

Clusters 10 and 11 of technical cooperation

The bulk of the Division's work falls along the research and inter-governmental axis. However, for the project work that we do, particularly DMFAS which is a large technical cooperation programme, RBM has been a longstanding and very useful tool for improving delivery and ensuring the requisite transparency.

The **Debt Management and Financial Analysis (DMFAS) Programme** is one of UNCTAD's flagship technical cooperation programs and one of the leading providers of technical assistance and advisory services in debt management. Since its inception over 30 years ago, DMFAS has supported almost seventy developing and transition countries, working with central banks and ministries of finance, to improve their capacity to effectively manage their debt.

The programme focuses on providing countries with a set of proven solutions for improving their capacity to handle the day-to-day management of public liabilities and the production of reliable debt data for policy-making purposes. This includes its specialized debt management software, advisory services and capacity-building.

Since our last report to the Working Party, DMFAS has completed its previous strategic plan and launched its new plan for 2016-19.

The latest meeting of the DMFAS Advisory Group (a core part of the programme's governance structure) in November expressed its satisfaction with the excellent results achieved in the implementation of the 2011-2015 strategic plan, concluding that the programme has contributed to concrete and sustainable progress for DMFAS client countries that includes improved external and domestic debt data recording, enhanced reporting and improved debt analysis capacities.

It also endorsed the new strategic plan as a valuable instrument for enabling the international community to satisfy its commitments to promote effective debt management as defined in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Notwithstanding, the programme faces a significant challenge to secure the funds necessary to meet the needs of the countries it serves. We thank the current donors to the programme, namely Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland, and the beneficiary countries for supporting the programme through cost-sharing. We invite other donors to contribute.

Technical assistance in **Statistics** focuses on two projects:

First, International Trade in Services Statistics aims to improve the quality and harmonization of statistics on internationally trade in services (SITS) for countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union or Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine (UEMOA).

This project began in July 2015 and is expected to last for 30 months. The research phase of the project is complete, and we are now in the design and validation phase. This is expected to last until the end of the year when the build and implementation phases will commence. UNCTAD had been approached by ECOWAS, SADC, GCC and India requesting information regarding this project and whether it will be scalable beyond UEMOA. It is our intention that it will be.

Second, our E-learning tool on international trade in services statistics which is a joint capacity building project led by UNCTAD in partnership with the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD). Within UNCTAD this is a joint project between the Statistics Branch and the 'Train-for-Trade' Knowledge Development Branch.

The aim of the project is to develop an online tool or training course to assist compilers of international trade in services statistics around the world in ensuring they adhere to the new international standards reflected in The 2010 Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services.

The e-learning tool has been built, and filmed. It has been tested by 250 participants with the joint cooperation of the secretariats of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Sectoraria de Integracion economica centroamericana (SIECA) with good feedback. It will next

be tested at a face to face workshop in Geneva in mid-November. Thereafter final modifications will be made and translation into French and Spanish will begin.

To deliver its support to the **Palestinian people**, UNCTAD continues to carry out technical cooperation projects, provide training and advisory services and conduct research. These activities are delivered in close cooperation with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), the Palestinian private sector, civil society organizations, and with United Nations and other international agencies. UNCTAD's programme aims to strengthen the capacity of the PNA and the Palestinian private sector, and lay the foundations for the institutional capacities required for sound economic development and the efficient functioning of the economy of the future independent Palestinian State.

The programme on Assistance to the Palestinian People initiated its technical cooperation activities in 1995. Now, after two decades, the programme has successfully implemented at least 16 technical cooperation projects, slightly less than one project every year.

Presently, UNCTAD is successfully wrapping up its technical cooperation project on Capacity Development for Facilitating Palestinian Trade. The project activities, which commenced in mid-2011, progressed on two parallel tracks: consolidating the institutional capacity of the Palestinian Shippers Council (PSC) and increasing the awareness among professionals of the private and public sectors on the best practices in trade facilitation.

As part of project activities, UNCTAD worked with national and international agencies and consultants to develop and pilot a specialized trade facilitation training programme. Presently the PSC, under UNCTAD supervision, is taking steps to the accreditation of the programme towards a professional diploma in trade facilitation and supply chain.

Recently UNCTAD signed a grant agreement with the State of Qatar to sustain and enhance UNCTAD's capacity to extend assistance to the Palestinian people and research the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

There are a number of technical cooperation interventions that UNCTAD is ready to deliver to assist the Palestinian people – in particular on customs modernization, debt management and SMEs -- if extra-budgetary funding is secured.

Finally, the **Virtual Institute** (Vi) is a capacity building and networking programme whose aim is to strengthen local teaching and research capacities on trade and development at developing country academic institutions - universities and research centres. The ultimate goal is to help them strengthen their policy research and therefore make them more useful for their governments.

Since September 2015 the Vi has admitted 12 new members from 10 countries, and increased the total membership to 131 institutions in 64 countries. The Vi provided services in four areas: (1) support to teaching and research; (2) professional development for academics; (3) academic networking; and (4) dissemination of UNCTAD's research.

I would like to specifically mention three projects undertaken by the Vi during this period, in cooperation with UNCTAD divisions and programmes and with funding from the Government of Finland.

The first project strengthened the teaching and research capacity of academic institutions in LDCs and low-income sub-Saharan Africa on trade and development issues. The second project, undertaken jointly with the Trade, Gender and Development team of DITC, published French and Spanish translations of its teaching material on trade and gender, trained stakeholders through an online course, and helped build research capacity in sub-Saharan Africa by mentoring African researchers. The third project developed online courses based on Vi teaching resources and materials including analysis of non-tariff measures, structural transformation and industrial policy, and trade, the environment and sustainable development.

The Vi pays special attention to the evaluation and impact of its activities within the framework of results-based management. Using an online membership satisfaction survey, the Vi sought to measure the extent to which its capacity-building services were relevant to the members. An

overwhelming majority of the respondents said that Vi services were useful in their research, teaching, studies, policymaking, or advocacy activities.

The Vi would like to thank its donors - the Government of Finland and the One UN Fund for Tanzania - for their support during the past year. In addition, it is important to note that Vi member universities also funded a large part of the costs of some of Vi services.