAD expert meetings at an executive session of the Trade and Development Board;

- (c) In the event that the Board does not reach consensus on either (a) or (b) above, the fact that so far the extrabudgetary avenue has not proved successful would imply that it would not be possible to find a long-term solution for predictable financing. The Board would then need to examine the implications of this situation for the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD.

## Annex

### Update on other practices

1. The use of regular budget funds to finance the participation of experts in intergovernmental expert meetings is not uncommon. The programme budget of the United Nations contains numerous financial provisions for this purpose.
2. The information provided below for UNCTAD and DESA is taken directly from the relevant sections of the United Nations 2006-2007 proposed programme budget. Information regarding the specialized agencies has not been provided, since these agencies are not covered by the UN Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and Methods of Evaluation.

### Practices in UNCTAD<sup>1</sup>

#### *(a) Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues*

3. The Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues was established at UNCTAD IX in 1996. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/130 of 19 December 1994, the Commission (which is the successor intergovernmental body to the former United Nations Commission on Transnational Corporations) is assisted by 16 expert advisers, serving in their individual capacity and selected from both developed and developing countries. The Commission also has two standing subsidiary expert bodies, namely the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy and the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting.
4. Travel of representatives: The amount of \$110,300 provides for the travel and daily subsistence allowance of 16 experts serving in their personal capacity to participate in the annual sessions of the Commission.

#### *(b) Commission on Science and Technology for Development*

5. Established by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/235 of 13 April 1992, the intergovernmental Commission on Science and Technology for Development is composed of 33 members, meets biennially and reports to the Economic and Social Council. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/75 of 30 July 1993, the Commission receives specialized and technical advice from ad hoc panels and workshops that meet between sessions of the Commission to examine specific issues of science and technology for development.
6. Travel of representatives: The amount of \$275,900 provides for travel for one representative of each member State to participate in the session of the Commission and for travel and daily subsistence allowance of the experts at the intersessional ad hoc panels and workshops to provide expertise to the Commission, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/75.

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<sup>1</sup> Source (including for financial data): Section 12 of the United Nations Programme Budget, 2006-2007 (A/60/6).

## **Practices in the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)<sup>2</sup>**

### ***Standing intergovernmental organs and expert bodies***

#### *(a) Statistical Commission*

7. The Statistical Commission was established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 8 (I) of 16 and 18 February 1946, and is composed of 24 members elected on the basis of equitable geographical representation. It meets annually for a period of four working days.

8. Travel of representatives: The amount of \$95,100 provides for the travel to the annual session of the Commission for a period of four working days in New York in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/8.

#### *(b) Commission on Population and Development*

9. The Population Commission was established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 3 (III) of 3 October 1946 and renamed the Commission on Population and Development in its resolution 49/128 of 19 December 1994. The membership of the Commission was increased from 27 to 47, with each member elected for a four-year term (Council decision 1995/320 of 12 December 1995). The Commission normally meets annually for a period of five working days.

10. Travel of representatives: The amount of \$109,200 provides for travel to the annual sessions of the Commission.

#### *(c) Commission for Social Development*

11. The Social Commission was established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council by Council resolution 10 (II) of 21 June 1946 and renamed the Commission for Social Development in its resolution 1139 (XLI) of 29 July 1966. By its resolution 1996/7 of 22 July 1996, the Council decided to expand the membership of the Commission from 32 to 46 and to have the Commission meet in annual sessions of eight working days. The Council also decided to invite experts to participate in the meetings of the Commission when priority subjects addressed in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action were under discussion.

12. Travel of representatives: The amount of \$182,200 provides for travel to the annual sessions of the Commission.

#### *(d) Commission on the Status of Women*

13. The Commission on the Status of Women was established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council by Council resolution 11 (II) of 21 June 1946. Originally 15, the membership was increased to 18 in 1951, to 21 in 1961 and to 32 in 1966. By its resolution 1989/45 of 24 May 1989, the Council decided to enlarge the membership to 45 in

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Section 9 of the United Nations Programme Budget, 2006-2007 (A/60/6).

1990. It meets annually in New York for 10 working days. Its sessions bring together observers from both within and outside the United Nations system.

