



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.: General
17 July 2017

Original: English

Trade and Development Board

Sixty-fourth session

Geneva, 11–22 September 2017

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

**UNCTAD contributions to the implementation of and follow-up
to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and
summits in the economic and social fields**

Progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, and UNCTAD contributions

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

Executive summary

The Accra Accord and the Nairobi Maafikiano respectively contain strong mandates for UNCTAD to contribute to shaping and implementing the global development agenda. The following report, prepared in the spirit of the Nairobi Maafikiano, presents the contributions of the UNCTAD secretariat in 2016–2017 to the implementation and follow-up of United Nations summits and conferences on development and presents some ideas for the consideration of the Trade and Development Board to strengthen the contributions of the intergovernmental machinery in this regard.



Introduction

1. In its resolution 57/270 B, the General Assembly stressed the need to make maximum use of existing United Nations mechanisms for reviewing the implementation of commitments made within the United Nations system in key areas of development. It invited the Trade and Development Board to contribute, within its mandate, to the implementation and review of the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, under its relevant agenda items.
2. The Accra Accord states that “UNCTAD, within its mandate, should make a contribution to the implementation and follow-up to the outcomes of relevant global conferences. It should continue to contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals...” (para. 11).
3. The Doha Mandate agreed that “UNCTAD should continue to work within its mandate – through its three pillars, delivering meaningful results, utilizing available resources, while enhancing synergies and promoting complementarities with the work of other organizations. In this regard, UNCTAD should... implement and follow up, as appropriate, relevant outcomes from global conferences and summits on development” (paras. 18 and 18 (n)).
4. The Nairobi Maafikiano states that “UNCTAD should contribute to the implementation of and follow up to the outcomes of relevant global conferences, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and, as appropriate, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change...” (para. 10).
5. The present document gives an overview of the context and related mandates, progress made and UNCTAD contributions to the implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits during the period June 2016–May 2017.¹ It also provides some suggestions for the future work of the Trade and Development Board for its consideration.

I. International trade

A. Context and progress made

6. In 2016, anti-globalization sentiment spread across the globe, and many people expressed doubts that the openness of borders to flows of capital, people, and goods and services continued to be in their best interests. In many developed countries, these misgivings were converted into electoral support, resulting in a backlash against immigration and further trade integration. In turn, the rhetoric on the multilateral trading system shifted significantly.
7. Trade growth in 2016 was slower, at about 1.7 per cent, than at any period after the Great Recession, and estimates for 2017 remain moderate, at an estimated 2.4 per cent. At these levels, world trade will continue to languish in a technical recession. Commodity exporters, many of which are classified as developing or least developed countries, have experienced some reprieve, as prices for many commodities have risen from 2016 lows. Trade growth in 2017 will be particularly sensitive to policy decisions across a wide portfolio of issues.
8. Trade has an important role to play in helping achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Indeed, from its inception, UNCTAD has been dedicated to helping countries harness trade as an engine for development. A challenge in today’s environment is for policymakers to recognize the importance of reinforcing the multilateral trading system, as

¹ For further details, see UNCTAD Annual Report 2016 (forthcoming).

this works best to include the most vulnerable nations in trade negotiations and ensure sustainable and inclusive outcomes.

B. Contributions of the UNCTAD secretariat

9. As mandated by resolution 70/186 of the General Assembly, UNCTAD established the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy, holding the first meeting in October 2016, back to back with the fifteenth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy. The latter presented the voluntary peer review of Argentina. Under the auspices of its regional capacity-building programme in the Middle East and North Africa, UNCTAD established a consumer protection regional training centre in Beirut to serve as the focal point for planning, coordinating and implementing the capacity development activities of UNCTAD in the region.

10. UNCTAD continues to lead international cooperation on the development and revision of the publication, *International Classification of Non-Tariff Measures*,² coordinating ongoing global efforts to map data on such measures and conducted capacity-building through various workshops and online training.

11. During the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held in Nairobi in 2016, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme issued a statement on fisheries subsidies. The statement, endorsed by 91 countries, 4 intergovernmental organizations and 15 civil society organizations, called on member States and the international community to move forward and deliver on trade-related targets under Sustainable Development Goal 14. As mandated by the Nairobi Maafikiano (para. 100 (t)), UNCTAD further strengthened its work on the oceans economy and on trade and the environment, thus contributing to a multi-faceted approach to the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

12. As mandated, UNCTAD activities addressed, inter alia, trade and gender issues, creative economies and livelihoods, accession to the World Trade Organization and regional integration. Regarding the latter, UNCTAD has been heavily involved in Continental Free Trade Area negotiations, providing capacity-building activities for the negotiators and participating in the negotiating forum and various technical meetings organized by the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa in 2016 and 2017.

