

Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget,
seventy-second session (strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019)
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Statement by Deputy Secretary-General Joakim Reiter

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address you this morning in the 72nd session of the Working Party.

The main issue before us is the consideration of the UNCTAD biennial programme plan for 2018-2019. This plan is the start of a new programme budget cycle that will finish with the approval of the programme budget for 2018-2019, in December 2017.

This is the first opportunity to weigh-in on how the priorities of the work of the Secretariat are established and how mandates are translated into operational plans.

Let me start by giving you a quick overview on how the document before us relates to the overall budgetary process of the UN Secretariat, since - I presume - not all of us are equally familiar with it.

Based on, and subject to, your agreement over the next three days, by the end of December, Secretary-General Kituyi will submit a draft biennial programme plan to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. This plan, together with the plans of other Departments of the United Nations Secretariat, will be published as part of a larger document: the United Nations Strategic Framework.

Then the intergovernmental process will continue through the review by the Committee for Programme and Coordination -- or CPC-- and ultimately by the General Assembly.

Around this time next year, this process will continue with the preparation of the proposed programme budget. This budget incorporates the final version of the biennial programme plan and other elements, such as the specific outputs to be delivered by UNCTAD.

At that point, the Working Party will convene again to exercise its oversight role. Then in 2017 the process moves on completely into the hands of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. A flowchart of this process is available at the entrance of this room, in case you need further details.

There are three conclusions that you can derive from this process:

First, the Biennial Programme Plan is only the starting point to influence the working priorities of the Secretariat, and hence the budget formulation process. You will have plenty of occasions to make your priorities known.

Second, to ensure your views remain visible throughout this lengthy process, it is crucial that you maintain close contact with your respective delegations in New York. So they can also support your views at the CPC and at the General Assembly.

Third, in the midst of this process, this time round, we will also have the UNCTAD quadrennial conference. This is a key moment to set the priorities for the organization's work for the next four years. And, therefore, after UNCTAD14, we will have to reconvene to further discuss, and refine, the work programme.

Now, as for the substance of the document in front of you:

Let me highlight the two main elements that we have introduced compared to previous years:

First: We have tried to capture elements arising from new mandates, such as the Agenda 2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and others. In many of these cases, the specific elements linked to the implementation are still under negotiation, but you will see clear reference to the roles we have already been entrusted, for instance for the Technology Facilitation Mechanism.

Second: We have also introduced targeted modifications to indicators aimed at improving their results- or impact-orientation. By targeted, I mean that we have focused our attention to the indicators that were measuring "outputs". This was a shortcoming that had been flagged by several delegations in previous discussions.

In this version, you will see that we have modified such indicators to focus on measuring "outcomes" instead. For methodological and cost-efficiency reasons, we often had to rely on proxy indicators of relevance or usage by our beneficiaries. My colleagues responsible for the specific subprogrammes will be able to offer more details during the informal session.

On this last point, I would like to take a moment to inform you about our efforts to further mainstreaming RBM into our work. This is not directly linked to the document before you, and the subject of this meeting, but it IS linked to how we are supposed to deliver our mandated tasks, and hence important.

You would recall that SG Kituyi announced the creation of an internal coordination group for RBM. During 2015, this Group has been working on setting a common ground on how workplans are prepared and shared, and looking into best practices for the dissemination and follow-up on the results of publications.

This work will be reinforced and revitalized in the next months. For this reason, I have recruited a Programme Officer responsible for RBM roll-out in the house and reporting directly to me. Mrs Nishta Keeble will take up her new post in UNCTAD no later than 4 January. She comes from JIU and has previously worked in OIOS. So, I am very pleased to have her on-board.

The key task that she will do, immediately upon her arrival and under my supervision, is to do a subprogramme-by-subprogramme review during 2016.

The goal of this review is to make a full analysis, from scratch, on what each subprogramme intends to achieve, based on their resources and who their stakeholders are. In this way, we have a

fresh look at the logical frameworks without the constraints of the incremental approach of tweaking what we had in the previous biennium.

