



# United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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## Trade and Development Board

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Geneva, 15–26 September 2008

## Draft report of the Trade and Development Board on its fifty-fifth session

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 15 to 26 September 2008

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## **II. President's summary** *(continued)*

### **A. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD (report of the Working Party on its fifty-first session)**

1. Delegations said that work to consolidate trust funds into clusters should continue, with a reduction in the overall number of thematic trust funds. The Project Review Committee should play a central role in that process. There was a call for more proactive communication between the secretariat, beneficiaries and donors so as to make progress in the clustering process. Donors were invited to provide multi-year contributions to the newly established thematic trust funds.

2. The secretariat was requested to include an item on the agenda of the Working Party at its fifty-third session dealing with the interaction between the secretariat, potential beneficiaries and donors on UNCTAD's technical cooperation in accordance with paragraph 220 of the Accra Accord.

3. It was felt that there was room for improvement in the allocation of resources, taking into consideration that the share of total expenditure devoted to LDCs and Africa should not be reduced.

4. UNCTAD was urged to continue to be actively involved in the inter-agency processes related to the Delivering as One system-wide coherence process and to take a leading role within the Chief Executives Board cluster on trade and productive capacity. The secretariat was encouraged to strengthen efforts regarding the integration of economic and trade-related issues in the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and similar national development assistance plans. The secretariat was invited to explore the possibilities for increasing the total number of training courses on key issues of the international economic agenda (under paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action) and other capacity-building activities, including the Virtual Institute network and TrainForTrade. There was a call for UNCTAD to pay particular attention in its technical cooperation activities to providing support in the areas of commodities diversification, financing and competitiveness. Support should also be extended to oil-exporting developing countries in their negotiations with international corporations.

5. Some speakers encouraged member States to include in their delegations officials from the field in beneficiary countries to participate in the sessions of the Working Party and to provide, from their perspective, an assessment of the impact of UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities in their countries.

### **B. Report of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO on its forty-first session (Geneva, 4–5 December 2007)**

6. It was stated that the Trade and Development Board normally took note – without substantive discussion – of the session reports of the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) Joint Advisory Group (JAG). Some delegations, however, felt that the Board should consider more carefully the substantive work of JAG. Reasons included: (a) it was felt that the reform of ITC's governance was at a standstill; (b) there was an impression that ITC was ignoring work done at the country and regional levels, and that there was a duplication of UNCTAD's work; and (c) it was believed that the Board had not been paying enough attention to ITC's work.

7. Suggestions for addressing those problems included: (a) the introduction of effective governing measures for ITC; and (b) a strengthened UNCTAD coordinating role with ITC, including measures for UNCTAD to provide input into

ITC without duplicating its work, in accordance with paragraph 182 of the Accra Accord.

8. It was also noted that ITC – the “brainchild” of UNCTAD and WTO – had no division for LDCs, although both parent organizations did.

9. Representatives of ITC acknowledged those criticisms – especially the slowness of the consultative process – and promised to address them. They said they were committed to more transparency and that ITC had done its best to facilitate discussion on how to improve consultations; there should be a way to formalize the informal consultations that already took place between ITC and member States. Acknowledging that there was no dedicated division on LDCs in ITC, they said it was their intention to spend 50 per cent of the organization’s resources on LDCs, and there were currently several cross-cutting units working on LDC issues. They promised to include comments made at the Trade and Development Board in the next JAG report.

### **C. Reports of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget**

10. The discussion on the report of the fiftieth session of the Working Party highlighted the Working Party’s recommendation that the proposed strategic framework for the period 2010–2011 be considered as a revision to the strategic framework for the current biennium (2008–2009), so that the outcomes of UNCTAD XII could be implemented with minimum delay. However, it was noted that the Programme Planning and Budget Division and the Secretary of the Committee for Programme and Coordination had informed UNCTAD that that was not possible, unless approved by the General Assembly. UNCTAD would nevertheless ensure that the outcomes of UNCTAD XII were implemented with minimum delay through the adoption and implementation of the work plan for 2008–2011 (TD/B/WP/203/Rev.1). The strong efforts made by member States and the secretariat to strengthen the results-oriented performance measurement systems within UNCTAD, including the elaboration of meaningful indicators within the proposed UNCTAD section of the strategic framework for 2010–2011, were commended. The secretariat was requested to ensure that work on commodities be treated as a priority.

11. In the discussion on the report of the fifty-first session of the Working Party, it was recalled that member States had advised the secretariat to implement the 2008–2009 work programme as reflected in the four-year work plan, and also that the work plan be reflected in the 2010–2011 work programme.

### **D. Report by the President of the Advisory Body set up in accordance with paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action on the implementation of courses by the secretariat in 2007–2008 and their relevant impact; and the appointment of the members of the Advisory Body for 2009**

12. In the course of the discussion, delegates called for the following: (a) delivery of annual courses in all regions, as the courses effectively addressed the trade capacity gap in developing countries; (b) delivery of courses for higher-level decision-makers and parliamentarians; (c) improved funding to support the delivery of those additional courses; and (d) support for the UNCTAD Secretary-General’s fund-raising efforts, in particular from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States in a position to do so.