13. UNCTAD also provided assistance to numerous countries under the Trade Policy Frameworks programme, including to foster exchanges of experiences and lessons learned in formulating and implementing such frameworks.

C. Expected secretariat activities for 2017–2018

14. With regard to analytical work, UNCTAD will continue to address the nexus between trade and development and how trade can serve as a catalyst for the accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This will be complemented by the organization of expert groups and other meetings to facilitate the exchange of experiences and ideas in order to help member States find practical approaches to addressing development challenges.

15. In the context of the work of the General Assembly of the United Nations, UNCTAD will prepare the report of the Secretary-General on international trade and development for the Second Committee. The report will describe current trends in trade, trade policy and development, and address the negative perceptions of trade openness that are becoming increasingly common.

² UNCTAD, 2015, *International Classification of Non-tariff Measures*, 2012 version (United Nations publication, New York and Geneva).

16. In support of the multilateral trading system, UNCTAD will be working towards outputs and events relating to the eleventh Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, to be held in Buenos Aires, in December 2017. Issues of interest will include non-tariff measures, services, regionalism and World Trade Organization negotiations on harmful fisheries subsidies, especially in view of the nearing deadline for attaining Goal 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the UNCTAD secretariat will continue strengthening its work on the oceans economy and will provide a platform for dialogue, as well as legal advice and subsidies reform support for developing countries. In January 2018, UNCTAD will begin implementing a Development Account project on supporting developing countries in analysing and implementing evidence-based and policy-coherent oceans economy and trade strategies. UNCTAD will work to strengthen its partnerships in this area, with joint events planned with FAO, the International Ocean Institute and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

17. UNCTAD will continue its analytical work, including by supporting the numerous requests of member States to participate in service policy reviews and trade policy framework reviews. It is envisaged that much of this work will be carried out in conjunction with the work on the ongoing Continental Free Trade Area negotiations. A multi-year expert meeting will be devoted to the role of the services economy and trade.

18. Throughout 2017 and 2018, UNCTAD will also be implementing the BioTrade collaboration platform, involving key institutions and countries, sharing best practices on non-tariff measures, implementing access and benefit-sharing regulations and supporting developing countries as they design and implement their own national Biotrade programmes. Furthermore, UNCTAD will conclude national green export reviews for eight countries; one for Angola will be carried out under a Development Account programme.

19. In this regard, a report by UNCTAD and the Economic Research Institute for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and East Asia concerning non-tariff measures in the ASEAN region is under way. The report is aimed at helping policymakers strengthen their ability to deepen regional integration and support the harmonization of regulations. UNCTAD will continue to lead international cooperation on the development and revision of the international classification of non-tariff measures.

20. The UNCTAD secretariat will continue to address the important issues of consumer protection and competition law and policy, including by organizing intergovernmental groups of experts meetings, as mandated by the General Assembly.

21. UNCTAD will contribute to the sixty-second Commission on the Status of Women and will organize a side event on the importance of developing non-farm activities, in particular for women. The Commission will consider the challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

II. Commodities

A. Context and progress made

22. According to UNCTAD calculations, 88 of 134 developing countries depended on one or two unprocessed commodities for 60 per cent or more of their merchandise export earnings in 2014. The number of commodity-dependent developing countries has relatively remained unchanged over the past 30 years, despite the 2003–2011 commodity price boom. By contrast, developing countries have achieved some progress in improving food security. According to FAO estimates, 795 million people were undernourished in 2015, down by 167 million from a decade before.³

³ FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development and World Food Programme, 2015, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015: Meeting the 2015 International Hunger Targets – Taking Stock of Uneven Progress* (FAO, Rome).

