

**Trade and Development Board**

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**Matters requiring action by the Board in the follow-up to the  
thirteenth session of the Conference****Work plan for enhancing the management and  
administration of UNCTAD**

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## I. Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to present a work plan for enhancing the management and administration of UNCTAD, focusing on seven areas that have been identified as requiring strengthening. Through the actions enunciated in this work plan, the secretariat endeavours to build upon the momentum of enhancements initiated over the years, all of which have aimed at ensuring the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and impact of this organization.

2. To date, there have been significant institutional adjustments as well as new initiatives: strengthened research and analysis and greater outreach to academia, greater coordination of technical cooperation activities internally and externally, as well as the implementation of the Communications Strategy adopted by the Trade and Development Board. Interdivisional cooperation has been strengthened through the establishment of many subject-specific task forces, such as those on the food crisis, sustainable tourism, the greenhouse gas mitigation strategy, preparations for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and, more recently, for the preparation of UNCTAD XIII. There is still room for improvement, and this work plan is aligned with the secretariat's continued efforts to strengthen UNCTAD.

3. The work plan is grounded on the policies, rules, regulations and procedures of the United Nations Secretariat, of which the UNCTAD secretariat is a department.

4. Building on this foundation in the development of this work plan, the UNCTAD secretariat has taken into account the outcome and discussions at the twenty-sixth special session of the Trade and Development Board, the outcomes of the thirteenth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII), the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of Management and Administration in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development" and the Management Response to the review.

5. This work plan has been prepared with the explicit intention of accommodating all objectives for the seven areas within existing resources to the degree possible, particularly given the current challenging financial situation of the United Nations. The full implementation of some recommendations will nevertheless require additional resources which would need to be obtained through voluntary contributions in order not to impact adversely on activities that have already been programmed. This work plan is therefore based on the following premises: (i) there is strong institutional and political commitment to support the implementation of this work plan; (ii) the UNCTAD secretariat will immediately initiate the actions that can be accommodated within existing resources, while actions entailing additional costs will be undertaken subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources; and (iii) the work plan is a living document that may be updated in line with relevant developments and feedback received from its implementation.

6. The implementation of this work plan will be monitored internally on a regular basis by the Doha Mandate Coordinating Committee (DCC) that comprises the senior managers of UNCTAD.

## II. The work plan

7. This work plan focuses on further measures that the secretariat will undertake in seven areas:

- a. An integrated results-based management framework;
- b. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation capacity;

- c. Enhancing outreach and communications, including with the Geneva-based missions;
- d. Enhanced coordination of activities internally and externally, including through improved processes and procedures;
- e. Equitable geographic and gender representation, and transparent and effective human resources management;
- f. An effective fundraising strategy;
- g. The possibility of the establishment of a non-earmarked trust fund.

**a. An integrated results-based management framework**

8. As a department of the United Nations Secretariat, UNCTAD has incorporated a results-based approach in the planning, budgeting and monitoring of its work programme starting from the biennium 2002–2003, in line with the Regulations and rules governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8) and subsequent relevant decisions of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

9. This results-based approach includes, inter alia, the application of a logical framework approach to articulate clear objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement, prior to the implementation of any activities. Member States in Geneva are involved in the formulation of this logical framework when the Working Party meets to consider each UNCTAD draft proposed biennial Strategic Framework and programme narrative. Based on the mandated work programme, divisions in turn elaborate their work plans which enunciate goals, tasks, responsibilities and timelines for individual branches/sections. At the end of each two-year period, the results of activities undertaken under each subprogramme are formally assessed at the level of the United Nations Secretariat. These results are presented and communicated to the Working Party and the Committee for Programme and Coordination through the Programme Performance Report and the UNCTAD results-based Annual Report. These reports are the main instruments by which member States are kept informed of the overall programmatic results of UNCTAD. In particular, in line with results-based management (RBM) methodology, as the Working Party considers the biennial Programme Performance Report at the same time it considers the UNCTAD proposed programme narrative for the next biennium, it is also able to use performance information to assess and improve programme direction for the following biennium.

10. In line with the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Secretariat to strengthen RBM, and taking into account recommendation four on this subject, the UNCTAD secretariat will reinforce efforts on this front. The secretariat will prepare a document outlining an improved and better integrated RBM framework and focus in particular on enhancing the operationalization of the RBM framework at UNCTAD. The actions envisaged include enhancing and harmonizing the logical frameworks and work plans of each division, ensuring that each division has an effective system to monitor, evaluate and report on performance, and promoting the use of such findings to improve programme and project planning.

11. The secretariat is also in the process of finalizing a RBM manual for technical cooperation which focuses on the design of UNCTAD projects and the use of extrabudgetary resources.

