



**Working Party on the Programme Plan and
Programme Performance – Eighty-fifth session**

24 January 2023

Opening Remarks

Pedro Manuel Moreno

UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General

Chair, Your Excellency Priyanka CHAUHAN, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of India,

Vice-Chair, Your Excellency Gabriel OKOKO, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Nigeria,

Your excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

It is my distinct pleasure and honour to be with you here today, at the opening of this working party, that is my first in this hall as Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

Last year, I had the chance to meet most of you in person. But I want to take this opportunity to repeat what I have said to you.

As UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General, I carry the responsibility to implement, to follow-up, and to listen.

Implement the Bridgetown Covenant and its related mandates, which are many, and which demand of this institution a deep reconfiguration of the way we work, the way we are accountable, and the way we deal with the emerging crises of today and tomorrow.

Follow-up, the different initiatives that the current context demand of us, including our work at the UN Global Crisis Response Group, the negotiations of the Istanbul Grain and Fertilizer Agreements, our engagement with the G20, and our thought leadership in the area of gender and climate change from a development perspective.

And lastly, my mission is to listen. To listen to you, the member states, to listen to our sister UN agencies, and to listen to our own staff here at UNCTAD. If I learned something from my work at the United Nations over many years, is that frank and open dialogue is the way to success.

So please, your excellencies, do not ever hesitate to reach out to me. It is my duty, and it will always be a privilege to receive you and engage with you.

Your excellencies,

As is by now a custom in these working parties, this opening segment speech will be divided into three parts. First, context. Second, the year in review. And third, the year ahead (especially in reference to the Proposed Programme Plan).

Allow me to start with the context.

As our UNCTAD Secretary-General says, 2022 has left behind a world of cascading crises, a cascade that is only getting worse by the day.

COVID, climate change and the cost-of-living crisis are all increasing poverty and hunger at alarming speed. Geopolitics, not economics, is now steering globalization.

Funding gaps for SDG investments in developing countries are increasing. And debt burdens are turning unbearable for countries in the global south.

The ability to cope is unequal. Gaps between the developed and developing world, and also between men and women, are widening.

People are at the center of this reinforcing cascade of crises. People who, shock after shock, have depleted their capacity to cope with disaster. People who are falling in record numbers into poverty. People who are becoming increasingly disillusioned with their governments and political systems. And most dramatically, people who are skipping meals, especially women and girls.

This takes me to the second part of my presentation – The year in review – What have we done in the face of the current context

2022 did not only leave behind a world in crisis. 2022 also proved UNCTAD's capacity to adapt, influence, and respond to changing circumstances, contributing with concrete efforts to alleviate the severity of the crisis.

And just as the cascade of crises will persevere, and probably worsen; so too must we persevere, and better ourselves, and ready ourselves for what is to come. There is still

much way to go. But last year, we showed that we are going fast, that we are going in the right direction, and that we will continue running.

Excellencies,

Let me just highlight some of the things that we have done.

Very early last year, barely three weeks after the start of the War in Ukraine, at UNCTAD we produced a 'Rapid Assessment', using inputs from all divisions, which was read very widely among member states and the UN system.

This positioned UNCTAD well, so Secretary-General Guterres asked UNCTAD to coordinate the Task Team of the UN Global Crisis Response Group, made up of three workstreams on food, energy, and finance.

Through the GCRG, we produced three policy briefs, with very substantive inputs from UNCTAD.

As part of our work in the GCRG, UNCTAD became a leading member of the negotiating team for the two Istanbul Food and Fertilizer Agreements.

In terms of engagement from our research and analysis, readership numbers have increased substantially.

Media published 92 200 articles on all UNCTAD subjects last year.

Our reports and specialized publications were downloaded nearly a million times.

UNCTAD's social media accounts reached more than half a million followers last year, adding almost one hundred thousand new followers.

Lastly, there was a noticeable increase in support and engagement from the UN. 19 times an UNCTAD trade and development story was featured on the homepage of UN.org last year. UN global social media accounts (with over 16 million followers) now regularly post UNCTAD content including through promotional videos, reaching UN followers in 9 languages.

In terms of consensus building, we have had a very successful cycle of meetings, with much higher participation than in previous years. For example, for the Trade and Development Board. So, thank you so much to all member states for your participation.

This year's Trade Development Board was opened by a High-Level Segment that included Prime Minister of Barbados Mia Mottley, Deputy Prime Minister of the Netherlands Sigrid Kaag, and UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, having record attendance for the TDB from all stakeholders – 104 countries, 4 academia, 4 NGOs, 7 IGOs, 5 UN/specialized agencies.

