



**European Union**

**United Nations Conference on Trade and Development**

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**68th session of the Working Party**

**on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget**

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**Opening Statement by**

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**On behalf of the European Union and its Member States**

**Geneva**

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**EU Opening Statement**

M. Chair, I'm speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States. At the outset, let me congratulate you for your election and express to you our trust in your ability to conduct this session with success. We thank the Secretariat for preparing this session of the working party on technical cooperation and evaluation. We looked carefully into the various documents -although not all of them were available in time- and would like to make the following observations.

**Technical cooperation (item 3)**

On item 3, the review of UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities, we appreciate the synthetic report by the Secretary-General and its informative annexes. It highlights the importance and diversity of the technical assistance provided by UNCTAD with the support of main donors and beneficiary countries.

As you know, despite budgetary constraints in Europe, the EU and its MS remain committed to supporting UNCTAD's technical cooperation and stand among the biggest donors of this organisation and certainly constitute the first donor collectively.

We value UNCTAD's efforts to streamline and build coherence among its technical assistance activities, in particular between the three pillars. The report rightly stresses the rising importance of the UN Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity, led by UNCTAD. We remain interested to hear more about UNCTAD's cooperation with other organisations, in particular the ITC, and how their respective activities complement each other.

Overall, the EU and its MS feel that a deeper reform of UNCTAD's technical assistance branch is needed along the following lines:

- A solid fundraising strategy with the support of the Secretariat and beneficiary countries; in this regard, the proposal made by the EU and its MS in the last session of the working party remains valid, and we stand ready to discuss it further with other groups.
- A thorough modernization of the methods of work rooted in results-based management;
- A rethinking of the management of technical assistance activities;

- Improving ways of reporting to donors in a more regular and structured fashion, including through electronic dissemination.

As consistently underlined by the EU and its MS, UNCTAD's best interest lies in concentrating on its mandate and seek those areas where it achieves most added value.

The current vacancy at the head of technical cooperation services represents an opportunity to initiate needed improvements that meet donors' aspirations and serve beneficiaries through enhanced effectiveness. In this respect, we look forward to getting a sense of the Secretary-General's vision on UNCTAD's technical assistance activities and internal management and stand ready to exchange formal or informally with the Secretariat and delegates on this important topic.

We express a special thank to some Member States for taking the initiative of a seminar on RBM best practices and how they can apply to UNCTAD. We look forward to participating in this event and encourage colleagues from all groups to join.

#### **Evaluation (item 4)**

We read with interest the overview prepared by the Secretariat on the evaluation of UNCTAD activities, in particular its section on lessons learnt. While reading the overview we noticed a common feature to all evaluations, which is the lack of precise monitoring relying on results-based management. This comforts our belief that a specific and more systematic effort is need in this respect, while designing and reporting on projects.

The EU and its MS fully support the lessons learned on monitoring and evaluation as contained in paragraphs 34 and 35 of document TYD/B/WP/263. In our view, such recommendations apply not only to technical assistance projects but also to UNCTAD's activities and programmes in general.

A meaningful results-based management approach is needed relying on precise indicators. In this regard, we would like to know what has been concretely undertaken by the Secretariat to improve RBM since the adoption of the RBM framework last year.

Paragraph 35 also tackles another important aspect strongly supported by the EU and its MS, which is "gender monitoring".

Furthermore, we would like to emphasize the relevance for UNCTAD to enhance its coordination with other international organizations, as mentioned several times in the overview, so as to add leverage to its action.

As to future evaluation, the EU and its MS back the proposal made to proceed in 2015 with the external evaluation of subprogramme 3 on international trade.

As regards the external evaluation of UNCTAD subprogramme 2 (SP2), we thank the team of evaluators for their excellent job. The EU and its MS highly value the work and dynamism of this division, and its relevance as the focal point in the UN on investment for development. While we would like to receive more detailed information on the activity of the Enterprise Branch of the

Division (the Report focuses mainly on work done by the 3 Investment Branches), we acknowledge with appreciation the findings of strong relevance, significant impact, broad sustainability, and effective and efficient delivery of work in all three pillars. We also note with interest the best management practices established in SP2. These should be widely disseminated and adopted throughout the Secretariat.

We wish to put particular emphasis on recommendation 3 on RBM and recommendation 9 on strengthening the gender approach. We note that, currently, the different reports produced by UNCTAD's divisions- like the Results and Impacts Report 2014 of DIAE- come in different formats and presentations. It might be worth exploring a more systematic and unified way of reporting across UNCTAD's divisions, based on systematized RBM practices.

The EU and its MS look forward to a rich and fruitful meeting under your wise guidance, M. Chair, and will come back with specific comments as we discuss the different items in the agenda.

I thank you.