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

Fifty-first session

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 1 to 5 September 2008

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I. Draft decision and agreed conclusions adopted by the Working Party at its fifty-first session

A. Draft decision for consideration by the Trade and Development Board

Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing (Agenda item 4)

The Trade and Development Board

1. *Takes note* with appreciation of UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities and expresses gratitude for the continuous support provided by bilateral and multilateral donors;

2. *Reaffirms* the role of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget as the mechanism for consultations among member States on all issues regarding technical cooperation;

3. *Recalls* its decision 492 (LIV) and paragraphs 215 (c), 216 and 217 of the Accra Accord regarding the need for more coherence in the planning and implementation of technical cooperation programmes and more interdivisional coordination of technical assistance programmes and activities, including streamlining through the use of thematic clusters and programmes;

4. *Welcomes* the establishment of the 17 thematic clusters – including existing and proposed multi-year, multi-donor trust funds – and *invites* the secretariat, in consultation with member States, to continue the consolidation process in terms of the number of clusters as well as within each cluster, where appropriate, without compromising the scope, content and manner of delivery;

5. *Invites* donors and potential donors in a position to do so to provide multi-year contributions to the newly established thematic trust funds; *urges* the secretariat to provide administrative information on the trust funds and donors to provide the secretariat with the required financial instructions for the establishment of multi-donor trust funds and the closing of completed projects; and *encourages* more proactive communication among the secretariat, beneficiaries and donors, so as to make progress in the clustering process;

6. *Takes note* with interest of the information regarding requests for technical assistance and *requests* the secretariat to keep member States updated on these requests, as well as on their follow-up, on a regular basis. This information could serve as a basis for further discussion among beneficiary countries, donors and the UNCTAD secretariat on possible ways to translate requests into action, and may assist the secretariat and member States in defining UNCTAD's areas of focus for technical cooperation within its mandate;

7. *Requests* the secretariat to include an agenda item in the fifty-third session of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget for the interaction between the secretariat, potential beneficiaries and donors on UNCTAD's technical cooperation in accordance with paragraph 220 of the Accra Accord;

8. *Notes* that the new "portal" on UNCTAD technical cooperation is being established and should serve as a useful instrument to improve transparency, describe UNCTAD's technical assistance programmes and identify developing countries' needs and priorities;

9. *Notes* with satisfaction the active involvement of UNCTAD in the inter-agency processes related to the Delivering as One system-wide coherence process and its leading role within the Chief Executives Board (CEB) cluster on trade and productive capacity, and *appreciates* member States' continued support for this inter-agency mechanism;

10. *Encourages* the UNCTAD secretariat to strengthen efforts regarding the integration of economic and trade-related issues in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, national development strategic plans and poverty reduction strategy papers, including by assisting developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in doing so in accordance with paragraph 90 (i) of the Accra Accord, and *requests* the secretariat to keep member States updated in this regard on a regular basis;

11. *Invites* the UNCTAD secretariat to explore the possibilities for increasing the total number of training courses on key issues of the international economic agenda (courses mandated by paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action) and other capacity-building activities, including the Virtual Institute network and TrainForTrade;

12. *Notes* the importance of greater cooperation between UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre in the field of technical assistance, each focusing on its comparative advantages;

13. *Encourages* member States to include in their delegations officials from the field in beneficiary countries that are directly involved in the implementation of technical cooperation to participate in the sessions of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget and to provide, from their perspective, an assessment of the impact of technical assistance in their countries and, in this regard, *encourages* UNCTAD to facilitate the use of virtual conference facilities to enable the broadest possible participation;

14. *Invites* donors and countries in a position to do so to provide funds to assist field-based beneficiary officials to take part in the discussion of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget;

15. *Proposes* that an assessment be made by the CEB cluster, led by UNCTAD, within approximately a year of the conduct of each training workshop for resident coordinators within the framework of the CEB cluster on trade and productive capacity, of the extent to which trade and trade-related issues have been included in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

B. Agreed conclusions

1. Discussion of the four-year work plan in accordance with paragraph 221 of the Accra Accord

(Agenda item 3)

Discussion of the four-year work plan for the period 2008–2011

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

Having discussed the four-year work plan for the period 2008–2011 contained in document TD/B/WP/203, which was prepared as part of the implementation of paragraph 221 of the Accra Accord,

1. *Takes note* of the four-year work plan, and *advises* the secretariat to implement the 2008–2009 work programme as reflected in the revised plan, and to reflect this plan in the 2010–2011 work programme;

2. *Requests* the UNCTAD secretariat to fully implement the Accra Accord and to report regularly on its implementation;

3. *Requests* the secretariat to review the progress in the implementation of the work plan against the indicators of achievement for UNCTAD (TD/B/WP/L.130) and to report thereon to the Working Party;

4. *Encourages* the secretariat to increase its interdivisional work in the implementation of the work plan, taking advantage of each division's complementary skills and the synergies that such cooperative work creates;

5. *Requests* the secretariat, within the framework of the preparation of the draft programme budget for the next biennium, to review the use of ad hoc expert groups with a view to improving their cost-effectiveness, including by exploring the use of virtual meetings, and to ensure that they support full implementation of the Accra Accord;

6. *Requests* the secretariat to make efforts to mainstream cross-cutting issues contained in paragraph 173 of the Accra Accord into all divisions' work, and to ensure that all three pillars of UNCTAD's work are done in accordance with sub-theme 4 of the Accra Accord, highlighting paragraphs 171, 172, 174 and 178.

