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Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget

Fiftieth session

16–20 June 2008

Report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget on its fiftieth session

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 16 to 20 June 2008

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I. Agreed conclusions¹

Review of the UNCTAD section of the proposed United Nations strategic framework for the period 2010–2011

The Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget,

Having considered the draft UNCTAD section of the proposed United Nations strategic framework for the period 2010–2011,

1. *Emphasizes* that the Accra Accord is the basis for UNCTAD's work for the next four years;

2. *Recommends* that the General Assembly and its competent bodies consider the revision to the UNCTAD section of the proposed United Nations strategic framework for the period 2010–2011 as contained in document TD/B/L.130;

3. *Further recommends* 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) in order that the outcomes of the twelfth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XII), held in Accra in April 2008, can be implemented with minimum delay;

4. *Expresses the need* for the accurate and effective implementation of the Accra Accord, and *notes* that a discussion of the four-year work plan for 2008–2011 developed on the basis of the outcomes of UNCTAD XII will be undertaken at the fifty-first session of the Working Party, in September 2008;

5. *Recalls* paragraph 183 of the Accra Accord and the need to establish a mechanism for UNCTAD to contribute more effectively to developing countries' efforts to formulate strategies and policies to respond to the challenges and opportunities of commodity markets;

6. *Notes* that the clearly defined resources referred to in the strategic framework under paragraph 10.5 are the existing resources of the Commodities Branch of the Division on International Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities, which will henceforth be located in a sub-account under subprogramme 3;

7. *Welcomes* the UNCTAD Secretary-General's guidance on commodities, and *expresses confidence* in his ability to ensure that this issue gets due attention and that the new arrangement is successful, and invites him to report on this as appropriate;

8. *Takes note* of some delegations' interest in locating the sub-account on commodities in another existing subprogramme, and while respecting his prerogatives, *invites* the UNCTAD Secretary-General, based on his experience with the new arrangement to explore, if appropriate, the option of locating the sub-account on commodities in another existing subprogramme;

9. *Expresses appreciation* for the collaborative efforts invested in developing meaningful performance indicators in the strategic framework that are precise, representative and measurable, and that present tangible outcomes to beneficiaries, and *calls upon* UNCTAD to continue to strengthen its results-oriented

¹ Adopted by the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget at its fiftieth session, held from 16 to 20 June 2008.

performance measurement and evaluation systems in order to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of the institution;

10. *Commends* the UNCTAD secretariat's efforts to elaborate appropriate indicators to assist them and member States in monitoring the effectiveness and impact of their work, and *encourages* all divisions to continue their cooperative work with a view to developing a common, user-friendly reporting format for all subprogrammes;

11. *Requests* the UNCTAD secretariat to report back to the Working Party at its next session on institutional changes to be realized for the effective implementation of the Accra outcomes, based on the mandates contained in sub-theme 4 of the Accra Accord;

12. *Recommends* to the Trade and Development Board that the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget be renamed the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget, in line with current General Assembly terminology.

II. Proceedings

A. Chair's summary

Opening statements

1. At the opening plenary meeting of the session, on 16 June 2008, a number of delegations stressed the need for the effective implementation of the Accra Accord, and for the areas of work identified in the Accord to be duly reflected in the work programme. In particular, in light of the current food and energy crisis, there was a need to respect the spirit of paragraph 183 of the Accord when transforming the Commodities Branch into an autonomous unit. While all delegations recognized the importance of effectively addressing the problems faced by many developing countries in the field of commodities, different views were expressed on the actual implications of the paragraph in the context of the programmatic framework. Several delegations urged the Working Party, in considering the institutional arrangements in that respect, to be guided by the shared goal of ensuring that UNCTAD delivered substantively on its mandate on commodities and contributed more effectively to developing countries' efforts to formulate strategies and policies to respond to the challenges and opportunities of commodity markets.