23. After dropping to recent lows in early 2016, commodity prices recovered throughout the rest of the year, across all groups, with the UNCTAD non-oil commodity price index gaining 23 per cent. Nevertheless, concerns remained about the oversupply of extractive commodities, including minerals, oil and gas. Despite the recent price rally, commodity-dependent developing countries continued to face difficult macroeconomic consequences from the ongoing corrections in commodities markets, such as lower economic growth, rising inflation, reduced investment inflows, net capital outflows and fiscal deficits.⁴

B. Contributions of the UNCTAD secretariat

24. UNCTAD implements various activities to help commodity-dependent developing countries achieve their national objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals. As part of its consensus-building activities, UNCTAD convened the biennial Global Commodities Forum and the African Oil, Gas and Minerals Trade and Finance Conference, as well as the annual Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development, which provided policymakers and other stakeholders with opportunities to share best practices, form partnerships and identify strategies for such countries to navigate the continued uncertainty in commodities markets, while pressing forward with sustainable commodities development.

25. Technical assistance activities aim to expand the development gains countries draw from their agricultural and extractive sectors. In 2016, UNCTAD implemented two Development Account projects.

26. In addition, UNCTAD provides services that inform small producers in developing countries and contribute to the proper functioning of commodity markets, including for food.

27. In the context of the work of the General Assembly, UNCTAD prepares the report of the Secretary-General on commodities to the regular session of the General Assembly (resolution 70/191). The report to the seventy-second session focuses on two main areas: first, recent commodity price trends and the main driving forces behind these trends; second, economic diversification in commodity-dependent developing countries.

C. Expected secretariat activities for 2017–2018

28. The UNCTAD Commodities and Development Report 2017: Commodity Markets, Economic Growth and Development⁵ will examine the links between commodity prices and development, informing recommendations on how commodity-dependent developing countries can, for example, attenuate the negative effects of price volatility on their citizens and budgets, and better adapt their development strategies to commodity price cycles. In 2017, UNCTAD will hold the ninth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodity Dependence and Development, which will be devoted to commodity dependence and the Sustainable Development Goals. The session will focus on policy options that increase access to food and energy (Goals 2.a, 2.b, 2.c, 7.1 and 7.b), foster value addition to commodities (Goal 9.b) and improve the management of natural resources through, inter alia, efficiency in resource use, while preserving the natural resource capital used to produce renewable resources (Goals 12, 14 and 15).

⁴ United Nations, 2016, *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2016* (United Nations publication).

⁵ Forthcoming.

III. Trade, gender and development

A. Context and progress made

29. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action called upon the United Nations system to assist countries in the development of gender equality policies and programmes. Within this framework, UNCTAD has set up a work programme on trade, gender and development aimed at supporting member countries in mainstreaming gender in policy formulation and implementation, especially trade policy. Indeed, women manufacture products, trade goods across borders, manage and own trading firms and make up a large part of the workforce in export-oriented businesses. Yet women's potential in trade is still too often held back by the many constraints they face.

30. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through a comprehensive standalone goal (Goal 5) and gender-specific targets across the other Goals, tackles gender equality and women's empowerment.

31. The Nairobi Maaikiano recognizes the prominent role played by gender equality and women's economic empowerment towards achieving an inclusive and equitable global economic environment and provides UNCTAD with its strongest mandate yet on gender issues.

B. Contributions of the UNCTAD secretariat

32. In line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender equality aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNCTAD activities are linked in particular to women and poverty, women and the economy, and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. In line with the three pillars of its work, UNCTAD conducts in-depth research, implements capacity-building initiatives and raises awareness among policymakers and other stakeholders on trade, gender and development.

33. UNCTAD analytical work focuses on the complex gender ramifications of trade, on identifying gender-based constraints that hinder inclusive development and on supporting member countries to devise strategies and measures to overcome such constraints. UNCTAD conducted in-depth analysis on the complex gender ramifications of agricultural production and trade in developing countries, especially the least developed countries, and identified key challenges and opportunities for rural diversification and value chain creation that involve rural women.

34. UNCTAD co-authored a chapter on international trade as an engine for development in the 2016 report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development and provided analysis on the role of women as producers and traders.

35. UNCTAD organized a side event during the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women devoted to analysing the impact of the trade environment of women's employment.

36. Because of the prominent role gender issues are taking in the international development agenda, UNCTAD is expanding and diversifying its activities on the topic to bridge the knowledge gap on the nexus between trade, gender and inclusive development. UNCTAD also continues to support the development of women's entrepreneurship through the Empretec programme and Women in Business Awards. To enhance the understanding of gender issues among staff and increase their ability to include gender considerations in their analytical and technical cooperation work, UNCTAD is carrying out training programmes on gender mainstreaming for different groups of staff.

C. Expected secretariat activities for 2017–2018

37. UNCTAD plans to contribute to the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women that will address challenges and opportunities in achieving gender

equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. In line with the theme of the session and drawing upon its analytical work, UNCTAD will organize a side event on the importance of developing non-farm activities, in particular for women.