**Target implementation date:**

12. The secretariat will prepare an outline of the improved RBM framework inclusive of technical cooperation and report on progress at the next annual session of the Trade and Development Board in 2013.

**Resources required:**

13. The drafting of the RBM framework for UNCTAD, including undertaking research and holding internal consultations, will be undertaken within existing resources.

14. It is envisaged that additional resources would be required for the effective operationalization of the framework, particularly in the area of logical framework design, and programme monitoring. For instance, regular data collection (web metrics, field surveys, etc.) and analyses are essential in monitoring programme performance. Additional resource requirements would be contingent on the information required and the data collection methodology. The engagement of a RBM expert contracted for at least two months would also be necessary, including to conduct relevant training for UNCTAD staff and finalize a RBM manual for technical cooperation projects. Sustaining the full and effective implementation of the improved RBM framework is likely to require additional resources, which would be assessed at the appropriate time.

**b. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation capacity**

15. A key component of the RBM and accountability framework is a sound monitoring and evaluation system. To date, the monitoring and evaluation functions at UNCTAD support RBM by assisting with programme monitoring and evaluation. This is achieved by tracking accomplishments and implementation of the approved programme of work on a regular basis and through the delivery of evaluation reports, which enable the secretariat and member States to engage in systematic reflection on programme and project performance.

16. UNCTAD has been committed to strengthening its monitoring and evaluation functions in order to improve the UNCTAD lessons learnt and accountability framework. To this end, the following measures were implemented in 2011:

- Separation of the programme planning function from the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit so that the Unit focuses on monitoring and evaluation activities. The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit serves as the custodian of the evaluation function, in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards, and coordinates the monitoring function, in line with the Regulations and rules governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation. The Unit's activities include undertaking evaluations and promoting their use at decision-making levels, ensuring that all mandatory monitoring and reporting commitments are delivered, and providing guidance and assistance to staff on monitoring and evaluation matters, such as supporting self-evaluation capacity development;
- Adoption of an UNCTAD evaluation policy that clarifies, inter alia, the role and use of evaluation, responsibilities, the scope and periodicity of evaluations and the dissemination of reports.

17. To build a stronger monitoring and evaluation system to support RBM, and taking into account recommendation 11 on this subject, the following additional measures need to be undertaken:

- (a) Development of a clear annual plan of evaluations. Evaluations will be of a strategic nature to provide useful evidence on each subprogramme's

performance and thus promote learning, inform decision-making and enhance accountability;

- (b) Strengthening of self-assessment capacities and frameworks within all divisions, including through training;
- (c) Strengthening of capacities for impact assessments;
- (d) Establishment of a tracking mechanism to follow-up on evaluation recommendations;
- (e) Establishment of a mechanism to promote lessons learnt from evaluations;
- (f) Better dissemination of evaluation products.

**Target implementation date:**

18. The secretariat will report on progress made at the next annual session of the Trade and Development Board in 2013.

**Resources required:**

19. Measures (d), (e) and (f) identified in paragraph 17 will be undertaken within existing resources. With regard to measure (a), the development of an evaluation plan will not require additional resources, but the conduct of evaluations will require such resources. The annual evaluation that is considered by the Working Party has been enabled through the support of a trust fund supported by the Norwegian Government, which is presently funded through December 2012. If the type of evaluations required changes (such as a broadened scope for each evaluation) or an increased number of evaluations are desired by member States in order to strengthen lessons learnt, programme improvements and accountability, then additional resources would be required. The cost of an evaluation is contingent upon the scope and nature of the evaluation activities requested. For example, desk evaluations cost on average US\$12,000, an external evaluation of a project averages US\$20,000 and an external evaluation of a programme of work averages from US\$80,000 to US\$120,000 (covering a consultant fee and field visits by the evaluation team).

20. In order to implement measures (b) and (c), additional resources are required. In particular:

- There is a need to build better capacity within UNCTAD for self-assessments and impact assessments to improve the availability and quality of information that is a useful basis for external evaluations and internal decision-making, consistent with RBM principles. Training on RBM and assessment methodologies for UNCTAD staff is envisaged. As an example, the United Nations System Staff College can conduct such courses at a cost of US\$2,000 per person. For 20 participants, the additional requirement would be US\$40,000. Some of these 20 participants could then pass on to other colleagues the skills and techniques acquired during the training.
- Internal self-assessments methods, such as surveys, post-workshop questionnaires, web metrics, and field survey assessments, are the basis for informed decision-making on programme performance. Such data collection would require additional resources. For example, a limited number of field surveys to collect feedback directly from beneficiaries of UNCTAD activities could be conducted (requiring an estimated US\$20,000).

**c. Enhancing outreach and communications, including with the Geneva-based missions**

21. Progress on this front has been made since the Communications Strategy was first adopted by the Trade and Development Board in 2009. The secretariat has received encouraging feedback regarding improvements in communication with member States, the media response to major UNCTAD events and press campaigns, and civil society engagement with UNCTAD.

