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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 2 to 4 September 2019

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I. Action taken by the Working Party at its seventy-eighth session

A. Agreed conclusions on the evaluation of UNCTAD activities

(Agenda item 4)

The Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of internal and external evaluations for transparency, accountability and efficiency in accordance with the UNCTAD evaluation policy and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation of the United Nations Evaluation Group;
2. *Acknowledges* the additional workload entailed by results-based management; and *reaffirms* the importance of further improving implementation in line with the United Nations guidelines;
3. *Commends* UNCTAD for completing the evaluation of all of its subprogrammes, including the synthesis report, thereby providing useful information for the improvement of the work of UNCTAD;
4. *Appreciates* the efforts made by UNCTAD to implement the subprogramme evaluation recommendations; and *encourages* the swift implementation of pending recommendations, paying particular attention to those enhancing cross-divisional collaboration;
5. *Requests* the secretariat to put in place further measures to promote meaningful collaboration and synergies across divisions and to report to member States on the progress achieved at relevant sessions of the Working Party;
6. *Encourages* the secretariat to increase the visibility of the work of UNCTAD in New York by strengthening synergies with its New York office;
7. *Looks forward* to a new evaluation cycle of the five subprogrammes after the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; and *requests* the secretariat to focus on streamlining the related costs and on fundraising extrabudgetary resources for this purpose, taking into account the outcome of the review of the evaluation findings in 2019.

B. Other action taken by the Working Party

1. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing

(Agenda item 3)

1. At its closing plenary, the Working Party took note of the document TD/B/WP/297. The Working Party agreed upon a draft decision on the review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing, which would be presented to the sixty-eighth executive session of the Trade and Development Board, to be held from 30 September to 4 October 2019 (see annex I).

2. Evaluation of UNCTAD activities

(Agenda item 4)

2. Also at its closing plenary, the Working Party took note of the documents TD/B/WP/298 and TD/B/WP/299. The Working Party adopted agreed conclusions on this agenda item.

II. Chair's summary

A. Proceedings

1. The seventy-eighth session of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget was held in Geneva from 2 to 4 September 2019. The Working Party pursued its deliberations in an informal setting.

B. Opening statements

2. The President of the Trade and Development Board and the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD made statements. Statements were made by the representatives of the following delegations: Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; Iraq on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group; Togo on behalf of the African Group; the European Union on behalf of the European Union and its member States; and Nigeria.

3. In his welcoming remarks, the President of the Trade and Development Board highlighted the important opportunity for UNCTAD and the multilateral system provided by the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XV), to be held in Barbados in October 2020. He urged member States and the secretariat to work closely in the coming months on preparations for UNCTAD XV, to ensure its success. Finally, he noted that technical cooperation, one of the main themes of this session of the Working Party, was an important part of the mandate of UNCTAD.

4. In her statement, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD highlighted two key challenges facing the international community, namely climate change and inequality, and noted the major UNCTAD events taking place in September, including the Trade Forum and the Raúl Prebisch lecture, as well as the launch of the *Trade and Development Report*. She emphasized that UNCTAD was actively engaged in the implementation of the process of reform of the United Nations development system in order that the technical cooperation pillar could continue to serve those States that needed it most. With regard to UNCTAD technical cooperation, she indicated that, in 2018, overall expenditures for technical cooperation had increased by 9 per cent over expenditures in 2017, to reach \$43.7 million, with 46 per cent of expenditures related to assistance to the least developed countries. This reaffirmed the commitment of UNCTAD to enhance technical assistance in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries.

5. With regard to trust fund resources, the Deputy Secretary-General highlighted that overall voluntary funding to UNCTAD trust funds had decreased by 3 per cent, to \$34.2 million, despite enhanced funding support from both developed and developing countries. To access sustainable funding sources for technical cooperation, member States were invited to work closely with UNCTAD. UNCTAD would continue to enhance its relationship with traditional partners, approach potential new contributors and explore new funding sources and funding mechanisms, while at the same time further improving the functioning of technical cooperation, in particular in the areas of interdivisional and inter-agency cooperation, results-based management and gender mainstreaming. The Deputy Secretary-General invited member States to make more predictable and flexible multi-year contributions, including to the new multi-donor trust fund on trade and productive capacity, to scale up activities under the UNCTAD-led United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity.

