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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

**Report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan
and the Programme Budget on its
resumed thirty-ninth session**

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on 20 November and 13 December 2002



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Chapter I

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

(Agenda item 5)

Proceedings on 20 November 2002 (152nd plenary meeting)

1. The **Chairperson** said that, pursuant to the decision of the Working Party at the first part of its thirty-ninth session, she had conducted numerous informal consultations with a view to finding a long-term solution to ensure the availability of the necessary resources on a regular basis for financing the participation of experts. The consultations had been based on two proposals submitted by the European Union and by the Group of 77 and China. Unfortunately, consensus had not been reached.

Informal meetings

2. The Working Party pursued its deliberations in an informal setting.

Action by the Working Party

3. The Working Party decided to pursue informal consultations, to have informal consultations involving all members of the Working Party on 11 December, and to have a formal meeting on 13 December. If no consensus could be reached at that formal meeting, then a special session of the Board would be held to resolve the matter, in accordance with the decision taken at the nineteenth special session of the Board (Mid-term Review).

Proceedings on 13 December 2002 (153rd plenary meeting)

4. The **Chairperson** reported that it had not been possible to reach consensus on the matter before the Working Party.

Action by the Working Party

5. The Working Party decided that the Chairperson would report to the Board and would submit for further consideration of the issue by the Board by the end of January 2003 the square-bracketed text of the draft decision submitted by the Chairperson dated 13 December 2002; the proposal of the Group of 77 and China of 4 October 2002; the two European proposals of 4 October 2002 and 4 December 2002; and formal statements made by delegations at the closing plenary of the Working Party's session.

6. The representative of **Denmark**, speaking on behalf of the **European Union**, said he regretted that the two proposals submitted by the European Union had not been accepted. The second proposal incorporated major concessions by the European Union and would have provided for predictable financing for the countries most in need; it would not have excluded

any country from financing based on extrabudgetary resources. He noted the statement by the secretariat that funding had now been secured for all expert meetings in 2003.

7. The representative of **Egypt**, speaking on behalf of the **Group of 77 and China**, said that his Group was ready to accept any solution that met the three criteria decided on at the Mid-term Review. The proposal tabled by his Group did meet those criteria, but the other proposals did not.

8. The representative of **China** said the fact that funding was already available for 2003 meant that many countries were taking a positive approach to the issue of the participation of developing countries in expert meetings. The differences of views on the issue would be resolved once the positive impact of that participation had been demonstrated. He thanked those countries that had contributed funds to finance experts.

9. The representative of **Switzerland**, speaking also on behalf of **Norway** and the **United States**, regretted that no consensus had been reached. However, positive developments had occurred during the informal negotiations, and it would be important to continue to work constructively on the issue.

10. The representative of **South Africa**, speaking on behalf of the **African Group**, said that the aim of his Group during the informal consultations had been to remain faithful to the mandate provided at the Mid-term Review. He regretted that a solution to the problem had not been found.

11. The representative of **Thailand** said that the draft decision submitted by the Chairperson represented good middle ground and a basis for further discussion.

12. The representative of **Indonesia**, speaking on behalf of the **Asian Group**, thanked donors for their contributions related to the financing of experts in 2003 and said he hoped that the Chairperson's text would serve as the basis for the Board's discussions.

13. The representative of **Bangladesh** said he hoped that the Board would be able to solve the problem on the basis of the three criteria established at the Mid-term Review. It would be important in that respect to develop some new ideas, so as to reach an agreement without wasting time.

14. The **Chairperson** announced that the twentieth special session of the Board would be held on 27 January 2003 to resolve the matter of financing of experts. The text she had tabled reflected an attempt to bring the different points of view closer, but concessions would still be needed for agreement to be reached. She had hoped that the issue of financing of experts would be looked at not just in terms of financial resources but also from the point of view of the contribution of the expert meetings to development. She urged member States to use the text she had submitted as the basis for consideration of the issue at the Board's executive session.

Chapter II

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Opening of the session

15. The resumed thirty-ninth session of the Working Party was opened by Ms. F. Al-Ghazali (Oman), Chairperson of the Working Party.

B. Officers

16. The officers for the resumed thirty-ninth session were as elected at the thirty-ninth session, namely Ms. F. Al-Ghazali (Oman), Chairperson, and Mr. V. Malevich (Belarus), Vice-Chairperson-cum-Rapporteur.

C. Agenda

17. At its resumed thirty-ninth session, the Working Party took up agenda item 5, namely "Financing the participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in UNCTAD's expert meetings".

D. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

18. At its closing plenary meeting, the Working Party authorized the preparation of the report on its session, taking into account the proceedings of the closing plenary.