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General statements by member States
Speaker: Barbados

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Comment by Barbados on Joint Inspection Report on UNCTAD , June 2012

It is necessary to keep the activities of any organization under review in order to ensure its continued relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. In this light a Joint Inspection report is an important activity which should be highly valued.

Before accepting the analysis by the JIU report on UNCTAD however, it is important to determine the extent to which the assessment was scientific and balanced. Although there seemed have been some general conclusions which were not supported by fact and conclusions which cited facts that did not illustrate the point (for example in relation to leadership), this is no reason to reject the report in its entirety. It is important to select what is useful in the report and what will help to produce an improved UNCTAD, both at the technical, organizational and oversight levels, while at the same time remaining conscious of the weaknesses of the report.

Based on the JIU report, the relevance and effectiveness of UNCTAD seem to be at acceptable levels and in some cases at high levels, but there appear to be concerns about efficiency and mandate.

There is evidence that though the needs of members appear to be being met based on response by the members themselves, the manner in which these needs are being met is leading to some disquiet in some quarters. Beneficiaries however, seem quite satisfied with the results. However, the views of all parties must be taken into consideration.

In context, it may not be useful to analyse the merits and demerits of the process but rather to disentangle from these matters and to focus on the recommendations.

The following comments are therefore based on the recommendations made in the report. They do not however, assume an acceptance of some of the conclusions of the report nor of the methodologies used.

Re Recommendation 1

While the general point made is that members should be leading in terms of conclusions and recommendations, the articulation and recording of these conclusions and ideas will require input from the Secretariat since members are not working full time with UNCTAD and need to be supported by the Secretariat. Many members have multiple responsibilities and cannot physically perform these functions without assistance. However, there is room for improved communication between the Secretariat and members.

Recommendation 2

Not in a position to comment on this.

Recommendation 3

In recommending a structured long term strategy of partnerships complemented by a proactive fundraising strategy, it would have been helpful if the recommendation had indicated what the weaknesses in the present partnership arrangement are, as indications are that there are several initiatives currently being implemented. On the matter of fundraising this will always be a challenge and it is important that new and creative ways be found as the fortunes of traditional donors change. This recommendation is therefore supported.

Recommendation 4

A results- based management approach is increasingly being used across most international organizations. However, this effort must not be seen as that of the Secretary General. Initiatives like these have to be owned by the organization and there must be buy-in at all levels. It is a mistake therefore to define this approach as that of the DG. It must be embraced by the entire organization if it is to be successful.

Recommendation 5

This suggestion for re-instating of a department appears to be bordering on micro-managing of the organization.

Recommendation 6

Agreed

Recommendation 7

It may be a dangerous strategy to link fund-raising to the goals, priorities and targets of the organization. This could expose UNCTAD to a situation where the donors set the targets. This would be regrettable and should be avoided. Goals, priorities and targets should be de-coupled from fund-raising.

Recommendation 8

This seems to be micro-managing as technical cooperation is probably one of the areas of greatest satisfaction. It is not clear why a new structure would need to be put in place if the existing one is working efficiently. It might be more appropriate to determine how the present process can be strengthened.

Recommendation 9

It is always a matter of judgment as to whether implementation is more important than evaluation. Evaluation should be measured by how effectively it is being carried out rather than by the budgeted amount devoted to this head of expenditure.

Recommendation 10

An arrangement very similar to that recommended seems to have been put in place. This should be evaluated before a new approach is put in place.

Recommendation 11

This is important but one must guard against the tendency for evaluators to suggest that evaluation is the most important function in an organization.
