



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.: General
15 September 2011

Original: English

Trade and Development Board

Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget

Fifty-ninth session

Geneva, 5–7 September 2011

Report of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget on its fifty-ninth session

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 5 to 7 September 2011

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I. Draft decision and agreed conclusions adopted by the Working Party at its fifty-ninth 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 3)

The Trade and Development Board,

1. *Takes note* of the technical cooperation activities carried out by the UNCTAD secretariat in cooperation with the beneficiaries and development partners;
2. *Also takes note* of the reports prepared by the secretariat for the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget;
3. *Further takes note* of the moderate increase in total delivery of the technical cooperation programmes and activities of UNCTAD;
4. *Expresses appreciation* for the support provided by bilateral and multilateral donors and invites donors in a position to do so to make multi-year contributions to UNCTAD technical cooperation in order to increase predictability in the planning and implementation of the relevant technical assistance programmes;
5. *Encourages* UNCTAD's increased emphasis on full implementation of technical cooperation, within available resources, in order to ensure results achieved as planned, results-based management with clear objectives, intended results, and monitorable indicators for higher-level outcomes, especially in the case of those groups of countries listed in paragraph 212 of the Accra Accord that have so far benefited less from the technical cooperation activities;
6. *Emphasizes* the importance of a transparent, efficient, demand-driven and geographically balanced approach in UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities, and urges the secretariat to continue its efforts to promote greater coherence in the planning and implementation of technical cooperation programmes, including with UNCTAD's research and analysis and consensus-building pillars;
7. *Notes* that the 2010 expenditures in least developed countries (LDCs) amounted to 34 per cent of the total, while they were 42 per cent in 2009. Expresses its concern at the decrease registered in 2010 as compared to 2009 in the delivery of technical cooperation in support of LDCs, and urges the secretariat to continue to ensure that priority is assigned to LDCs;
8. In order to enable UNCTAD to respond to the demand for technical assistance from LDCs, including the support provided for the successful implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, *calls on* development partners in a position to do so to continue to contribute to the LDC Trust Fund;
9. Recalling its decisions 495 (LV), 498 (LVI) and 504 (LVII) and paragraphs 215 (c), 216 and 217 of the Accra Accord regarding the need for more coherence in the planning and implementation of UNCTAD technical cooperation programmes, in particular through the establishment of thematic clusters, *invites* donors in a position to do so to provide the secretariat with the necessary instructions to allow the consolidation process to continue, without compromising the scope, content and delivery of UNCTAD technical cooperation programmes;

10. *Thanks* the secretariat for the information provided regarding requests for technical cooperation, which is useful for identifying the needs and priorities of beneficiaries and can guide donors in their decisions regarding the allocation of their contributions;
11. *Encourages* the secretariat to continue its activities in support of United Nations system-wide coherence, and notes with appreciation the leading role of UNCTAD within the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity;
12. *Recalls* the Accra Accord and the relevant agreed conclusions of the Working Party, and expresses appreciation with regard to UNCTAD's assistance to and support of the Palestinian people.

B. Agreed conclusions

Evaluation of UNCTAD activities: In-depth evaluation of UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development

(Agenda item 4)

1. In-depth evaluation of UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development

The Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget,

Having considered the in-depth evaluation of UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development as contained in document TD/B/WP/234, and the management response to the evaluation as contained in document TD/B/WP(59)/CRP.1,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the independent evaluation team for the evaluation report, to the secretariat for the support provided to the evaluation process, and to the Government of Norway for its financial support for the evaluation;
2. *Takes note* of the views expressed and the recommendations and findings contained in the evaluation report, and in this context, underlines the role that science, technology and innovation play in development, and takes note of UNCTAD's work in this field;
3. *Requests* that member States further discuss the recommendations of the evaluation report, and decides that such discussions will take place at the next Working Party on technical cooperation in the second half of 2012;
4. *Welcomes* the contributions made by donors to the science and technology for development programme.