38. To follow up on the agreed conclusions of the sixty-first Commission on the Status of Women and the implementation of the Nairobi Maafikiano, UNCTAD will contribute in the following manner: helping to implement economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment; reinforcing its work on the links between gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment and trade and development; and supporting member States in the design and implementation of policies and the establishment of institutions that support women's economic empowerment, economic security and rights and that enhance their economic opportunities (Nairobi Maafikiano, para. 55 (bb)).

39. As part of its research and technical assistance work, UNCTAD is developing a trade and gender toolbox for the ex-ante gender assessment of trade measures that will help explain the implications for women of the implementation of a given trade policy. It will also produce two studies: one dealing with the impact of regional integration in East Africa on women's employment and one dealing with women as informal cross-border traders in Southern and East Africa in recognition of the particularly important role that cross-border trade plays in job creation and income generation for poor women.

40. UNCTAD will also continue delivering its online courses on trade and gender, both the standard course opened to stakeholders from all developing regions, as well as tailor-made courses for specific regional groupings.

IV. Investment and enterprise development

A. Context and progress made

41. Foreign direct investment (FDI) flows contracted by 2 per cent, to \$1.75 trillion, in 2016. The share of developed economies in world FDI inflows increased from 55 per cent in 2015 to 59 per cent in 2016, reinforcing a reversal in a five-year trend during which developing and transition regions had become the main recipients of global FDI. Flows to developed countries rose by 5 per cent to \$1.03 trillion, while FDI to developing economies – excluding Caribbean financial centres – decreased to \$646 billion (minus 14 per cent). FDI outflows declined in all major regions. Developed countries were responsible for just over 70 per cent of global FDI outflows in 2016.

42. A modest recovery in global FDI flows is forecast for 2017, although flows are expected to remain well below their 2007 peak. A synchronized upturn in economic growth in major regions and improved corporate profits will boost business confidence. A cyclical recovery in the manufacturing sector and in international trade is expected to bolster growth in developed countries, while a likely strengthening of commodity prices should underpin a recovery in developing economies in 2017. As a result, global FDI is expected to increase to almost \$1.8 trillion in 2017 and climb further in 2018, to \$1.85 trillion. However, policy uncertainty and political developments remain risk factors that may affect recovery.

43. In the area of investment policy, policymaking is becoming more complex and divergent. In 2016, 80 per cent of measures sought to advance investment promotion, facilitation and liberalization. Some 58 countries adopted at least 124 investment policy measures – the highest number since 2006.

44. Thirty-seven new international investment agreements were concluded in 2016, bringing their total to 3,324 treaties. In 2016, there were 62 new known investor-State disputes, bringing the overall total to 767.

B. Contributions of the UNCTAD secretariat

45. UNCTAD devoted the 2016 edition of the *World Investment Report*⁶ to policy challenges posed by investor nationalities. The report analyses the ownership patterns of multinational enterprises and explores the policy implications of these chosen ownership structures, notably in the areas of investment, tax and competition policy. Furthermore, the report cautions that policymakers should be aware of the de facto multilateralizing effect of complex ownership on international investment agreements and introduces a global action menu for investment facilitation to provide countries with a toolkit of policy options that can unlock investment gains at low cost.

46. UNCTAD convened its fifth World Investment Forum in 2016, which addressed the future of investment policy for sustainable development. UNCTAD also completed one investment policy review and three implementation reports, bringing the total number of reviews to 45. Support was extended to countries to define reform options that better align the regime of international investment agreements with sustainable development principles, and work continued to help countries improve their business environment to attract more foreign investment.

47. In the area of investment promotion, UNCTAD worked closely with investment promotion agencies to increase the visibility and viability of green investment promotion opportunities. The 2016 Investment Promotion Awards honoured investment promotion agencies for best practices in forging partnerships to promote FDI that contributes to sustainable development.

48. UNCTAD co-organized the Sustainable Stock Exchanges initiative, which promotes responsible corporate behaviour.

49. The thirty-third session of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting was held in 2016. The meeting focused on the development of reporting tools to measuring progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

50. UNCTAD continued to provide technical assistance on business facilitation, including its eRegulations and eRegistrations portals that promote transparency and better governance in the business sector, and to improve the operating environment for small businesses.