2. With regard to the development of more meaningful performance indicators in the proposed United Nations strategic framework for the period 2010–2011, many delegations welcomed the revised indicators that reflected the consultations undertaken prior to the current session of the Working Party. It was recognized that the strategic framework could not contain a comprehensive list of specific indicators for each subprogramme. The objective therefore was to identify and utilize indicators that were precise, representative and measurable and that offered tangible outcomes to beneficiaries. Some delegations encouraged the adoption of additional performance indicators such as those presented by the Division on Investment and Enterprise, to enable all subprogrammes to track their work more effectively and to continuously improve their impact.

3. Some delegations asked what institutional changes would follow from the mandates agreed on in sub-theme 4 of the Accra Accord, and called for those changes to be set out in the strategic framework. In particular, the secretariat was urged to strengthen its results-oriented performance measurement and evaluation systems in order to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of UNCTAD.

4. For the sake of consistency in references to cross-cutting issues, some delegations proposed that subgroups of developing countries with special needs should be mentioned in the various subprogrammes. There were specific calls from regional coordinators for the special needs of the least developed countries to be mainstreamed in all subprogrammes, and for a stronger emphasis to be placed on the needs of landlocked developing countries in the strategic framework.

B. Informal meetings

5. After its opening plenary meeting, the Working Party pursued its deliberations in an informal setting.

C. Action by the Working Party

6. At its closing plenary meeting, on 20 June 2008, the Working Party adopted the agreed conclusions on the review of the UNCTAD section of the proposed United Nations strategic framework for the period 2010–2011 (see chap. I above).

III. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

7. At its opening plenary meeting, on 16 June 2008, the Working Party elected Mr. Dmitry Godunov (Russian Federation) as its Chair and Mr. Boumediene Mahi (Algeria) as its Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

8. At the same meeting, the Working Party adopted its provisional agenda (TD/B/WP/199). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of the UNCTAD section of the proposed United Nations strategic framework for the period 2010–2011
4. Review of the UNCTAD strategic framework and programme budget for the biennium 2008–2009, in the light of the outcome of the twelfth session of the Conference
5. Provisional agenda for the fifty-first session of the Working Party
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

C. Provisional agenda for the fifty-first session of the Working Party

(Agenda item 5)

9. At its closing plenary meeting, on 20 June 2008, the Working Party approved the provisional agenda for its fifty-first session (see annex I).

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

(Agenda item 7)

10. At the same meeting, the Working Party authorized the Rapporteur to finalize the report on its session.

Annex I

Provisional agenda for the fifty-first session of the Working Party

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Discussion of the four-year work plan in accordance with paragraph 221 of the Accra Accord
4. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing
5. Progress report on the implementation of sub-theme 4 of the Accra Accord
6. Evaluation of technical cooperation activities:
 - (a) Progress report on UNCTAD's advisory services on investment
 - (b) Progress report on UNCTAD's trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building on accession to the World Trade Organization
 - (c) UNCTAD's evaluation policy
7. Provisional agenda for the fifty-second session of the Working Party
8. Other business
9. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

Annex II

Attendance*

1. Representatives of the following States members of the Working Party attended the session:

Algeria	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Bangladesh	Japan
Belarus	Mali
Belgium	Mexico
Benin	Netherlands
Brazil	Portugal
China	Russian Federation
Germany	United States of America
Indonesia	

2. Representatives of the following States members of UNCTAD but not members of the Working Party attended the session:

Angola	Madagascar
Argentina	Mauritania
Austria	Mongolia
Barbados	Morocco
Botswana	Mozambique
Burundi	Nepal
Cameroon	Nigeria
Chad	Norway
Côte d'Ivoire	Oman
Cuba	Pakistan
Czech Republic	Paraguay
Djibouti	Peru
Ecuador	Philippines
Egypt	Romania
Finland	Saudi Arabia
France	Senegal
Ghana	Slovenia
Greece	South Africa
Guatemala	Spain
Guinea	Sudan
Hungary	Switzerland
India	Syrian Arab Republic
Iraq	Thailand
Israel	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Italy	
Jamaica	United Republic of Tanzania
Kuwait	
Lebanon	Zambia
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Zimbabwe

* For the list of participants, see TD/B/WP(50)/Inf.1.

3. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
African Union
European Community
Organisation internationale de la francophonie