2. Follow-up on the implementation of recommendations from the independent external evaluation of UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities dedicated to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and other structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies

The Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget,

Having taken note of the progress report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in last year's evaluation of UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities dedicated to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, and other structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies, as contained in document TD/B/WP/235,

1. *Notes* the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations. Nevertheless, requests that efforts be strengthened to fully implement the recommendations of the independent evaluation on an equitable basis;
2. Recognizing that UNCTAD's LDC Trust Fund is an important vehicle for enabling technical cooperation and capacity-building activities in LDCs, and for the successful implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, and appreciating the contributions to the LDC Trust Fund, *calls on* development partners in a position to do so to continue to contribute to the LDC Trust Fund;
3. *Requests* the secretariat to report back on further progress made in the implementation of the recommendations at the next session of the Working Party dealing with technical cooperation.

II. Proceedings

A. Opening statements

1. Opening statements were made by Mr. Petko Draganov, Deputy Secretary-General, UNCTAD; Mr. Mothae Anthony Maruping (Lesotho) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; Mr. Sek Wannamethee (Thailand) on behalf of the Asian Group; Mr. Hugo Rodríguez Nicolat (Mexico) on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries; Ms. Ellen Nee-Whang (Ghana) on behalf of the African Group; Ms. Agnieszka Hardej-Januszek (Poland) on behalf of the European Union; Ms. Erika Kőszegi (Hungary) on behalf of Group D; Mr. Dinesh Bhattarai (Nepal) on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries; Mr Roberto Flores Bermúdez (Honduras); Mr. Boumediene Mahi (Algeria); and Mr. Leulseged Tadese Abebe (Ethiopia).
2. The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Mr. Petko Draganov, provided a broad overview of UNCTAD technical cooperation activities in 2010, pointing out in particular that overall expenditures in 2010 had been slightly higher than in 2009, and that contributions from bilateral and multilateral donors had increased by 3 per cent over the previous year. Furthermore, progress had been made in rationalization of the activities and consolidation of the projects carried out within each of the 17 thematic clusters. However, further efforts were required, and donors in a position to do so were strongly encouraged to provide specific instructions to the secretariat regarding the commingling of their funds into thematic multi-year, multi-donor trust funds. UNCTAD had continued to strengthen its role in the United Nations reform process, in particular through its coordination of the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity. UNCTAD had received funds in 2010 from the newly established multi-donor funding mechanisms, such as the multi-donor trust funds and the One UN funds designed to support inter-agency operations at the country level. The Deputy Secretary-General welcomed the report of the independent evaluation team, and noted that it provided a timely basis for discussions on how to strengthen UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development (STD). Indications of how the secretariat had responded to the previous year's evaluation – for example, by improved interdivisional collaboration – were also briefly presented.
3. In the statements made by delegates, all speakers stressed the importance of technical cooperation as an essential pillar of UNCTAD's work. A number of speakers also stressed the importance of ensuring synergies between technical cooperation and the other two pillars of UNCTAD's work, namely research and analysis, and consensus-building. Many speakers stressed that technical cooperation must be demand-driven, transparent, and coherent in its planning, with a view to making it more efficient and increasing its impact.

