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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
Working Party on the Medium-term Plan  
and the Programme Budget  
Thirty-fifth session  
Agenda item 7

**DRAFT REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN  
AND THE PROGRAMME BUDGET ON ITS THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION**

Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur: Mr. Edward Chisanga (Zambia)

Speakers: Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD  
Islamic Republic of Iran (for Group of 77 and China)  
Egypt (for African Group)  
Portugal (for European Union)  
Cuba (for Latin American and Caribbean Group)  
Morocco  
Malaysia (for Asian Group and China)  
Dominican Republic  
Nigeria  
United States  
China  
Croatia (for Group D)  
South Africa

**Note for delegations**

This draft report is a provisional text circulated for clearance by delegations.  
Requests for amendments should be communicated by **Wednesday, 26 April 2000 at the latest** to:  
UNCTAD Editorial Section, Room E.8106, Fax No. 907 0056, Tel. No. 907 5656 or 5655

## **INTRODUCTION**

The first part of the thirty-fifth session of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 13 March 2000 and 20-21 March 2000. In the course of the session, the Working Party held one plenary meeting, the 135<sup>th</sup> meeting. All other meetings were informal and held in private.

## Chapter I

### REVIEW OF THE UNCTAD SECTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2002-2005

(Agenda item 3)

1. For its consideration of this item, the Working Party had before it the following documentation:

“Review of the UNCTAD Section of the United Nations medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005” (TD/B/WP(XXXV)/Misc.1/Rev.1)

2. The **Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD**, introducing the draft UNCTAD section of the medium-term plan, said the joint challenge for member States and the secretariat was to translate the Bangkok Plan of Action (TD/386) into comprehensive work plans and programmes. The framework for that approach was provided by the four instruments of integrated management set out in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, collectively referred to as the “programme planning rules”. The four instruments included two planning instruments — the medium-term plan and programme budget — and two assessment instruments — monitoring and evaluation.

3. As defined in the programme planning rules, the medium-term plan included an introduction to each programme, with an indication of principal mandates, and at the subprogramme level, a brief statement of “concrete and time-limited” objectives “verifiable either directly or through evaluation” of the strategy envisaged to meet those objectives; a notion of results expected by the end of the four-year period covered by the plan; and, where possible, indicators of achievement.

4. Following the review by specialized intergovernmental bodies, such as the Working Party, the secretariat submitted to the United Nations Controller the report of the body concerned, including any recommendations for changes to the secretariat’s draft. The medium-term plan thus modified would subsequently be reviewed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), the Economic and Social Council, and the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), prior to its submission to the General Assembly.

5. The secretariat’s draft (TD/B/WP(XXXV)/Misc.1/Rev.1) stressed that the main reference in determining mandates and work programmes was the relevant parts of the Plan of Action adopted in Bangkok. While officially the period covered by the medium-term plan was 2002-2005, to conform to the four-year planning cycle established by the Assembly, in practice, in the case of UNCTAD, the four-year cycle was from one quadrennial Conference to the next.

6. The spokesperson for the **Group of 77** (Islamic Republic of Iran) considered that the text contained in TD/B/WP(XXXV)/Misc.1/Rev.1 provided a good basis for discussion. He emphasized the importance of the Plan of Action as the principal guide in that exercise, and the need to indicate that the details should be drawn from the Plan of Action.

7. The spokesperson for the **African Group** (Egypt) said that UNCTAD should try to build on its success at the tenth session of the Conference. While the text was an improvement over the first draft<sup>1</sup>, certain points were still missing. The medium-term plan should reflect the areas of work for UNCTAD as agreed by member States at Bangkok. He would welcome the adoption of the subprogramme on the development of Africa, but in that context the African Group did not wish to propose any organizational changes within the secretariat beyond what had been done at UNCTAD IX, on the understanding that additional resources would be assigned to it. That understanding took into account particular difficulties faced by African countries, as demonstrated by recent natural disasters.

8. The representative of **Portugal**, speaking on behalf of the **European Union**, requested postponing consideration of the agenda item since the text had been made available only on the morning of the meeting. It was important to define concrete and time-sensitive performance indicators.

9. The spokesperson for the **Latin American and Caribbean Group** (Cuba) said he agreed with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 that, while the text provided a fine basis for discussion, changes should nonetheless be made to keep it consistent with the Plan of Action. He wished to see, for example, a reference under each subprogramme to Section II.F. of the Plan of Action, on technical cooperation, so as to reflect the importance the Group attached to technical assistance.

10. The representative of **Morocco** associated himself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and thanked the secretariat for having clarified the purpose of the exercise. The solidarity between member States and the secretariat of UNCTAD was one of the reasons for the success of UNCTAD X. They should act now and maintain the momentum so as to respond to the high expectations placed on the organization. The text was much more in line with what was expected than the first draft. If the purpose of the medium-term plan was to provide new direction to the work of UNCTAD, it should at least allude to the major elements in the Plan of Action which member States had emphasized at the Conference, such as the reform of the international financial architecture and the new technical assistance programmes. It should indicate new areas of work and changes in emphasis, and should reflect the overall philosophy evinced at UNCTAD X. He agreed with the European Union's request for postponing consideration of the agenda item in order to allow member States to better prepare for the discussion.

