

Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget, seventy-sixth session

3-5 September 2018

Mr. Paul Akiwumi, Director of the Division for Africa, LDCs and Special Programmes

Management Response to Sub-Programme 5's Independent Evaluation

Mr. President of the Board,

Secretary-General, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you have heard from Dr. Punit Arora, Sub-Programme 5 on Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes has been evaluated on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, partnerships, impacts, sustainability, and human rights and gender aspects of its work. Given the time allowed for my intervention, I will only comment on some of the key findings and recommendations made in the Evaluation Report. However, I would like to note that a detailed management response is, contained in the document, TD/B/WP(76)/CRP.1.

The evaluation notes that Sub-Programme 5's work is not only relevant, but key to the successful implementation of UNCTAD's mandate under the *Nairobi Maafikiano* and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With regard to the research products we have developed under SP5, the evaluation found that publications are of high quality and exceed the expectations of our stakeholders. SP5's publications are critical for enhancing UNCTAD's stakeholders' understanding of important and emerging issues in Trade and Development. Moreover, stakeholders recognized the importance of high-quality research to inform the development of effective technical cooperation activities.

The evaluation takes note that the Division has been very efficient in meeting its targets on various outputs and publications. I am happy to report that ALDC has the best implementation rate of its publications programme across all UNCTAD Division (93% as per data from our ISS colleagues). Worryingly, the evaluators found that both regular and extrabudgetary resources for ALDC have declined over the period of the evaluation, which covers from 2013 to 2017, though there was a slight rebound in the last year.

As for the effectiveness of the Division's activities and outputs, I am pleased to report that 80% of the respondents to the evaluators' questionnaire rated the Division's publications as either 'useful' or 'very useful'. Sub-programme 5's flagship publications, in particular, were highly regarded. They were also recognized for their contribution to national policy discussions. This success has created heavy demand

for technical cooperation from UNCTAD, which also received high satisfaction rates. More than 90% of the beneficiaries were satisfied with the quality of the technical assistance provided.

Moving on to the recommendations made in the evaluation, I am pleased to report that UNCTAD has accepted all seven of them, and we have already begun working towards their implementation, with the following caveats.

Regarding the first recommendation on “Portfolio and resource rebalancing”, which calls for the Division to continue rebalancing its portfolio and fine-tune its strategy by increasing emphasis on technical cooperation and related support, ALDC will seek to further its engagement to increase its technical cooperation work, provided that extra human and financial resources are received. The Division will attempt to strengthen its technical cooperation activities and extend its advisory services beyond what it is currently being delivered. However, this can only be realized to a certain level, and with an accompanying increase in staff and budgetary allocations.

As you are aware, the Division is implementing the Organization’s mandate under the *Maafikiano* and its programme of activities under serious financial and human resource constraints. In this regard, the Division hopes that the recommended UNCTAD-wide evaluation to revisit workplans and budgets, to inform interdivisional resource reallocation, as agreed by UNCTAD’s management, will take place as soon as possible.

As for the second recommendation to incorporate sustainability considerations into the Division’s interventions, ALDC, within its capacity and existing resources, will attempt to further develop synergies between its research and its technical cooperation arms. As highlighted in the evaluation, I am pleased to report that the Division has already started to craft technical cooperation projects based on the original findings and policy recommendations originating from the Division’s two flagship reports, namely the *Least Developed Countries Report* and the *Economic Development in Africa Report*. And, we will strive to do more in the future.

Sub-Programme 5 has also started to account for sustainability considerations in its ongoing technical cooperation activities, as evidenced by the active role the Division has played in setting up the Regional Center of Excellence for the Fisheries Sector in Vietnam for Asian and African countries. Furthermore, the Division has already started to undertake a programmatic approach to its project implementation, and will continue to seek a multi-year approach to technical cooperation projects and programmes, along the lines of the 5-year EU-UNCTAD Joint Programme of Support for Angola: Train for Trade II.

Recommendation 3 calls for the Division and UNCTAD, in general, to develop fund-raising strategies to better address our stakeholders’ needs. The Secretariat will strengthen its efforts to develop a comprehensive extra-budgetary resource-mobilization strategy, building on the ones developed in 2011 and 2013. Along the lines of the UNCTAD-wide fund-raising strategy, Sub-Programme 5 will formulate a resource-mobilization policy aimed at mobilizing funds for building productive capacities and structural transformation in the LDCs, Africa, SIDS and LLDCs. This will also enable the Division to conduct multi-year research and implement policy recommendations with key stakeholders to the benefit of the poorest share of the population.

To enable us to duly carry out our mandate and positively respond to all technical cooperation requests coming from LDCs, Africa, SIDS and LLDCs, any extra-budgetary contributions, including through the LDC Trust Fund, would be gratefully appreciated.

The evaluation report further contains one recommendation for which implementation is currently ongoing, namely the need for increased partnerships and collaboration with other UN Agencies. The Division has already developed partnerships for the implementation of technical cooperation and assistance projects, and we have successfully engaged in joint research initiatives. Although some of these partnerships are *ad hoc*, many are the result of years of constructive collaboration. Due to the nature of its work, Sub-programme 5 actively engages with the UN Economic Commission for Africa, with the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), as well as with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Furthermore, in the context of UN Reform of the development pillar and the development of the next generation of UN Country Teams, UNCTAD and Sub-Programme 5 in particular, will endeavor to increase its presence on UNCTs, as well as through the UN Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity.

Recommendation 5 calls for UNCTAD to develop a matrix organizational structure for the UNCTAD Addis Ababa Office, with stronger linkages with the Division for Africa, LDCs and Special Programme, including reporting responsibilities to its Director. Under the overall coordination of Office of the Secretary General, and in full compliance with the goals and responsibilities of the UNCTAD Addis Office, the Division will identify a clear communication channel and a mechanism for information sharing that would enable the creation of enhanced linkages and cooperation. I would like to highlight that this engagement is active and ongoing.

Recommendation 6 calls on ALDC to institute the systemic collection of data on its purported impacts and outcomes, including through an improved results-based management system (RBM). As part of the UNCTAD's effort to improve and enforce the organization's RBM, the Division will attempt to implement this recommendation as soon as possible. In this regard, I am pleased to inform you that I have arranged for 8 members of my staff to be sent to an RBM-specific training, which should lead to a Divisional Results Framework. This training should take place some time this month.

Finally, under recommendation 7, the evaluators suggested that the Division and UNCTAD, in general, increase efforts to integrate human rights and gender issues in the implementation of our activities. The Division takes this recommendation on board, and under OSG's overall guidance, will strive to enhance its efforts to ensure a systematic approach to human rights and gender issues. On this point, please allow me to emphasize that the Division has appointed a gender focal point, who reviews all publications and technical cooperation projects according to the gender checklist for Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment in Technical Cooperation Projects, as well as the Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming in UNCTAD Research and Analysis developed by the Organization. We will continue to mainstream human rights and gender issues in our research activities, provided that sex-disaggregated and gender sensitive data are available. Unfortunately, I must emphasize that a lack of data available in many countries under our mandate seriously hampers the extent of the analysis.

Before I conclude, I would like to personally thank Dr. Punit Arora, Mr. Edouard Jay, Ms. Neema Manongi and Mr. John Mathiason for their high level of professionalism and engagement over the past several months. Finally, I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Ms. Madeeha Bajwa and her team for the efficient support given to the Division throughout this evaluation.

Thank you very much.