6. A few delegates and representatives of regional groups stressed the importance of technical cooperation as a key instrument in delivering on the mandate of UNCTAD and in supporting developing countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With regard to the reform of the United Nations development system, some delegates and representatives of regional groups expressed interest in the strategy devised and measures taken by UNCTAD to adapt to the reform, to ensure that UNCTAD resources and capacities were fully recognized and effectively integrated into the new system, and they requested that the office in New York redouble its efforts to guarantee the visibility of UNCTAD and its strengths.

7. With regard to technical cooperation funding, some delegates and representatives of regional groups expressed concerns about the continuing decline in trust fund resources in 2018 and recognized the need to enhance the predictability, flexibility and sustainability of funding. A few delegates and representatives of regional groups suggested that developed countries and development partners in a position to do so should increase their contributions to UNCTAD, to address funding constraints. A few delegates and representatives of regional groups requested UNCTAD to explore funding opportunities with the private sector and to develop a comprehensive funding strategy.

8. With regard to the management of technical cooperation, the representative of one regional group emphasized the increased focus on electronic commerce (e-commerce) and the digital economy, in-house training on results-based management and the progress made in gender mainstreaming, and suggested that UNCTAD should set specific and measurable targets to address structural gender-related inequality in beneficiary countries, conduct an in-depth evaluation of each technical cooperation project and further promote results-based management throughout the secretariat. The representative of another regional group highlighted the efforts made by UNCTAD in updating the request database and enhancing interdivisional and inter-agency cooperation, and encouraged UNCTAD to further enhance cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa and other agencies in the design and implementation of technical cooperation projects. Finally, some delegates and representatives of regional groups noted the lack of horizontal dialogue in the secretariat and requested that UNCTAD take measures to ensure that its staff were better informed of ongoing internal activities.

C. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing

(Agenda item 3)

9. The Working Party considered the document “Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing” and its annexes (TD/B/WP/297, TD/B/WP/297/Add.1 and TD/B/WP/297/Add.2).

10. A few delegates and representatives of regional groups appreciated the priority given by UNCTAD to the least developed countries in the delivery of technical cooperation, yet also expressed concerns about the lack of funding support to the multi-donor trust fund for the least developed countries in the past few years. The representative of one regional group encouraged development partners in a position to do so to foster cross-regional South–South cooperation and a few delegates and representatives of regional groups stressed that such cooperation should not be a substitute for traditional North–South cooperation. One delegate suggested a possible increase in the share of the regular budget of the United Nations, including the Development Account, dedicated to UNCTAD technical cooperation.

11. The Deputy Secretary-General noted that there might be some associated challenges with regard to mobilizing funds from the private sector, such as the mismatch between the interests of the private sector and the nature of UNCTAD technical cooperation, which was focused on government policies and legal and regulatory frameworks. UNCTAD could approach the private sector with regard to some technical cooperation programmes, but it was not necessary to devise a strategy for mobilizing funds from the private sector. In addition, with regard to the regular budget for technical cooperation, she highlighted the recent efforts made by UNCTAD to increase the staff budget and urged member States to support the endeavours of UNCTAD through their representatives on the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the General Assembly. Finally, the Deputy Secretary-General noted that the purpose of visits to the capitals of main donor countries was complementary to the efforts of individual divisions in mobilizing funds. She suggested enhancing the dissemination of the results of technical cooperation, to increase trust among potential donors.

12. With regard to subprogramme 1, the Division on Globalization Strategies detailed its technical cooperation activities. The Virtual Institute, the UNCTAD programme of support to academia, had extended its membership and continued its facilitation and capacity-building efforts through online courses (including on the global green new deal), videoconferences and study tours. In the area of statistics, electronic learning tools had been developed for trade in services and merchandise services, and the joint UNCTAD and West African Economic and Monetary Union project on improving international trade in services had organized workshops for statisticians in the West African region. In addition, the UNCTAD programme on assistance to the Palestinian people continued to directly respond to paragraph 55 (dd) of the Nairobi Maafikiano, yet a dearth of resources continued to limit its ability to deliver on this mandate. The project titled “South–South integration and the Sustainable Development Goals: Enhancing structural transformation in key partner countries of the Belt and Road initiative” had launched a platform to share the successful policy experiences of China and other developing countries with other country stakeholders in the initiative. Finally, in the area of debt, the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System programme continued to provide capacity-building support to almost 60 countries, to help them manage debt effectively and sustainably, and an independent evaluation had found that the programme had a significant long-term positive impact in core areas of public debt management relevant to debt data transparency.

