

Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget, 71st
Session

Opening Statement by the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

7 September 2015

As prepared for delivery

Mr. Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all from the summer break and the seventy first session of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget.

During this session we will discuss two very important topics for UNCTAD. The first one is the review of our technical cooperation activities and their financing. The second topic is the evaluation of our activities.

Throughout this session my colleagues will provide you with further details on these topics. Therefore, I would like to use this opportunity to share with you some highlights of these activities during last year, and to introduce to you a new product: the UNCTAD Toolbox

I) Let me start with our technical cooperation activities and highlight three points.

a) The first point relates to the **funding of UNCTAD technical cooperation activities**. Traditionally, UNCTAD relies for the most part on voluntary contributions from bilateral sources to fund its technical cooperation activities. And on this front, I have good and bad news.

The good news is that in 2014, UNCTAD trust funds reached US\$39.4 million, which represents an increase of 26% compared to 2013. This is the result of increased financial support from a handful developed and developing countries, as well as the European Commission.

While this is encouraging, the bad news is that this is insufficient to cover our demand for technical cooperation.

Let me share with you some preliminary figures. From 1 January 2013 until August 2015, in 2.5 years, we have received more than 800 requests for technical assistance. This means that on average, every working day, UNCTAD receives at least one request for technical assistance.

Responding to all them requires a budget of approximately US\$56 million.

So far, we have only secured 42% of the needed funds and covered 62% of the requests. To cover the remaining 38% of the demands for technical cooperation requires over US\$ 32 million, almost equivalent to one additional of voluntary contributions. This is an amount that is easy to say but difficult to collect.

Furthermore, the forthcoming adoption of the post-2015 development agenda is likely to *increase*, rather than decrease, the requests for technical cooperation. To address these requests, UNCTAD needs to mobilize more funds from all potential sources. This mobilization is crucial to transform the ambitions of the post-2015 development agenda into concrete actions. And in these efforts, we need your support.

b) My second point relates to **the allocation of UNCTAD technical cooperation resources.**

In 2014, overall expenditures on UNCTAD technical cooperation activities amounted to US\$38.8 million, which corresponds to the average expenditure over the last five years. 59% of expenditures were earmarked for ASYCUDA and DMFAS, our two largest technical cooperation programmes.

UNCTAD continues to give priority to LDCs in the allocation of its technical cooperation resources. Their share of UNCTAD's total technical cooperation expenditures remained stable, at 40%.

The SDGs aim to eradicate extreme poverty from our planet by 2030. This requires unprecedented efforts, but also unprecedented funding support, especially for the most vulnerable countries. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to call on development partners to increase their contributions to the UNCTAD LDC Trust Fund. Your support is needed for the world we aim to build by 2030.

c) My third point relates to **the functioning of UNCTAD technical cooperation and our efforts to deliver as one**

In this context, it is worth mentioning the leading role played by UNCTAD at the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity.

Since the official lunch of the Cluster in 2008, it has effectively enhanced inter-agency coordination, and strengthened the role of trade and productive capacities in the integrated technical cooperation delivered by the UN.

To scale up the Cluster activities, UNCTAD initiated a process in 2014 for the establishment of a multi-donor trust fund. Contributing to this trust fund is to support activities that build productive capacities, enable countries to transform their economies, create jobs and harness trade for sustainable development. It is for this reason that I would like to invite all member countries to support this fund!

Before concluding my remarks on technical cooperation activities, I would like to introduce to you our new product: **the UNCTAD tool box**.

This toolbox presents the battery of products that UNCTAD offers to countries to pursue their development objectives. As you can see, it presents an *à la carte* menu for donors and beneficiary countries depending on their objectives, preferences and priorities.

The toolbox is also the result of listening to you, as donors or beneficiaries. It is the product that many of you have implicitly demanded. A product that succinctly explains what UNCTAD can offer in different areas, and how what we offer is relevant and the impact and results our products can achieve.

A special edition of the UNCTAD toolbox was issued for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in July, and we received very positive feedback.

I hope you are pleased with this new initiative and we welcome any comments you may have. Our technical cooperation team will be more than happy to listen to you and incorporate your feedback.

II) Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me now turn to the second topic on the agenda: Evaluation.

We all agree that development policies and programmes must be informed by evidence generated by credible monitoring and evaluation systems. This is why the General Assembly, with the aim of strengthening the demand for, and use of, evaluation decided that 2015 is the International Year of Evaluation. This year is

thus a challenge to us all to promote rigorous evaluation of key programmes, and to incorporate the lessons from these evaluations, positive and negative, into policy.

This is what we do with UNCTAD's evaluation function. We will continue to improve principles of transparency, accountability and learning. We aim to ensure that we learn from our past performance. We must ensure that we consolidate the actions that have delivered the right results and correct our course when needed.

In this session of the Working Party, you will consider evaluations of UNCTAD's programmes and projects that were completed between 2014 and 2015. You will also consider a follow-up to the external evaluation of UNCTAD's subprogramme 2 on investment and enterprise that was considered by the Working Party in 2014. In addition to an overview of findings from evaluations of five projects, you have the report on the External evaluation of our subprogramme on International trade as commissioned by the Working Party last year.

Following established practice, the Report on trade was prepared by an external evaluation team comprised of an independent evaluation consultant and two representatives of member States, who participated in their personal capacity. My gratitude goes to the members of the evaluation team: Mr. SV Divvaakar, Ms. Jaime Moody and Mr. Juan Carlos Sanchez Troya. I would also like to convey our gratitude to the Government of Norway for their kind support in enabling the conduct of such evaluations.

The purpose of our work under the trade subprogramme is, and has always been: Prosperity for all through trade. The various components of the subprogramme have two main goals. The first one is to help developing countries

to use international trade as a tool for inclusive and sustainable development. The second one is to help them to integrate equitably into the global economy.

And we have achieved much through our work on trade. But we can do much more and we can do much better.

Evaluations such as the one the Working Party will consider are a step towards that goal.

The evaluation team, as well as my colleague Mr. Guillermo Valles, Director of the Division on International Trade in Goods and Services and Commodities, will present and discuss the conclusions of the evaluation and the management response. We look forward to your guidance on the actions to be taken.

Distinguished delegates,

Under SG Kituyi, UNCTAD has committed to transparency and continuous improvement. It is my hope that our discussions at this session will feed into dialogues on how UNCTAD can strengthen its contributions to sustainable and inclusive development, especially as the world embarks on the ambitious and universal post-2015 agenda.

Your discussions at this Working Party session will help improve our technical cooperation activities and programmes. The secretariat looks forward to having a constructive discussion on the subjects raised. I am confident that, by working together, we can make good use of this opportunity.

I wish you a successful meeting.

Thank you.