At the end of this process, we are looking to have 1) a revised logframe for each subprogramme, 2) a measurement plan that complements the logframe by defining a clear methodology, accountability and resource-allocation to support RBM.

Beyond the topic of RBM, you may recall that I held a briefing on 8 July 2015 about ongoing and upcoming management improvements and offer to repeat this session whenever you deem it appropriate. So far, I have not received any feedback or request on this offer, and I want to reiterate my offer to brief you on management issues whenever you request it.

Notwithstanding the lack of requests, allow me to give a quick update of the state of play. Please note that the initial version of our plan is based on the document entitled *Management Facts at UNCTAD* distributed during the briefing in July. In practice, it constitutes a comprehensive Action Plan. This document outlines a total of 18 commitments in the form unchecked boxes.

We have now developed, based on the 18 commitments, 24 specific deliverables - projects, if you wish - to be completed mainly in 2016.

Also, in addition to the targeted improvements described above, we have made progress with other elements, such as the upgrading of the intranet platform to provide access outside UNCTAD, as a means to foster cooperation and flexibility. We have also launched mobile versions of a number of our publications, which you saw at TDB in September. As of today, six publications have been turned into "apps" or "e-books". And our target is that all major flagships will, in the future, be offered also in this format.

It should be underlined that one of the biggest milestones of the plan, for this fall, was perhaps the roll-out of a new ERP system called Umoja, which is a UN Secretariat-wide initiative. Supporting UNCTAD's participation in the project took a large percentage of staff time from the Resources Management Service and from across UNCTAD over the last few months. Today, I am

happy to announce that Umoja was rolled out earlier this month and is being used by staff to process all transactions. I would like to take the opportunity to recognize the efforts of staff who worked tirelessly to meet tight and sometimes seemingly impossible targets.

This being said, we only start to realize the full extent of the capabilities that a 21st century ERP such as Umoja can offer. We are looking into ways and means to re-organize ourselves to take full advantage of this opportunity.

Furthermore, we are in the process of revamping of UNCTAD's communications, including the website. This is no small thing. But it is absolutely necessary to ensure that we become, as SG has said many times, a communicating organization.

Finally, I am glad to report that we have completed actions to ensure 100% implementation rate for OIOS recommendations -- well above the 80% required by the Senior Manager's Compact of SG Kituyi with the UN Secretary-General. We are committed to continue to be open to the impartial advice of oversight bodies and to use it to improve UNCTAD's work.

These are some of the areas that we have been working on and, again, I would like express my willingness to continue this dialogue. We are building a modern, more responsive, and efficient UNCTAD.

We are nevertheless concerned that the expectations of what UNCTAD should deliver are not being matched by sufficient resources. I have shared with you, in September, a calculation of the resource gap that keeps us from being able to fulfill the full range of technical cooperation requests we receive. With a declining or at least stable regular budget, and that is a reality, additional resources from budgetary contributions are the only means to play the revitalized role you have asked us to fulfill.

We need to move from discussing this financial gap to, collectively, start taking actions to close it. And, first and foremost, this is members' responsibility. On UNCTAD's side, we will soon be in a position to give you all relevant information on what gaps exist and from whom we have

received requests - whenever we receive it as well as our total backlog. But you will have to find ways to effectively use the information. And for this reason: I would like to suggest that we find an informal "matching mechanism", whereby donors and recipients can more concretely assess requests for technical assistance.

We are working on specific proposals to improve the dialogue on how funding arrangements could match our incoming requests for technical cooperation. So far, we are working on the basis of best practices that are in place in other entities you are familiar with, such as the EIF. We will be coming back to you soon with more details.

Distinguished delegates,

I would like to apologize for taking a few minutes away from the specific topic in front of us today. However, I believe these are relevant elements that help you have a better picture of where we stand from a managerial point of view.

I will stop here and I look forward to any questions or comments.

Thank you very much.