22. Some of the ongoing initiatives include:

- Measures to improve outreach and communications to specific key audiences. For example, policymakers – the principal audience of UNCTAD – are reached through face-to-face meetings with UNCTAD staff, the presentations of reports or research findings to delegations, dissemination of policy briefs, as well as through UNCTAD participation in debates and panel discussions, and document dissemination at high-level inter-governmental meetings. Such meetings include the Special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and UNCTAD in New York (March 2012), the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly (October 2011) and meetings of the Group of 20;
- Induction courses on UNCTAD and its work for delegates from Geneva-based Missions;
- The launch in March 2012 of the new UNCTAD website. Work is ongoing to further improve the site to ensure better organization of content and improved search features to make it an even more user-friendly tool for member States and other target audiences.
- A web-based technical cooperation portal developed by UNCTAD to provide transparent and up-to-date information on projects and their implementation. The technical cooperation portal was launched in September 2010. Up-to-date financial information is in general always available for all projects from the Technical Cooperation Service. Work to ensure up-to-date information on the status of implementation of projects will continue.
- A common branding, layout and design for UNCTAD was developed and adopted in June 2011. Implementation is under way.
- In order to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of communications and outreach activities, the Communications Editorial Board within the UNCTAD secretariat will continue to meet on a regular basis to consult, coordinate and collaborate with designated representatives from divisions and services on all communication-related activities, including related web activities.

23. Additional initiatives to further enhance outreach and communications will continue to be undertaken in accordance with the Communications Strategy and the recommendations of the Working Party at its annual review.

24. In particular, it is important to ensure close, effective cooperation and coordination with Geneva-based delegations which are pivotal in ensuring the effectiveness of UNCTAD outreach and communications, inter alia, through their guidance at the Working Party's review of the implementation of the Communications Strategy and by serving as a direct link to their capitals. In order to further enhance outreach and communications with Geneva-based missions, additional initiatives include:

- (a) The secretariat will better endeavour to meet the specific information needs of Geneva-based delegates. In this regard, work on the delegates' portal for official documentation, meeting and publication alerts, draft reports, UNCTAD staff

missions abroad, etc., continues. The portal should be operational by the end of 2012;

- (b) In addition to the annual induction course for new delegates, the secretariat could organize briefings for new ambassadors on UNCTAD and its work;
- (c) While the monthly consultations convened by the President of the Board will continue to allow for regular briefings by the secretariat on forthcoming meetings, informal follow-up to meetings and housekeeping matters, these monthly consultations could also be an opportunity for the secretariat to conduct substantive briefings to member States on its work, such as the key messages of new and forthcoming publications, and forthcoming activities in the field;
- (d) The secretariat will continue discussions with colleagues at the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to identify practicable solutions for ensuring the timely translation of documents and publications, in the context of the existing resource constraints for translation within the Department.

25. Broader communications and outreach initiatives will also include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Improving the dissemination of UNCTAD work and activities at the national and regional levels, including United Nations Resident Coordinators and the United Nations regional commissions. For example, UNCTAD conducts the P166 training course and participates in the induction courses for Resident Coordinators, as a member of the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity. These courses are venues that can be used to promote a better understanding of UNCTAD;
- (b) Improving capacities to better harness social media tools;
- (c) Identifying ways to better engage with local media and United Nations Resident Coordinators to improve the promotion of activities in the field.

**Target implementation date:**

26. The secretariat will report on progress made in the implementation of these initiatives at the session of the Working Party in the second quarter of 2013 that reviews the implementation of the communications strategy.

**Resources required:**

27. Measures (a) through (d) identified in paragraph 24 will be undertaken within existing resources.

28. Some of the recommendations contained in the Communications Strategy cannot be implemented from existing resources alone. In particular, this includes improvements to the UNCTAD website, media monitoring tools, increased outreach at the regional and national levels, the promotion of multilingualism and increased participation of civil society representatives from the South. For example, a media monitoring tool to collect web and media coverage statistics is essential to monitor message reach and use, consistent with an RBM approach. However, such tools can cost between US\$4,000 and US\$10,000 per year. For instance, the Department of Public Information within the United Nations Secretariat uses Meltwater News analysis for US\$10,000 per year.

**d. Enhanced coordination of activities internally and externally including through improved processes and procedures**

29. The secretariat has already taken several initiatives to strengthen interdivisional cooperation, and senior managers meet frequently to discuss issues as they arise. For instance, the Accra Accord Steering Group, chaired by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, met regularly to guide the implementation of the Accra Accord and discuss other issues. Also, in the last six years several interdivisional task forces were established to encourage closer collaboration among divisions, which often resulted in joint work on reports.