51. Support to entrepreneurship development was given through the dissemination of the UNCTAD Entrepreneurship Policy Framework, which aims to support countries as they design and implement effective policies to create a conducive environment for small businesses.

52. In June 2017, UNCTAD published the 2017 edition of the *World Investment Report*, which focuses on investment and the digital economy.⁷

C. Expected secretariat activities for 2017–2018

53. UNCTAD will continue to play a lead role in backstopping investment and enterprise policymaking at the global, regional and national levels. It uses five policy instruments in this endeavour: the Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development, the Action Plan for Private Investment in the Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Action Menu for Investment Facilitation, the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework and the Accounting Development Tool.

⁶ UNCTAD, 2016, *World Investment Report 2016: Investor Nationality – Policy Challenges* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.II.D.4, Geneva).

⁷ UNCTAD, 2017, *World Investment Report 2017: Investment and the Digital Economy* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.17.II.D.3, Geneva).

54. UNCTAD will again provide inputs, as appropriate, to major conferences. In particular, UNCTAD will continue its work to assist the least developed countries in improving their prospects and ability to attract foreign investment and facilitate business.

55. The sixth World Investment Forum will be held in 2018. As in the past, UNCTAD will work in cooperation with other international agencies to cover a broad range of issues.

56. UNCTAD will provide inputs to the twenty-third Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Bonn, November 2017). Likewise, UNCTAD will contribute to the eleventh Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (Buenos Aires, December 2017) and to the 2018 Group of 20 Summit (Buenos Aires).

V. Global systemic issues: Macroeconomics, finance and debt

A. Context and progress made

57. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets goals that encompass most of the research, analytical and statistical work of UNCTAD. Sustainable Development Goals 1, 8, 9, 10 and 17 are particularly relevant in this regard. UNCTAD compiles, validates and processes more than 150 indicators and statistical time series essential for the analysis of international trade, economic trends, FDI, external financial resources, population and labour force issues, commodities, the information economy and maritime transport.

58. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda outlines several mandates and priorities relevant to the work of UNCTAD, such as strengthening debt management and the need to assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies that foster debt financing, debt relief, debt restructuring and sound debt management. The Agenda welcomes work on establishing methodological standards and promoting the public availability of data on public and publicly guaranteed sovereign debt, total external debt obligations and more comprehensive quarterly debt data.

59. In addition, the Agenda includes a commitment to help developing countries attain long-term debt sustainability and address the external debt of heavily indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress (Goal 17.4). It also reiterates the commitment to enhancing international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries, which is addressed by UNCTAD through the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System Programme.

60. Member States also encourage work between debtors and creditors to prevent and resolve unsustainable debt situations, taking note of the UNCTAD Principles on Promoting Responsible Sovereign Lending and Borrowing. UNCTAD provides statistical and policy analysis inputs on the reduction of illicit financial flows from developing countries, the reform of official development assistance, the combatting of tax evasion and avoidance, and related means to increase public and private resource mobilization.

B. Contributions of the UNCTAD secretariat

61. In 2016–2017, UNCTAD continued to respond to emerging problems and challenges posed to developing countries in the areas covered by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

62. The Trade and Development Report, 2017: Beyond Austerity – Towards a Global New Deal⁸ takes up the issue of structural transformation, which is relevant to Sustainable Development Goal 9. UNCTAD continued its work on preparing statistics for almost all economies of the world, aimed at producing more effective analysis of emerging and urgent issues within a framework of long-lasting tendencies and wide geographical scope.

⁸ Forthcoming.

63. UNCTAD has also continued its work in the areas of debt and development financing. As a major institutional stakeholder in the financing for development process, UNCTAD is contributing to the preparation of the report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development in the area of debt and debt sustainability, as well as systemic macroeconomic issues. In 2016 and 2017, UNCTAD provided inputs to a number of chapters of the report.

64. UNCTAD is entrusted with the preparation of the annual report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the General Assembly on external debt sustainability and development. The 2016 report (A/71/276) reviewed the recent evolution of debt indicators of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. In addition, UNCTAD serviced the General Assembly negotiations concerning resolution 71/216 on external debt sustainability and development.

65. UNCTAD has continued to spread its Principles on Promoting Responsible Sovereign Lending and Borrowing, including in the Paris Forum, which acknowledged their importance. In order to further implement these Principles, UNCTAD continued to assist five least developed countries through a Development Account project on building capacity in regulatory and institutional sovereign debt governance.