13. The representative of one regional group stressed the importance of the work of UNCTAD with regard to the global green new deal and requested that more be done on this topic. The secretariat noted that, in addition to capacity-building opportunities offered through the Virtual Institute, UNCTAD would make available an update on the global green new deal in the context of the launch of the *Trade and Development Report*, which would be discussed by the Trade and Development Board at its sixty-eighth executive session. The representatives of a few regional groups highlighted the importance of the work of the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System programme in supporting 57 countries in effectively managing public debt, given concerns about rising debt levels and the risk of debt distress in many developing countries. Some delegates and representatives of regional groups expressed appreciation for the work of the programme on assistance to the Palestinian people. However, they also expressed concern that the programme lacked the necessary resources to fully implement paragraph 55 (dd) of the Nairobi Maafikiano. The secretariat noted that, to date, severe financial constraints had hindered efforts to strengthen the programme.

14. With regard to subprogramme 2, the Division on Investment and Enterprise, referring to its *Results and Impact Report 2018*, detailed the impact of capacity-building projects in support of investment for development. The Division provided evidence of the relevance, quality, effectiveness and impact of its core products, including by referring to the most recent evaluations of activities. For example, the project titled “Strengthening the capacities of developing country policymakers, investment promotion officials and academia in two priority sectors to attract investment for sustainable and inclusive development” had been qualified by the external evaluator as successful in improving institutional capacity in developing countries, raising awareness of the role of investment in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, cost-effectiveness and the strong synergies established with other programmes within and outside the Division, as well as its high impact. Keeping with the long-established practice of the Division to systematically review core products and brand services and update them accordingly, future orientations of technical assistance programmes in the area were also presented. They included a project on Sustainable Development Goal model zones, which built on *World Investment Report 2019*, and a project to establish national investment advisory councils.

15. The representatives of some regional groups expressed appreciation for the continuous high-level delivery and achievements of the programme. The representative of one regional group requested additional information on the nature of the cooperation of the programme with other divisions. The representative of another regional group highlighted the importance of universality in the delivery of technical assistance and requested the Division to further elaborate on its efforts with regard to production and capacity-building for investment. The representative of one regional group pointed to the encouraging comments made by an evaluator on the Division’s approach with regard to gender and

stressed the importance of mainstreaming gender and human rights as cross-cutting issues in all endeavours.

16. With regard to subprogramme 3, the Director of the Division on International Trade and Commodities reiterated the aim of the Division to highlight the transformational effect of trade in improving quality of life, in empowering and in reducing inequality and, to this end, noted the activities undertaken in key priority areas. With regard to mainstreaming gender into trade policy, the Director noted the online courses launched in 2015, adding that in 2019, for the first time, the courses had been made available in both English and French, thereby broadening the audience. Similarly, publications issued in 2018 had targeted ways in which the capacity of women entrepreneurs could be boosted to participate in international trade catered to the needs of specific regions. Addressing challenges in relation to market penetration and access had been identified as a key area for intervention, as well as the need for a bottom-up approach to market access, to address gender equity. With regard to competition and consumer protection, ensuring that anticompetitive behaviour that created monopolistic structures in international trade was a continued cause for concern, and the Director highlighted specific regional programmes in this area. Further, the Director noted that little progress had been made in the last 20 years to alleviate commodity dependence in developing countries and stressed the need to add value along the supply chain in developing countries and retain economic value in host countries. She highlighted two projects in this regard, namely trading food to promote sustainable development in landlocked commodity-dependent developing countries; and promoting cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa. The Director noted efforts undertaken by the Division to mainstream environmental concerns into trade policy and highlighted three projects, namely, those on the ocean economy and trade strategies conducted in Barbados, Costa Rica and Belize; the national green export review conducted in Angola; and green exports through voluntary sustainability standards in developing countries, conducted in the Philippines. Finally, the Director noted the role of the private sector in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and added that non-tariff measures could be a significant hindrance to small businesses and that more needed to be done to help equip small and medium-sized enterprises to trade.

