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## Trade and Development Board Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget

Seventy-seventh session  
Geneva, 30 January–1 February 2019

### Report of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget on its seventy-seventh session

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 30 January to 1 February 2019

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## **I. Action taken by the Working Party at its seventy-seventh session**

### **A. Agreed conclusions on the review of the draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2020 (part II of the proposed programme budget)**

(Agenda item 3)

#### *The Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget*

1. *Concurs* with the proposed draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information document for the year 2020 as contained in document TD/B/WP(77)/CRP.1/Rev.1;
2. *Requests* the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to take full account of and reflect appropriately the comments and inputs provided by member States during the seventy-seventh session of the Working Party and document TD/B/WP(77)/CRP.1/Rev.1 for the purposes of his submission of inputs for the proposed UNCTAD programme budget for the year 2020 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for subsequent consideration by the General Assembly of the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies;
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to ensure that the views expressed by member States during intergovernmental deliberations at the seventy-seventh session of the Working Party, a subsidiary body of the Trade and Development Board, are transmitted in a timely manner to the relevant United Nations entities dealing with programmatic and budgetary issues;
4. *Invites* the Secretary-General to make available to the member States of UNCTAD documentation on the submissions he has made to the United Nations entities dealing with programmatic and budgetary issues on the draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2020 (part II of the proposed programme budget);
5. *Reaffirms* the importance of UNCTAD and its pivotal role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
6. *Stresses* the importance that UNCTAD have adequate resources to fully implement the mandate entrusted to it, in particular in the period leading up to the fifteenth session of UNCTAD;
7. *Encourages* the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to explore the best modalities to maximize synergies and redeploy resources across the subprogrammes, as well as within each subprogramme, so as to respond in the best possible conditions to the areas of work identified by the Nairobi Maafikiano, and requests the secretariat to focus its efforts on the parts of the mandate that are not yet on track for completion in this quadrennium, as identified by the deliberations of the midterm review;
8. *Expresses* concern on the delay in the launch of the programme budget preparation and its impact on the deliberations of the relevant elements by the Working Party and requests the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to transmit those concerns to the relevant authorities in New York;
9. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, for future programme budget exercises, to provide to member States, alongside the draft programme plan, appropriate supporting documentation so as to undertake a comprehensive review of the proposed draft programme plan;
10. *Recommends* that the Trade and Development Board invite the President of the Trade and Development Board to transmit the outcome of the Working Party to the Chairs of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly;

11. As a follow-up to the agreed conclusions adopted by the Working Party at its seventy-sixth session, *requests* the secretariat to prepare a proposal and organize consultations with member States on the issue of a programme cycle for in-depth evaluations of the subprogrammes, with a view to discussing it at the next session of the Working Party;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to establish a methodology for a harmonized approach of each subprogramme regarding quantifiable deliverables;

13. *Welcomes* the finalization of the terms of reference for future sessions of the Working Party, as a result of informal consultations, and for approval by the Trade and Development Board, in a timely manner.

## **B. Other action taken by the Working Party**

### **1. Review of the draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2020 (part II of the proposed programme budget)**

(Agenda item 3)

1. At its closing plenary meeting on 1 February 2019, the Working Party adopted the agreed conclusions on this agenda item.

### **2. Provisional agenda for the seventy-eighth session of the Working Party**

(Agenda item 4)

2. At its closing plenary meeting on 1 February 2019, the Working Party approved the provisional agenda for its seventy-eighth session (see annex I).

## **II. Chair's summary**

### **A. Proceedings**

1. The seventy-seventh session of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 30 January to 1 February 2019. The Working Party pursued its deliberations in an informal setting.

### **B. Opening statements**

2. The Deputy-Secretary General of UNCTAD delivered a statement, followed by statements made by the representatives of the following delegations: Ecuador, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; Togo, on behalf of the African Group; Guatemala, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries; Romania, on behalf of the European Union; Canada, on behalf of JUZCANS; Estonia, on behalf of Group D; Algeria, on behalf of the Arab Group; Tunisia; the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Iraq; the State of Palestine; and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

3. In her opening statement, the Deputy-Secretary General of UNCTAD said that the year 2020 would mark the beginning of an annual budget cycle. The document presented under agenda item 3 was the first of its kind at UNCTAD, not only because of a short budget cycle but also because of a new approach, which was in line with the wishes of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and endorsed by Member States, to carry out an organization-wide management reform. The programme plan was provided in one document, rather than three separate ones previously, wherein results were presented more clearly and efficiently than before.