66. UNCTAD co-published a special edition on sovereign debt of the *Yale Journal of International Law* in 2016⁹ and organized a side event of the Second Committee of the General Assembly, mandated in resolution 70/1, on hold-out creditors. In addition, UNCTAD participated in a Group of 77 workshop on sovereign debt vulnerabilities and the opportunity for a new debt workout mechanism building on the General Assembly process of the United Nations held in New York, United States, on 31 October 2016.

67. With regard to technical cooperation and advisory services in downstream debt management, UNCTAD, through its Debt Management and Financial Analysis System programme, continued its assistance to developing countries in order to improve their capacity to manage debt in a sustainable manner, with a specific focus on the least developed countries. Working directly at the country level in almost 60 countries and 85 institutions, the programme helped strengthen the capacity of users in the day-to-day management of public liabilities and the production of reliable debt data for policymaking purposes.

C. Expected secretariat activities for 2017–2018

68. The Trade and Development Report, 2017 links the issues of globalization, inequality and growth with the Sustainable Development Goals. It suggests a global policy approach to address these issues, in particular robots, industrialization and inclusive growth, macroeconomic aspects of gender issues and inclusive growth, and globalization and the rise of rentier capitalism.

69. With regard to statistical and analytical policy tools, UNCTAD will continue to provide statistics that are broadly related to the attainment of the Goals by member States. It will also continue to develop its new financial condition indicators for developing countries, as well as its work on measuring illicit financial flows from developing countries, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

70. As part of its work in technical cooperation, UNCTAD, through the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System programme, will continue cooperating with a large number of developing countries on downstream debt management and capacity-building.

71. As mandated by the Nairobi Maafikiano, UNCTAD will service its new Intergovernmental Expert Group on Financing for Development and promote substantive synergies between the work of the Expert Group and follow-up processes concerning financing for development at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

⁹ *The Yale Journal of International Law*, fall 2016, Volume 41, No. 2, Online Special Issue.

72. Towards the end of 2017, UNCTAD will co-publish a volume on the analysis of microcredit and microcrises in developing countries.

73. UNCTAD is planning to hold a meeting with representatives of member States later in 2017 to brief them on the contribution of a Development Account project¹⁰ to the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

74. UNCTAD, in cooperation with the Statistical Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, is developing a harmonized methodology and system for the collection of statistics on international trade in services. This project is also supported by the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics, which will contribute to the achievement of Goal 17.

75. UNCTAD has also developed a complementary e-learning tool for trade-in-services statistics. This is now available in English, and a French version is under development. It will also use Development Account funds to develop a complementary e-learning tool on merchandise trade.

76. As part of a Development Account project, UNCTAD, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the Economic Commission for Africa will commence conceptual work in 2018 on the measurement of illicit financial flows, addressing Goal 16.4.

VI. Science and technology for development, including information and communications technologies

A. Context and progress made

77. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) adopted four outcome documents with firm objectives, goals and targets, to be met by 2015, along with 11 action lines and main themes. UNCTAD, through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, was designated by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations to act as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up to the outcomes of the Summit. In addition, UNCTAD is co-facilitator of the action line on e-business and contributes to measuring progress towards the Summit's targets through the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) for Development.

78. The General Assembly has called for close alignment between the WSIS process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, in May 2015, WSIS stakeholders published a matrix making direct linkages between the WSIS action lines and the Sustainable Development Goals. The General Assembly also recommended the outcome of the next WSIS review, to be held in 2025, to be an input into the review process for the 2030 Agenda.

B. Contributions of the UNCTAD secretariat

79. As secretariat of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, UNCTAD continued monitoring the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of WSIS at the international and regional levels, and prepared the corresponding annual report of the Secretary-General.¹¹ As part of the annual follow-up activities, a high-level round table entitled "Review of progress made in the implementation of WSIS outcomes" was organized at the twentieth session of the Commission, held in Geneva, from 8 to 12 May 2017.

80. The Commission also discussed the role of ICTs in helping promote new innovation approaches to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in contributing to the achievement of Goal 9 to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. The Commission

¹⁰ The project deals with building capacity in regulatory and institutional sovereign debt governance.

¹¹ See A/72/64-E/2017/12 for details on activities in 2016.

also recognized the rapid growth in broadband access networks, especially in developed countries, and underscored the need to urgently address the growing digital divides.

81. UNCTAD continued providing substantive support to the work of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation of the Commission established by the General Assembly in resolution 70/125. The Working Group held three meetings in 2016 and 2017 and will submit a report to be considered by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its twenty-first session in 2018.