11. The spokesperson for the **Asian Group and China** (Malaysia) said the text provided a good basis for the work of the Working Party. He underscored the importance placed by his Group on the need to advance the spirit of Bangkok through implementation of the Plan of Action in such a way as to accommodate the interests of all member States.

12. The representative of the **Dominican Republic** said that the spirit of Bangkok which had produced a consensus should be maintained and the momentum should not be lost. The secretariat's work should reflect clearly both the wishes of member States and the Plan of Action. In particular, the section describing the work on international trade should be more specific about the work on the least developed countries (LDCs) and trade, and on commodities. There was also a need for "new blood" and for promotions within the secretariat.

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<sup>1</sup> The secretariat's first draft (TD/B/WP(XXXV)/Misc.1) had been presented 7 March 2000 at an informal briefing on the medium-term plan.

13. The representative of **Nigeria** endorsed the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and the African Group and said that the work of the Working Party at its current session was critical for the implementation of the Plan of Action. The decision to establish the new subprogramme on Africa and to strengthen the relevant unit was a landmark decision. However, the subprogramme's function should not be limited to sectoral coordination but should also include consensus-building through monitoring, assessment and follow-up of the related initiatives, as well as capacity-building in such areas as regional cooperation schemes in Africa. Accordingly, resources allocated to the subprogramme should match the need not only for coordination but also for research and policy analysis.

14. He welcomed the strengthening of the Office of the Special Coordinator for least developed, landlocked and island developing countries in view of preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the LDCs, as contained in the current programme budget. However, the establishment of the subprogramme on Africa, and the resulting increase in resources, should not imply a diminished need to strengthen the Office of the Special Coordinator. Similarly, the strengthening of that Office should not imply a diminished need for resources allocated to the subprogramme on Africa.

15. The representative of the **United States** agreed with the request for postponing consideration of the agenda item and underlined the need to reflect the differences between the outcomes of the ninth and tenth sessions of the Conference and to redefine the expected achievements and performance indicators with a view to producing tangible results.

16. The representative of **China** associated himself with the statement made on behalf of the Asian Group and China. He appreciated the text, as well as the full cooperation between delegations and the secretariat and the democratic process that had led to its production. That would serve further to strengthen the functions of UNCTAD. The outcome of UNCTAD X reflected the interests of all member States, and constituted a fragile balance. Full consideration should be given to maintaining that balance.

17. The spokesperson for **Group D** (Croatia) stated that the countries with economies in transition had expressed their great interest in the work of UNCTAD through their contributions to UNCTAD X and were pleased to see that interest reflected in the Plan of Action. Such references should be maintained in the medium-term plan, as it was based on the Plan of Action. The text should constitute the basis for the Working Party's discussions.

18. The representative of **South Africa** associated himself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77, the African Group, the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and the Asian Group and China, as well as with the statement by Morocco. He welcomed the establishment of the subprogramme on the development of Africa and hoped it would be provided with sufficient resources. He also noted the omission of some important elements from the text, notably the role of UNCTAD in the reform of the international financial architecture.

#### *Informal meetings*

19. The Working Party pursued its discussions of agenda item 3 in informal meetings, in the course of which it considered the draft UNCTAD section of the medium-term plan subprogramme by subprogramme.

*Action by the Working Party*

20. At its plenary meeting on 21 March 2000, the Working Party approved the text of the draft medium-term plan, as amended, and adopted a decision in that connection. (For the draft UNCTAD section of the medium-term plan, see TD/B/EX(24)/L.2; for the decision, see TD/B/EX(24)/L.3.)

## **Chapter II**

### **ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

#### **A. Opening of the session**

21. The thirty-fifth session of the Working Party was opened on 13 March 2000 by Mrs. Angelina M. Sta. Catalina (Philippines), Chairperson of the Working Party at its thirty-fourth session.

#### **B. Election of officers**

(Agenda item 1)

22. At its 135<sup>th</sup> (opening) plenary meeting, the Working Party elected Mr. Y. Afanassiev (Russian Federation) as its Chairperson and Mr. Edward Chisanga (Zambia) as its Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur.

#### **C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

(Agenda item 2)

23. Also at its 135<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting, the Working Party adopted the provisional agenda for its thirty-fifth session (TD/B/WP/124). 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 United Nations medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005
4. Review of the UNCTAD programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001, in the light of the outcome of the tenth session of the Conference<sup>2</sup>
5. Provisional agenda for the thirty-sixth session of the Working Party
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

**[To be completed]**

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<sup>2</sup> Item 4 to be taken up at the second part of the session (17-19 April 2000).