2. Progress report on the implementation of sub-theme 4 of the Accra Accord
(Agenda item 5)

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

Having considered the "Progress report on the implementation of sub-theme 4 of the Accra Accord" (TD/B/WP/207),

1. *Welcomes* the measures taken so far in the implementation of the Accra Accord, including sub-theme 4, inter alia, through the creation of the Accra Accord Steering Group, and *encourages* the secretariat to continue its efforts in this connection and to keep member States informed on further steps in this regard on a regular basis. The monthly consultations of the President of the Trade and Development Board could provide an opportunity to do so;

2. *Emphasizes* the need to implement the Accra Accord, including sub-theme 4, faithfully, comprehensively and in a balanced manner;

3. *Further emphasizes* the importance of partnership among all member States, relevant bodies within the United Nations system and the secretariat in their efforts to strengthen the organization;

4. *Stresses* the importance of developing a new communication strategy and *encourages* the secretariat to hold consultations with member States in that connection;

5. *Reiterates* the importance and priority UNCTAD should accord to helping countries to integrate trade into their United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, when appropriate, and *requests* that the secretariat periodically update member States on progress in this regard, taking into account General Assembly resolution 62/208;

6. *Encourages* UNCTAD to assist United Nations resident coordinators in identifying and developing UNCTAD programmes for their countries and their inclusion in United Nations development frameworks;

7. *Requests* the secretariat to produce addenda to documents TD/B/WP/203 and TD/B/WP/207 showing how all the missing paragraphs in the work plan, as well

as in the progress report on the implementation of sub-theme 4, will be implemented;

8. *Requests* the secretariat to inform member States on the efforts made by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to attract voluntary contributions for the funding of the participation of experts from developing countries in expert meetings, including through the funding campaign to be launched in September 2008.

3. Evaluation of technical cooperation activities

(Agenda item 6)

(a) Progress report on UNCTAD's advisory services on investment

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

Having considered the "Progress report on the implementation of the recommendations and observations contained in the evaluation of UNCTAD's advisory services on investment" (TD/B/WP/204),

1. *Takes note* with satisfaction of the changes implemented to its advisory services on investment on the basis of the recommendations, and *encourages* the secretariat to continue its efforts to this end.

(b) Progress report on UNCTAD's trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building on accession to the World Trade Organization

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

Having considered the "Progress report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the evaluation of UNCTAD's trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building on accession to the World Trade Organization" (TD/B/WP/205),

1. *Notes* with appreciation the unique and comprehensive technical assistance programme on accession to the World Trade Organization provided by UNCTAD;

2. *Invites* the donors and potential donors in a position to do so to make multi-year contributions to UNCTAD technical cooperation, to increase predictability in the planning and implementation of the relevant technical assistance programmes;

3. *Encourages* the secretariat to continue its efforts to strengthen of this programme.

II. Proceedings

A. Opening statements

1. The following speakers made opening statements: Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Acting Deputy Secretary-General, UNCTAD; the representative of Zimbabwe on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; the representative of Chad on behalf of the African Group; The representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Asian Group; the representative of France on behalf of the European Union; the representative of Barbados on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries; the representative of Bangladesh on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries; the representative of China; and the representative of the Russian Federation.

B. Informal meetings

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

C. Action by the Working Party

3. The Working Party approved a draft decision for submission to the Trade and Development Board at its fifty-fifth regular session. It also adopted agreed conclusions on the following: (a) discussion of the four-year work plan for the period 2008–2011; (b) a progress report on the implementation of sub-theme 4 of the Accra Accord; and (c) evaluation of technical cooperation activities (see chap. I).

III. Organizational matters**A. Election of officers**

(Agenda item 1)

4. At its opening plenary meeting, on 1 September 2008, the Working Party elected Ms. Carmen Elena Castillo-Gallandat (El Salvador) as its Chair and Mr. Peter R. Janus (Netherlands) as its Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

5. At the same meeting, the Working Party adopted its provisional agenda (TD/B/WP/201). The agenda was thus as follows:
 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

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

(Agenda item 7)

6. At its closing plenary meeting, on 5 September 2008, the Working Party approved the provisional agenda for its fifty-second session (see annex I).

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

(Agenda item 9)

7. At the same meeting, the Working Party authorized the Rapporteur to finalize the report on its fifty-first session.

Annex I

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

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of the work programme: draft programme budget for the biennium 2010–2011
4. Progress report on the financing of participation of experts from developing countries and economies in transition in UNCTAD's intergovernmental expert meetings
5. Provisional agenda for the fifty-third session of the Working Party
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

Annex II

Attendance¹

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
Brazil	Netherlands
China	Portugal
El Salvador	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:

Albania	Iraq
Angola	Israel
Argentina	Jamaica
Australia	Kazakhstan
Austria	Lebanon
Barbados	Lithuania
Bhutan	Madagascar
Bolivia	Morocco
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Nepal
Botswana	Nigeria
Bulgaria	Oman
Burundi	Pakistan
Cambodia	Paraguay
Cameroon	Peru
Chad	Philippines
Chile	Poland
Congo	Rwanda
Côte d'Ivoire	Singapore
Cuba	Slovakia
Czech Republic	South Africa
Djibouti	Spain
Dominican Republic	Sudan
Egypt	Sweden
Ethiopia	Switzerland
Finland	Syrian Arab Republic
France	Thailand
Ghana	Turkey
Greece	Uruguay
Guatemala	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Guinea	Yemen
Honduras	Zimbabwe
India	

3. The following observer attended the session:

Palestine

¹ For the list of participants, see TD/B/WP(51)/Inf.1.

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

African Union
European Community

League of Arab States
Organisation internationale de la francophonie