14. Travel of representatives: The amount of \$212,600 provides for travel to the annual sessions of the Commission.

*(e) Commission on Sustainable Development*

15. The Commission on Sustainable Development was established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council by Council decision 1993/207 of 12 February 1993. The Commission is composed of 53 members elected for a term of office of three years, and meets annually for a period of two to three weeks. In its resolution 2003-61, ECOSOC organized the Commission's work in a series of two-year action-oriented implementation cycles, which include a review session and a policy session. In addition, regional meetings to review implementation and one intergovernmental meeting will be held in each implementation cycle.

16. Travel of representatives: the amount of \$474,500 provides for travel to the annual sessions of the Commission, one intergovernmental meeting and one regional review meeting in the Commission member's region.

*(f) Committee for Development Policy*

17. The Economic and Social Council, in annex I to its resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, renamed the Committee for Development Planning as the Committee for Development Policy and reconfirmed its status as a subsidiary body of the Council. In accordance with Council resolution 1998/46, the Committee is composed of 24 independent experts who reflect adequate geographical and gender balance. The experts are nominated by the Secretary-General following consultation with interested Governments and are approved by the Council. The term of office of each member is three years. The Committee's annual session is for five working days.

18. Travel of representatives: The amount of \$318,600 provides for the travel of the members of the Committee.

*(NOTE: The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources has been abolished in accordance with ECOSOC decision 2002/203. Its work has been incorporated into the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development.)*

*(g) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*

19. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was established in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979. As from 1997, the 23-member committee holds two regular annual sessions in New York of 15 working days each, preceded by a five-day pre-session working group. As a result of the entry into force on 22 December 2000 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a Working Group, comprised of five members of the Committee, meets for a period of five working days after each session for a total of 10 working days annually. With respect to the inquiry procedure established by the Optional Protocol, it is expected that the Committee will undertake three missions of inquiry annually

for a period of two weeks for each mission. Each mission will consist of three members of the Committee for on-site visits for two weeks, for a total of six visits per biennium.

20. Travel of representatives: the amount of \$1,142,200 provides for the travel and per diem costs of the 23 members of the Committee to attend the meetings of three weeks twice a year, as well as the travel and subsistence costs of the members, the Chairperson or her/his representative when attending meetings of other United Nations organs dealing with human rights (\$1,054,800); the cost of the two annual meetings of the Working Group on the Optional Protocol (\$38,500); and the costs of the three annual missions of inquiry (\$48,700).

*(h) Committee of Experts on Public Administration*

21. By its resolution 2001/45, the Economic and Social Council established the Committee, which consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity by the Council upon the nomination of the Secretary-General. It meets annually for a period of five working days.

22. Travel of representatives: the amount of \$298,400 provides for the travel and per diem of the experts attending the annual sessions.

*(i) Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters*

23. By its resolution 2004/69 of 11 November 2004, the Council renamed the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters as the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. It is composed of 25 members nominated by Governments and acting in their expert capacity. The members, who are appointed by the Secretary-General, after notification of the Council, have a term of four years. The Committee meets on a yearly basis for a period of five working days in Geneva.

24. Travel of participants: the amount of \$315,500 provides for the travel and related costs of the experts attending the biennial session.

*(j) United Nations Forum on Forests*

25. The United Nations Forum on Forests was established by ECOSOC resolution 2000/35 of 18 October 2000. It was established as a subsidiary body of the Council composed of all States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies. The Council decided that the Forum would initially meet annually for a period of up to two weeks, that it could recommend the convening of ad hoc expert groups and that it would have high-level ministerial segments and multi-stakeholder policy dialogues.

26. Travel of representatives: the amount of \$131,600 provides for the travel to the annual sessions of the Forum of one representative of each of the Member States who are also members of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

*(k) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*

27. In its resolution 2000/22, the Economic and Social Council established the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as a subsidiary organ of the Council. It consists of 16 members – 8 members to be nominated by Governments and elected by the Council and 8 members to be

appointed by the President of the Council following formal consultations with the Bureau and regional groups. All members serve in their individual capacity for a period of three years. The Forum meets annually for a period of 10 working days.

28. Travel of representatives: the amount of \$315,500 provides for the travel and per diem of the Forum members to the annual sessions.

### **Practices in the United Nations regional commissions**

29. There is no provision in the United Nations programme budget to cover the costs of experts participating in meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the regional commissions.

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