In general, we have seen not only higher numbers of participation in our meetings, but also higher levels of participation, in terms of representation. Key countries are clearly starting to revalue and increase their engagement with UNCTAD, as members see that

UNCTAD can really move the needle where it matters, a factor which I think has been the key to our success.

And on technical cooperation, I am happy to say that this will be a breakthrough year for UNCTAD in this area. Not only have we agreed a new and bold technical cooperation strategy, but we have been increasing both our budgets and deliveries of the technical cooperation programs in member countries, thanks to the confidence and generosity of our donors: In 2021, in terms of extra-budgetary contributions, UNCTAD technical cooperation increased by 54 per cent to reach an all-time high of \$51.2 million; and in terms of delivery, total expenditures for UNCTAD technical cooperation also rose significantly, by 33.5 per cent, to reach a record high of \$46.8 million.

Thanks to our work in 2022, we are in a good position to do everything we must do going forward, especially in terms of our 60th anniversary, and our next quadrennial conference.

This takes me to the third part of my presentation, the Proposed Programme Plan

On this point, I will

First, speak about performance in 2022 included in the document and for which you requested more details.

Second, I want to mention the context in which the 2024 programme plan is embedded and its overall orientation.

Third, I will share the results we want to achieve in 2024.

Fourth, to further enhance transparency and share information, I want to update you on the budget approved for 2023, as well as on our progress on results-based management.

1. Our performance in 2022.

Despite the limitations imposed by the format, we consider that the selected results for 2022 reflect the multidimensional nature of our work, in terms of themes, areas and geographic focus.

These results will be complemented by our Annual Report published in spring.

In the preparatory session in October, you asked us to explore mechanisms for sharing more information on the implementation of our Deliverables. For that purpose, we have prepared the “2022 performance report on the implementation of deliverables”. The report provides complementary details on the deliverables, beyond the exigencies of New York but in line with our commitment to transparency. I want to point out that there may be some revisions as we are in the process of finalizing the numbers. But we hope that the report addresses your request.

2. Looking ahead, the context of the 2024 programme plan:

2024 will be a special year for UNCTAD as it will mark the institution’s 60th anniversary. It will be a moment to reflect and celebrate how the institution with its universal

membership has been a platform to discuss and develop ideas pertinent to the world, and especially to developing countries.

As elaborated in the first part of my presentation, it is difficult to predict how the world will look-like at that time owing to the multiple and interrelated crisis we are going through.

When drafting the Programme Plan for 2024, the uncertainty and complexity of this situation had to be taken into consideration.

The document in front of you reflects the institution's commitment to use its three pillars of work - consensus building, research and analysis, and technical cooperation - to confront these crises and build a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future.

I would like to remind you that it is the UN Secretary-General who reports on the work of the Global Crisis Response Group and the Istanbul Grain and Fertilizer Agreement. This is a parallel track to our UNCTAD Programme Plan.

The strategic direction of our 2024 Programme Plan is provided by the Bridgetown Covenant. The proposed plan is fully in line with the priorities of the Covenant, and thus focused on supporting member States in achieving the four transformations outlined in the mandate.

Despite the rigid format of the document, you will have noted that the Bridgetown Covenant is incorporated throughout and to the greatest extent possible.

The Overall Orientation emphasizes our commitment to work on climate change. In 2024, UNCTAD will pursue its work on scaling up climate finance, decarbonizing the logistics of trade and global value chains, boosting sustainable investments, and supporting a just transition to a low-carbon economy.

Externally, we will continue to advance the issue of the integrated treatment of development economics and climate change in international fora, such as the COP. Internally, we will ensure organizational coherence and synergies on climate and the environment across subprogrammes through the established cross-divisional Environment and Climate Change working group.

The Bridgetown Covenant also reaffirmed the importance of considering gender as an integrated and cross-cutting issue in UNCTAD. We will support member States in designing and implementing policies that support women's economic empowerment. For this purpose, we are examining gender specific trade barriers and obstacles, and are enhancing statistics on gender in trade to capture how women and men participate in and benefit from trade.

Our Secretary-General, Ms. Grynspan, has clearly articulated that the gender perspective is central in how she wants to move forward. To scale up the work on gender and ensure relevance and policy coherence, she set up a Gender Committee at the Director level. In fact, the Committee will meet this coming Friday to move ahead with UNCTAD's strategic vision on gender.

A major change is the institutional arrangements for statistics. Statistics became a cross-organizational and stand-alone Service last year. It is now reflected under the Overall Orientation, and its deliverables are incorporated in the cross-cutting deliverables table.

Statistics will also be reflected separately in part B – the financial requirements for the year 2024. The Statistics Service will be under the Executive Direction and Management with its own dedicated post and non-post resources. As soon as the document is issued by NY in its integral and final form, containing both part A (programme plan) and B (proposed budget), we will of course share it with you.