4. The review by the Working Party of the draft programme plan and performance information for the year 2020 constituted the beginning of a process during which Member States would have several opportunities to be informed and intervene, both in Geneva and in New York. Once reviewed, the document would be submitted by the UNCTAD secretariat to the Office of Programme Planning, Finance and Budget in New York for consideration by

the General Assembly in its discussions on the budget for the year 2020, under the trade and development section of the draft budget programme for 2020.

5. While the programme plan was prepared on the assumption of zero growth, some targeted reductions were to be expected, which, however, would not affect the implementation of existing programmes. As the plan was based on existing mandates, the draft programme plan and performance information for the year 2020 would need to be revised in the light of any new mandate stemming from the fifteenth quadrennial session of UNCTAD in 2020.

### **C. Review of the draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2020 (part II of the proposed programme budget)**

(Agenda item 3)

6. In the discussion of the agenda item, most regional groups and delegations expressed concern as to whether a review of the draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2020 (part II of the proposed programme budget) could be comprehensive and yield meaningful results without considering linked resource implications.

7. A representative of the secretariat said that the consideration of budgetary matters was a prerogative of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. Further, the Secretary-General of the United Nations would ultimately define the final resource requirements for the publication of part III of the proposed programme budget in New York. In the absence of the resource elements for 2020, other background information such as the resource allocation for 2018–2019 had been made to provide a more comprehensive picture.

8. Many regional groups and delegations expressed concern about the trend in decreasing resources and anticipated reductions for 2020 and the impact that such a trend could have on the capacity of the secretariat to implement its mandates. Several delegations said that the internal distribution of resources would need to adapt to the emerging priorities given by new and reinforced mandates.

9. Many regional groups expressed their views on specific aspects of the draft programme plan and performance information such as the balance of priorities, the reflection of mandates, the underlying methodology, internal and external cooperation arrangements, the alignment of subprogrammes with the Sustainable Development Goals and the inclusion of cross-cutting issues such as gender and youth.

### **D. Other business**

(Agenda item 5)

10. During the closing plenary, the representative of the Group of 77 and China requested that the following paragraph from the statement she had delivered on behalf of the Group at the opening plenary be put on record:

The Group of 77 and China recall the Nairobi Maafikiano and its commitment towards the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as expressed in paragraph 55 (dd), as well as in numerous General Assembly resolutions. The Group of 77 and China requires the strengthening of the UNCTAD programme of assistance to the Palestinian people with adequate resources and effective operational activities.

### **E. Closing plenary**

11. With regard to paragraph 12 of the agreed conclusions, a representative of the secretariat stated that a methodology for a harmonized approach to quantifiable deliverables, defined by the Office of Programme Planning, Finance and Budget, was in place. Regarding the expectations expressed by member States during their deliberations, a more detailed

definition of assignment of existing resources to deliverables or vice-versa would not be possible for several reasons. These included technical constraints, divergence in the nature and scope of deliverables and lack of flexibility of regular budget resources.

### **III. Organizational matters**

#### **A. Election of officers**

(Agenda item 1)

12. At its open plenary meeting on 30 January 2018, the Working Party elected Mr. Tunde M. Mustapha (Nigeria) as its Chair.

#### **B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

(Agenda item 2)

13. At the same meeting, the Working Party adopted its provisional agenda (TD/B(WP/294). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers;
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work;
3. Review of the draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2020 (part II of the proposed programme budget);
4. Provisional agenda for the seventy-eighth session of the Working Party;
5. Other business;
6. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board.

#### **C. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board**

(Agenda item 6)

14. At its closing plenary meeting on 1 February 2019, the Working Party decided that the report on its seventy-seventh session would be finalized, under the authority of the Chair, after the session.

## **Annex I**

### **Provisional agenda for the seventy-eighth session of the Working Party**

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing
4. Evaluation of UNCTAD activities:
  - (a) Evaluation of UNCTAD activities: Overview
  - (b) Synthesis of the five subprogramme evaluations and an update on the status of implementation of the recommendations
5. Briefing on the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of UNCTAD
6. Provisional agenda for the seventy-ninth session of the Working Party
7. Other business
8. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

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## Annex II

### Attendance\*

1. Representatives of the following States members of the Working Party attended the session:

Algeria	Nigeria
Finland	Panama
Japan	Russian Federation

2. Representatives of the following States members of UNCTAD but not members of the Working Party attended the session:

Afghanistan	Mexico
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mongolia
Djibouti	Morocco
Egypt	Nepal
Estonia	Philippines
Gabon	Poland
Guatemala	Togo
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Tunisia
Lebanon	Zambia

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\* For the list of participants, see TD/B/WP(77)/INF.1.