82. UNCTAD co-organized the WSIS Forum, together with the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. UNCTAD highlighted in particular the potential of e-commerce to support the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the importance of statistics on information communications technology to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this context, UNCTAD continues to contribute to the work of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development.

83. UNCTAD has recently expanded the scope of its work on measuring ICT to trade in ICT-enabled services. This includes pilot statistical surveys in developing countries, which are planned for 2017. Better access to such statistics is essential for evidence-based policy making related to ICT, e-commerce and trade.

84. UNCTAD launched a new initiative called “eTrade for All” to assist developing countries in enhancing their e-commerce readiness. The initiative was launched at the fourteenth session of the Conference in July 2016, and its online platform (etradeforall.org) went live at the UNCTAD E-commerce Week in April 2017. The platform allows developing countries to easily find information about various forms of assistance offered by partner organizations of the initiative. During that week, more than 1,000 participants from 100 countries met to discuss how to make e-commerce more inclusive.

85. UNCTAD also launched a new tool, rapid eTrade readiness assessments, which has been tested in Bhutan and Cambodia and will be made available to other least developed countries. The assessments focus on seven policy areas that are deemed important for countries to reap benefits from e-commerce and propose concrete actions for policymakers to address bottlenecks.

86. With regard to activities in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development examined two priority themes: new innovation approaches to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the role of science, technology and innovation in ensuring food security by 2030. In addressing these topics, the Commission noted that science, technology and innovation policies must be aligned to address the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic development, social progress and environmental protection. The Commission agreed on a draft resolution on science, technology and innovation for development, which will be considered for adoption by the Economic and Social Council in July 2017.

87. As a member of the United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, UNCTAD participated in work stream 5 on mapping of science, technology and innovation initiatives, which led to a report that contains an initial mapping of such initiatives within the United Nations system.

88. As part of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, UNCTAD contributed to the preparation of the 2016 and 2017 reports of the Task Force. The report was presented to the Financing for Development Forum, which welcomed the recommendations of the report. The 2017 report examines the progress made during the first year of implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and will be introduced at the Forum in July 2017.

C. Expected secretariat activities for 2017–2018

89. UNCTAD will highlight in particular the potential of e-commerce to support the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the importance of ICT statistics to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this context, UNCTAD continues to contribute to the work of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development.

90. UNCTAD will continue supporting the implementation of the WSIS action line on electronic business and will hold the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-Commerce and the Digital Economy, as well as E-commerce Week. It will also launch the Information Economy Report 2017: Digitalization, Trade and Development (forthcoming), further develop the eTrade for All network, complete the pilot studies on measuring trade in ICT-enabled services, launch national e-commerce strategies for Egypt and Rwanda, and undertake several rapid eTrade readiness assessments, including in collaboration with the Enhanced Integrated Framework.

91. As mandated by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 2006/46, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development will continue to serve as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up to the outcomes of WSIS. As part of the follow-up activities, the Commission will continue the preparation of annual reports on the implementation of outcomes of the WSIS, taking into account the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 70/125.

92. In 2017–2018, the Commission will examine two priority themes that are closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda, namely, the role of science, technology and innovation to increase substantially the share of renewable energy by 2030 and building digital competencies to benefit from existing and emerging technologies, with a special focus on gender and youth dimensions.

93. UNCTAD will also conduct policy-oriented work to strengthen its science, technology and innovation for development policy frameworks to ensure better alignment with the 2030 Agenda, particularly with regard to issues of inclusiveness and sustainability and to reflect this in its technology and innovation policy work at the national level (science, technology and innovation policy reviews).

94. UNCTAD will continue to contribute to the work of the inter-agency task team on science technology and innovation and contribute to the technology work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Finance for Development.

VII. Countries in special situations

A. Least developed countries

Progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020

95. In accordance with paragraphs 10 (a) and 76 (d) of the Nairobi Maafikiano, UNCTAD has been actively supporting the goal of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) of enabling at least half the number of least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation from least developed country status by 2020 (para. 28).

96. In May 2016, the midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action attempted to track the progress made and identify ways to move forward in the achievement of the set goals.

Contributions of the UNCTAD secretariat

97. UNCTAD is contributing to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action through research and policy analysis, as well as technical cooperation and intergovernmental consensus-building.