Cooperation and collaboration – internal and external - is another key dimension in the Overall Orientation.

Addressing interrelated issues for sustainable and equitable growth and development requires extensive cross-fertilization and cooperation between the UNCTAD subprogrammes and collaboration with other UN entities and relevant stakeholders.

We will continue working with resident coordinator offices and be involved in the preparation of common country assessments and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

At the regional level, we will continue working closely with the UN Regional Commissions and partner organizations, such as the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), regional economic communities, business communities, and strategic development partners to foster regional economic integration and growth.

We will also foster cooperation with international financial institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions, the OECD and the G20 to contribute to international policy debates on trade, investment, and finance. We will continue to bring the voice and needs of all developing countries to the negotiating table.

As you know, our UNCTAD SG established a dedicated working group for G20 issues so that we can internally build a stronger whole-of-UNCTAD effort with the G20.

3. The results we want to achieve in 2024.

At the informal Working Party in October, we presented to you our ideas and elements for each subprogramme. We carefully noted your feedback and comments, and accounted for it in the document we discussed today.

The selection of the 2024 results reflects the diversity of our work as well as a strong connection with the four transformations of the Bridgetown Covenant. Concretely, the results highlighted are:

For Subprogramme 1: To assist Palestine to formulate sound economic policies.

For Subprogramme 2: To support member States to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation through financing strategies.

For Subprogramme 3: To diversify economies through services trade.

For Subprogramme 4: To assist developing countries to have efficient and resilient port management; and

For Subprogramme 5: To enable LDCs to graduate with momentum through the development of comprehensive strategies.

You will have the opportunity to discuss these highlighted results in detail with the Divisions during the Working Party.

4. In the spirit of transparency and information sharing, I take this opportunity to update you on the 2023 proposed budget that you approved last year.

The SG had mentioned to you her request for additional posts. In line with the budget implications and requirements of the Bridgetown Covenant and those associated with revitalizing UNCTAD, nine additional posts were included in the final budget proposal for consideration by member States and approval by the GA. As you may recall, this is the information included in the 2023 fascicle shared with you last year.

We have received confirmation from New York that the GA approved the UNCTAD 2023 budget of 77 million, including the establishment of 9 additional posts.

On the result-based management, I want to follow up on Secretary-General Grynspan's commitment in the last Working Party to inform you on progress made on the development of a multiyear results framework and the implementation of results-based management.

As our Secretary-General said, engaging in RBM is a process that takes time and requires compromises. Over the last few months, we have developed a results framework in collaboration with all Divisions. It is guided by the Bridgetown Covenant. This means, the main goals of the Organization are the four transformations. To efficiently contribute to these goals, we applied RBM best practices and developed a theory of change which explains how activities are understood to produce results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts. This theory of change provides the backbone of the UNCTAD results framework. Its steps logically link the activities UNCTAD delivered, their results, the impacts in countries and the progress in achieving the four transformations.

The logical framework distinguishes between what UNCTAD is accountable for - the activities and their results, and to what UNCTAD contributes - the impacts and achievement of the goals. We identified indicators at each step and are now working on collecting data and information to measure these indicators.

Designing a perfect RBM-framework is almost a "mission impossible". But I am convinced that the results framework we are developing is a good start and that will complement our annual programme plan.

Given the scope of this exercise, I am proposing to organize a round of conversations with the regional groups at the end of February to brief you and get your feedback on the specific framework we are working on.

My final point is on the Delegate's Portal.

In accordance with paragraph 120 of the Bridgetown Covenant, our SG promised that the register of decisions of the TDB would be made available on the Delegate's portal before the end of 2022. I am pleased to report that this promise has been fulfilled. The delegate's portal now has a comprehensive register of decisions and outcomes of the TDB and its subsidiary bodies.

Dear delegates, dear friends,

These were some of the more important points I wanted to highlight from the 2024 programme plan. I am afraid that, even after taking a long time, I have been far from exhaustive. But this is a good sign. A sign that a vast, healthy, and impactful work schedule is ahead of us.

Before I finish, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you. Thanks to you, delegates, and regional coordinators for your readiness to give us feedback and ideas to keep improving, and thanks to all our UNCTAD staff, who have worked very hard in preparing for this Working Party, in doing the needed consultations, in drafting the different divisional strategies. Any plan, no matter how brilliant or sparse, can be a success or a failure. What makes the difference is the commitment and the people. And we definitely have both.

The challenges the world faces are big and concern us all. But the fact that we are here and are willing to engage is an important step towards finding common ground and ensuring that UNCTAD has a programme plan that prepares the institution to face these challenges in time to make ourselves worthy of our sixtieth anniversary in 2024.

Encore et à tous, muchas gracias.