European Union

Statement

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget

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Agenda Item

Evaluation of UNCTAD activities: Overview

Statement by the European Union Delegation to the UN and other international organisations in Geneva

Geneva, 15 September 2020

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –
Chair, Excellencies, distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States in this session of the Working Party. We commend UNCTAD for its commitment on evaluating its work and appreciate the very good report prepared. As underlined on various occasions, **evaluations are central for UNCTAD's transparency, accountability and efficiency.** They underpin donor confidence and ensure that we can learn from experience.

As such, **we repeat our calls from previous years to expand UNCTAD's evaluation activities to cover all aspects of the organisation's work, including the Intergovernmental Machinery.** As pointed out in past sessions of this Working Party, such a holistic approach towards the evaluations would provide the membership with a comprehensive picture of UNCTAD's activities, fully in line with the UN Evaluations Norms and Standards of 2016 and UNCTAD's Evaluation Policy of 2011. For instance, **we would appreciate to hear regularly about the internal evaluation processes and their follow up.**

Unfortunately, we did not see through the positive example of the 78\textsuperscript{th} WP last September and one subsequent management meeting that considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service.

With regard to the external evaluations completed between April 2019 and April 2020, **we commend UNCTAD for the positive feedback** it received for the evaluated technical assistance projects. This relates in particular to the relevance and local responsiveness of the projects. **However, we note with concern that, as last year, the evaluated projects failed to integrate effectively human rights and gender considerations** in their substantive work and analysis. In theory, UNCTAD appears to have incorporated systematically gender aspects in its deliberations. However, in practice, much remains to be done, as confirmed by the evaluation reports over the recent years. We, therefore, call upon the Secretariat to follow up decisively on the issued recommendations in this respect.

**Private sector involvement**, or the lack thereof, is another element that perhaps stands out in this evaluation report. Almost indiscriminately, the results of UNCTAD’s technical assistance will have a direct or indirect impact on the private sector, making their involvement highly relevant. We count on the Secretariat to see how to best implement this recommendation.
We would like to note with appreciation the very good and concrete recommendations issued by the evaluators. Some of which, we believe, could already have had certain follow up – for instance, building an online repository of seminar content or best practice sharing for project 1415M. We would appreciate hearing from the Secretariat how it is advancing in the implementation of these issued recommendations.

This brings me to the last part of the report – the very remarkable meta-analysis of the lessons learnt from the 2015-2019 project evaluations. We would like to commend the Secretariat for this very valuable and useful work, which should further improve the effectiveness and value added of UNCTAD’s technical assistance. At this stage, we would appreciate if the Secretariat could share some indications on how these very detailed lessons learnt are being addressed in concrete terms. But would also call for a regular information sharing during the future WPs, on how these and other lessons learnt translate in the future technical assistance that UNCTAD will carry out.

Before concluding, we take note of the evaluation plan for 2021. We understand the circumstances that made it difficult to start the new cycle of subprogramme evaluations this year. But we would like to emphasise the usefulness and relevance of having these evaluations done. According to the proposed plan, we are looking at almost a decade between the same subprogramme would be evaluated. Therefore, we would like to propose that the next subprogramme evaluation programme commences as early as possible, to allow for its consideration at the end of 2021 or very early 2022. We believe that this should be feasible, despite planning the Conference in April 2021.

Thank you.