4. Many speakers expressed concern that out of the total expenditures on technical cooperation, there had been a sharp decrease in the share of expenditures in support of the LDCs, and requested the secretariat, in its technical cooperation activities, to assign the highest priority to that group of countries in order to meet their increasing demands. Some delegates also expressed concern at the decline in the financing of the trade-related activities of UNCTAD.
5. Many speakers commented that efforts towards greater rationalization should continue, while ensuring that the scope of activities was not reduced.
6. Many speakers praised UNCTAD's achievements in the framework of the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity, and encouraged the secretariat to continue its involvement in the system-wide coherence reform process of the United Nations.
7. Some delegates said that the LDC Trust Fund was an important vehicle for implementing capacity-building in support of LDCs, and appealed for the regular replenishment of that Fund, in particular with a view to allowing UNCTAD to fully contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action.
8. Most delegates took note of the work of the evaluation team and commended the team on its thorough and analytical report containing constructive recommendations regarding enhancement of effectiveness.
9. Many delegates concurred with the recommendation in the evaluation report calling for UNCTAD to improve its planning, monitoring and reporting practices with regard to its work programme on science and technology for development. One delegate further proposed that UNCTAD's overall strategy should be complemented by better-defined objectives, outcomes and indicators in order to support its mandate on science and technology. Another delegate emphasized the need to strengthen the monitoring and follow-up of technical cooperation activities in the area of science and technology – notably for the science, technology and innovation policy (STIP) reviews and for other programmes such as the Network of Centres of Excellence project.
10. A few delegates concurred with the recommendation in the report that UNCTAD should clarify its internal division of tasks and responsibilities with regard to transfer of technology.
11. Two delegates agreed with the recommendation that more attention should be given to technical cooperation programmes and to transferring skills and knowledge to developing countries by closer engagement of UNCTAD staff at the country level, and increased participation by local experts in project activities.
12. A few delegates reiterated the necessity of improving coordination within UNCTAD and with other agencies in order to ensure complementarities and better coherence, notably in the area of science, technology and innovation (STI).
13. One delegate concurred with the finding of the evaluation report that the time allocated to discussion of STI during meetings of the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission was usually inadequate and did not allow for thorough discussions or well thought-out decisions on follow-up to STI themes – limiting the support for the research and analysis and technical cooperation work of the Science, Technology and ICT Branch. The delegate also endorsed the recommendation that UNCTAD should ensure that the work of the Science and Technology Section is well balanced between the Organization's mandates as secretariat for the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and for its other STD activities.

14. One delegate expressed concern about the relatively low share of STD- and ICT-related technical cooperation activities, despite the emerging challenges and opportunities that these represented for developing countries. Another delegate commented that the contribution of UNCTAD's STD programme in achieving the Millennium Development Goals did not seem to be clear enough.

15. One delegate requested UNCTAD to step up its activities in the field of science, technology and innovation, including ICT, and urged development partners to give these activities high priority as an area for international cooperation.

B. Informal meetings

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

III. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

1. At the opening plenary meeting, on 5 September 2011, the Working Party elected Mr. Wang Dawei (China) as its Chair and Mr. Dmitry Lyakishev (Russian Federation) as its Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

2. At the same meeting, the Working Party adopted its provisional agenda (TD/B/WP/231). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing
4. Evaluation of UNCTAD activities: In-depth evaluation of UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development
5. Provisional agenda for the sixtieth 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 sixtieth session of the Working Party

(Agenda item 5)

3. At its closing plenary meeting, on 7 September 2011, the Working Party approved the provisional agenda for its sixtieth session (see annex I).

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

(Agenda item 7)

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

Annex I

Provisional agenda for the sixtieth session of the Working Party

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of the proposed UNCTAD Biennial Programme Plan for the period 2014–2015
4. Provisional agenda for the sixty-first session of the Working Party
5. Other business
6. 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	El Salvador
Belarus	Honduras
Belgium	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Benin	Russian Federation
China	Switzerland

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

Bahrain	Kenya
Bangladesh	Mauritius
Brazil	Mexico
Bulgaria	Morocco
Burkina Faso	Myanmar
Burundi	Nepal
Chile	Pakistan
Cyprus	Peru
Djibouti	Philippines
Dominican Republic	Poland
Ecuador	Portugal
Ethiopia	Serbia
Finland	South Africa
Germany	Spain
Ghana	Thailand
Hungary	United Kingdom
India	Viet Nam
Italy	Zambia
Kazakhstan	

¹ For the list of participants, see TD/B/WP(59)/INF.1.

3. The following observer was represented at the session:
Palestine
 4. The following intergovernmental organization was represented at the session:
European Union
 5. The following panellists participated in the session:
Ms. Judith Marcia Arrieta Munguía, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Mexico, Geneva
Mr. Hugo Rodríguez Nicolat, Permanent Mission of Mexico, Geneva
Mr. Marc Thunus, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Belgium, Geneva
Mr. Arto Valjas, Consultant
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