30. Measures have also been taken to improve coordination and coherence in UNCTAD technical cooperation activities, such as the establishment of the interdivisional Project Review Committee to improve the internal coordination of projects. UNCTAD will also continue its efforts towards improved coherence within the broader United Nations Development Assistance Framework through its lead role in the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity.

31. Such coordination initiatives have delivered results and will continue. Following the agreement by member States on the UNCTAD mandate – the Doha Mandate – for the next four years, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD established the Doha Mandate Coordinating Committee (DCC) on 9 May 2012. The DCC will convene all directors at least once a month, and more frequently under the chairmanship of the Deputy Secretary-General, to lead and monitor the implementation of the Doha Mandate. This will include steering the enhancements to our existing results-based management framework, and other management and administrative matters.

32. Interdivisional task forces, working groups and other informal collaborations will continue to serve as one of the main modalities for the secretariat to deliver its work more efficiently and effectively, particularly for subjects of a cross-cutting nature.

33. Synergies from inter-agency cooperation and with other international organizations will also continue to be exploited so as to mutually strengthen each other's capacity and avoid duplication. Closer engagement in coordination mechanisms such as the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs within the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity and the United Nations Evaluation Group will be sought with a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of processes and procedures.

**Target implementation date:**

34. The secretariat will report on progress made at the next annual session of the Trade and Development Board in 2013.

**Resources required:**

35. Dedicated resources are needed to enhance external coordination, as well as maintain and further develop UNCTAD leadership and involvement in the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity activities at the global, regional and country levels.

**e. Equitable geographic and gender representation, and transparent and effective human resources management**

36. With regard to the request to ensure that recruitment processes are fair and transparent, the secretariat reiterates that it fully complies with all the applicable United

Nations rules and procedures on staff selection. For instance, on equitable geographic and gender representation, for regular budget posts, the UNCTAD secretariat is bound by the system of geographical distribution administered by the Office of Human Resources Management at the level of the United Nations Secretariat, not at the level of UNCTAD or any other individual department. It is also important to note that, according to applicable General Assembly resolutions, the paramount consideration in the recruitment and selection of staff is securing the highest standard of efficiency, competence and integrity. Gender and geographic considerations are given due regard from among the pool of suitably qualified candidates.

37. Nonetheless, after careful analysis of the subject, UNCTAD has and will continue its remedial actions within its purview in these areas of human resources management. For example, one of the constraints to improving gender and geographic representation in UNCTAD has been the scarceness of suitably qualified applicants, whether females or nationals of underrepresented countries. The UNCTAD secretariat will therefore concentrate its efforts in reaching out to professional networks, academia and member States, to enlarge the pool of qualified applicants to UNCTAD posts. The Focal Point for Women and alternate will also continue to exercise their functions, in particular, by actively participating in an advisory capacity in selection processes.

38. The UNCTAD secretariat will also increase efforts to draw on a wider geographical pool in the area of consultancy. In particular, UNCTAD will leverage its recently rolled-out web-based consultancy roster<sup>1</sup> to attract and reach out to a more diverse pool of potential consultants.

39. In order to meet the time targets set for recruitment processes, the secretariat is taking the following steps:

- A reorganization of its Human Resources Management Section that will improve the definition of responsibilities for recruitment and selection, and provide dedicated attention to overseeing vacancy management;
- The identification of best practices within UNCTAD and in other departments of the United Nations Secretariat in expediting recruitment and selection, which will be replicated throughout the UNCTAD secretariat.

**Target implementation date:**

40. The secretariat will provide regular updates on human resources-related indicators to every November session of the Working Party.

**Resources required:**

41. There are no additional financial implications.

**f. An effective fundraising strategy**

42. The secretariat has been engaged in a process to improve internal coordination of technical cooperation operations and fundraising through a steering committee chaired by the Deputy-Secretary-General, which has served to reduce duplication and strengthen interdivisional cooperation. An effective fundraising strategy is fully in line with the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen UNCTAD, and taking into account

<sup>1</sup> <http://consultants.unctad.org/>

recommendation seven on this subject, the secretariat will develop a draft fundraising strategy for consideration.

**Target implementation date:**

43. A first draft of the strategy could be ready for consideration before the end of 2012.

**Resources required:**

44. No additional resources are required for the drafting of the strategy.

**g. The possibility of the establishment of a non-earmarked trust fund**

45. The secretariat would welcome the establishment of a non-earmarked general trust fund. Given the new request of the Trade and Development Board, and taking into account recommendation nine on this subject, the secretariat will draft a new proposal on the possibility of the establishment of a non-earmarked trust fund.

**Target implementation date:**

46. The proposal will be presented for consideration before the end of 2012.

**Resources required:**

47. No additional resources are required for the drafting of the proposal.

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