98. *The Least Developed Countries Report 2016: The Path to Graduation and Beyond – Making the Most of the Graduation Process* addressed the challenge faced by the least developed countries to graduate from the least developed country category. The report argues that graduation should be regarded as a milestone in a country’s long-term economic and social development, not as a winning post. It follows that the focus should not be on graduation itself, but rather on “graduation with momentum”.

99. UNCTAD undertook substantial country-specific action in 2016 in support of the Istanbul vision of accelerated structural progress toward graduation thresholds in the largest possible number of least developed countries. Six countries benefited from technical assistance in their efforts to prepare for a successful move to post-least developed country status.

100. In 2016 UNCTAD continued to implement a project on building the capacities of selected least developed countries to upgrade and diversify their fish exports in the least developed countries. The project contributed to efforts to upgrade the technical knowledge and expertise in beneficiary countries to overcome challenges posed by international standards on fish exports. In addition, the project helped to develop a manual tailored to each country’s circumstances and examine successful experiences and best practices from other countries in taking advantages of the Fair Trade movement in developed countries and the premium prices offered by organic market especially in Europe. Finally, the project recommended policies and strategies for implementation with a view to improving capacity to comply with international standards and enhancing the capacities of least developed countries to develop and diversify their exports by tapping their fishery potential.

B. Small island developing States

Progress made in the implementation of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway

101. In 2010, the General Assembly, in resolution 65/2, called for “concrete recommendations” and to “consider what improved and additional measures might be needed to more effectively address the unique and particular vulnerabilities and development needs” of small island developing States. In the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014), countries reinforced their pledge “to take urgent and concrete action to address the vulnerability of small island developing States”, which has fuelled UNCTAD commitment and action in support of the resilience-building efforts of these countries.

Contributions of the UNCTAD secretariat

102. As pledged by member States in the Samoa Pathway, the outcome of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, UNCTAD made a commitment to actively support the resilience-building efforts of these countries. UNCTAD took action on this front and proposed a reform of the rule to identify cases of graduation from least developed country status with a view to giving the vulnerability criterion a superior weight in the decision-making process regarding the question of graduation, to the extent of ruling out forced graduation for highly vulnerable least developed countries. Several least developed small island developing States would benefit from such a reform. UNCTAD also extended technical assistance to six of them in 2016, thereby testing the embryo of a future integrated framework of technical cooperation with such States, which would focus on supporting resilience-building action and the quest for structural economic progress.

C. Landlocked developing countries

Progress made in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024

103. The Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 aims to contribute to the eradication of poverty stemming from a landlocked condition, through the implementation of specific actions in identified priority areas.

Contributions of the UNCTAD secretariat

104. In 2016, UNCTAD undertook a number of important activities in support of landlocked developing countries. These activities contributed to capacity-building in policy formulation and implementation in beneficiary countries and assisted in upgrading technical knowledge and expertise to overcome challenges posed by international standards on fish exports in Uganda.

VIII. Suggested activities of the Trade and Development Board for 2017–2018

105. Based on this note and related meeting reports, summaries and papers published by the UNCTAD secretariat, the Trade and Development Board may wish to consider taking a number of actions in the coming year, as follows:

(a) The Board may wish to consider strengthening its inputs to development-related meetings and processes in the broader United Nations system. The Board may therefore wish to provide a more direct and robust input into the relevant discussions in the General Assembly, particularly the Second Committee, through current contributions – the report of the regular session of the Board – as well as through more topical inputs. This could include contributions to specific follow-up processes, such as financing for development, as well as specific mechanisms, such as the High-level Political Forum of the Economic and Social Council;

(b) The Board may also wish to have a more focused discussion on current challenges facing the multilateral trading system. The Board may wish to consider, for example, discussing the oceans economy in more detail and provide the General Assembly with a summary of these proceedings, as an input for the relevant work at United Nations Headquarters in New York;

(c) In recognition of the increasing relevance of gender issues in the global development agenda, it would be suitable for these issues to be addressed by UNCTAD not only through the research and capacity-building pillars, but also through the intergovernmental pillar. The Board, in the context of the above, may wish to consider furthering the debate on “diversification and value chain creation that involve rural women”, which could provide inputs to related deliberations at the United Nations in New York such as the Commission on the Status of Women of the Economic and Social Council;

(d) With regard to issues related to ICT, the digital economy, e-commerce for development, and science and technology for sustainable development, the Board may wish to provide a more direct input into the relevant discussions in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy, in particular, provides an excellent opportunity to generate policy recommendations that could be considered and further elaborated by the Trade and Development Board.