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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Working Party on the Medium-term Plan
and the Programme Budget
Thirtieth session (Part one)
Geneva, 6 October 1997
Agenda item 7

AGREED CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY ON THE MEDIUM-TERM
PLAN AND THE PROGRAMME BUDGET AT THE FIRST PART
OF ITS THIRTIETH SESSION 1/

1. The Working Party reviewed the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD (TD/B/44/11 and Add.1 and 2). It recalled that, in June 1997, the Board had adopted UNCTAD's Technical Cooperation Strategy and that, in March 1997, the Board had taken note of the first three-year plan (1997-1999) for technical cooperation prepared by the secretariat.
2. The Working Party considered a number of general issues concerning the technical cooperation programme as a whole, including recent developments and future prospects regarding the mobilisation of resources from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and bilateral and other multilateral sources, the distribution of activities among countries, regions and programmes, cooperation between UNCTAD and other organizations as regards operational activities, and proposals regarding financial self-sustainability and cost recovery in certain UNCTAD technical cooperation programmes.
3. The Working Party noted that in Africa, the value of regional projects exceeded that of national projects and expressed the hope that activities in that region should increasingly be undertaken at the country level. It also noted that the relative share of technical cooperation expenditures in the Asian region and in

1/ As adopted by the Working Party on 8 October 1997.

the Latin American and Caribbean region had diminished significantly over the past three years.

4. The Working Party conducted a programme-by-programme review of activities undertaken in 1996, and exchanged views on individual programmes with the responsible secretariat officials.

5. The Working Party was of the view that, in order to achieve improved cost-effectiveness and outputs, some priorities should be set among the numerous technical cooperation programmes and projects of UNCTAD. The Working Party recommended that a good occasion to make progress in this area would be in the context of the preparation of the three-year rolling technical cooperation plan for 1998-2000. In this respect, it was suggested that the Working Party could review the plan prior to its submission to the Board.

6. On the basis of its review, the Working Party recommends the following draft decision to the Trade and Development Board for consideration under agenda item 6(a) of the provisional agenda for the forty-fourth session:

Draft decision

"The Trade and Development Board ,

1. Takes notes of the report on technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing and the complementary statistical information submitted by the secretariat (TD/B/44/11 and Add.1 and 2);

2. Notes with encouragement the increase in the level of UNCTAD's technical cooperation expenditure in 1996 and that projected for 1997;

3. Reaffirms the principle that technical cooperation should be non-conditional and that it should be demand-driven;

4. Expresses its appreciation to bilateral and multilateral donors for their contributions to UNCTAD's technical cooperation programmes, and appeals to them to extend their contributions in line with UNCTAD's Technical Cooperation Strategy and plan;

5. Requests the secretariat to explore ways and means of increasing the predictability of funding for the technical cooperation programme of UNCTAD;

6. Encourages the secretariat to continue its efforts to deepen its cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with a view, inter alia , to increasing the level of funding and other support from UNDP for UNCTAD programmes;

7. Takes note of the proposals of the secretariat on the question of partial cost recovery with a view to contributing to the financial self-sustainability of selected programmes, and requests the secretariat to report on the legal implications of those proposals and to provide the thirty-second session of the

Working Party on technical cooperation with details of alternative cost-recovery options which might be applied, as well as the possibility of special arrangements for least developed countries (LDCs);

8. Notes the fact that the Working Party agreed on the need for greater transparency in respect of activities funded from the regular budget and those funded from extra-budgetary resources;

9. Notes the progress made by UNCTAD in its cooperation with other organizations, and requests the secretariat to pursue its efforts to intensify such cooperation, including with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO);

10. Encourages the secretariat to continue to deepen its cooperation with the International Trade Centre (ITC) with a view, inter alia, to better coordinating technical cooperation in several areas, including support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);

11. Requests the secretariat to prepare, in consultation with member States, a handbook whose objective would be to assist possible beneficiaries of UNCTAD's technical cooperation;

12. Requests the secretariat, in consultation with member States, to explore new modalities which would ensure a better relative balance in the share of technical cooperation expenditure of the various regions, taking into account their respective needs;

13. Decides to consider an in-depth evaluation of the Global Trade Point Network at the thirty-second session of the Working Party in 1998 dealing with technical cooperation;

14. Requests the secretariat to prepare the rolling three-year technical cooperation plan for 1998-2000 for consideration by the Working Party at the second part of its thirtieth session in December 1997 and thereafter by the Trade and Development Board at its first executive session in 1998, with a view to rationalizing the technical cooperation plan;

15. Requests the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to include, in his next report on technical cooperation through the Working Party on the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme Budget to the Trade and Development Board information on:

- The implementation of the UNCTAD Technical Cooperation Strategy;
- The implementation of technical cooperation programmes in line with the areas of activity established in paragraph 97 of "A Partnership for Growth and Development" to enable the Working Party to contribute to the mid-term review by the Trade and Development Board of the outcome of UNCTAD IX;
- The cost-effectiveness of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD; and
- The establishment of quality control and standards at the project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages."