

Sixty-eighth session of the Working Party.

Agenda item 4 (c) (ii)

Introduction of the progress report on the implementation of recommendations from the evaluation of UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development

Distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to briefly introduce to you the secretariat's report on the implementation of the recommendations of the external evaluation of UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development.

At the outset I would like to convey to you the regrets of the Director of DTL, Ms. Miroux, who is unfortunately unable to make this introduction as she is currently participating in the UN Conference on Small Islands Development States in Samoa.

This report is contained in document TD/B/WP(68)/CRP.1 of 14 August 2014. The document lists the 12 recommendations formulated by the external evaluators, and for each of them presents the activities the secretariat indicated that would be undertaken as a follow up, as well as the progress achieved.

The activities are presented as they were endorsed by the Working Party last December, in the same table format that was submitted to this body. The document also includes as an Annex the Report of the interdivisional task force on science, technology and innovation that was established to take up a number of issues relevant to recommendations number 1, 2 and 5 of the external evaluation.

In order to leave as much time as possible for your deliberations I will not go into a detailed review of the 43 different actions that were included in the plan. However, I would like to underline that all of them are either completed or on-going at this time, except those that by their very nature can only be undertaken at a later stage (such as the external evaluation of all new projects). Naturally my colleagues and I will be happy to answer specific questions that you may have about any particular aspect of the implementation of the plan.

Nevertheless, there are a few issues to which the secretariat would wish to draw your attention, as they were considered particularly important when the action plan was prepared. These concern:

(1) The strategic reflection about the role of the Science, Technology and ICT branch in the overall context of UNCTAD's mandate in science and technology for development;

(2) The clarification of the various roles of UNCTAD's divisions to the work on science and technology for development; and

(3) The development of options for the intergovernmental treatment of STI and ICT issues in UNCTAD.

These three issues were considered by the interdivisional task force as detailed in the annex to the CRP.

The secretariat is pleased to report that the task force easily identified the components of our vision of the role of STI in the work of UNCTAD and of each individual Division, and agreed on the means to ensure collaboration and a clear division of work. As stated in the task force's report, this vision is centered on the crucial function of STI and ICTs in the development of the productive capacities of developing countries and the improvement of their competitiveness. The respective contributions of each Division are aligned with this vision. Interdivisional collaboration will be geared towards strengthening UNCTAD's impact in terms of STI contributions to the productivity and competitiveness of developing countries.

With regard to the third point, the interdivisional task force noted that although the evaluators called on the secretariat to formulate various options for the intergovernmental treatment of this issues, this was clearly the prerogative of member States as they consider the overall functioning of UNCTAD's machinery. From the secretariat's point of view, however, it is worth noting that most of the issues raised by the evaluators concerning the treatment of STI and ICT issues in the intergovernmental work of UNCTAD have significantly improved in the years that passed since the evaluators prepared their report. This concerns both the regular organization of expert meeting on this matter, as well as the inclusion of an item on STI questions in the agenda of the Commission on Investment, Enterprise and Development. The secretariat considers that these have provided opportunities for very constructive discussions on the policy issues of STI for development.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the secretariat remains committed to the full implementation of the work plan as presented to the working party and that we look forward to your feedback and guidance to further improve the relevance and impact of our activities.

Thank you for your attention.