17. The representative of one regional group expressed interest in seeing a greater focus on the digital economy and a commitment to cooperate on deepening efforts in this area. With regard to a query by the representative of another regional group on further actions that could be taken to reduce commodity dependence, in particular in developing countries, the Director stated that, in addition to the efforts already being made, the private sector could become more heavily engaged, in order to retain more value in producing countries. Investment in training and infrastructure were identified as avenues to boosting value addition. With regard to competition and consumer protection, the representative of one regional group noted that there were a number of projects proposed in this area that had not received financing in the current year but that many of these projects would be of benefit to countries in Africa and, to this end, enquired as to the mechanisms that could be used by the United Nations to help obtain financing for these projects. The representative of another regional group enquired about interdivisional approaches used to execute work in cross-cutting areas; there was room for improvement in this area to foster increased collaboration. One delegate stressed the role of the private sector in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and development in the least developed countries and expressed concern with regard to the lack of financing, adding that focus must be placed on the true needs of the members and secretariat to ensure the smooth functioning of UNCTAD. The Director noted that South–South cooperation could be utilized more effectively to help address the lack of financing and to build technical cooperation into trade agreements.

18. The secretariat highlighted two initiatives with regard to the implementation of the recommendations in the synthesis report, related to the mainstreaming of climate change-related matters into the work of the Division and related to communications. The inaugural Trade Forum placed climate change at the centre of the trade debate and involved a cross-divisional approach, including collaboration among divisions to organize and promote the event, which served as a high-level platform to showcase climate change-related issues in publications such as the *Commodities and Development Report*. With regard to communications and outreach, the Division had adopted agile responses to address trade

and development concerns and focused on the production of timely content of public interest. In this regard, statistics showed that press releases and news on high priority areas were the top performing items on the UNCTAD website compared with other major publications; these had been produced in collaboration with communications and design teams in UNCTAD to ensure the products reached the public in an appealing format. Finally, the Division had undertaken efforts to boost its online presence, in particular on social media platforms.

19. With regard to a query by the representative of one regional group on whether the technical cooperation projects of the Division took into account recommendations stemming from the publications produced by other divisions, the secretariat noted that there was healthy collaboration in this regard. With regard to a query by one delegate on whether the Division covered issues related to e-commerce, the secretariat specified that the Division was more involved in issues related to providing support to countries in e-commerce-related negotiations and that more comprehensive approaches in collaboration with other divisions were possible. The representative of one regional group suggested that the example of the efforts made by the Division to effectively take recommendations into account should be followed by other divisions. Finally, one delegate noted the focus of the Division on matters related to climate change, and looked forward to outcomes from the Trade Forum to further efforts in this area.

20. With regard to subprogramme 4, the Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics highlighted the technical cooperation activities of the Division and its central role. In 2018, the Division had accounted for over 63 per cent of the total technical assistance-related expenditures of UNCTAD. Its technical cooperation was closely aligned with its various mandates, including the Nairobi Maafikiano, was demand driven and was generally implemented through a programmatic approach and with close partnership with other development partners, including other divisions. The Automated System for Customs Data was the largest technical assistance programme of UNCTAD, accounting for nearly half of the expenditures in 2018. It had been implemented in over 100 countries in 2018 and recent developments included regional-level programmes in the Pacific and in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and Economic Community of West African States regions. Benefits of the System included, among others, support for trade facilitation reforms, faster goods clearance, better trade statistics and enhanced tariff revenue in beneficiary countries. In the area of e-commerce and the digital economy, the Division had initiated and delivered 18 rapid eTrade readiness assessments for the least developed countries. The Division also provided support in preparing national e-commerce strategies and assistance in law reform in e-commerce. In the area of science, technology and innovation policy, the Division provided support through policy reviews in a number of developing countries and partnered with a large number of relevant stakeholders, in both the United Nations and member States, to build capacities in this area in developing countries. The Director noted that with regard to both areas, namely, the digital economy and science, technology and innovation policy, resources were lacking, including in terms of staff, for the Division to be able to deliver on all of the requests received during the period. The Division provided assistance in the area of sustainable and resilient transport, including by supporting the creation of transport corridors at the regional level and with regard to transport infrastructure-related climate resilience. Support for trade facilitation reforms and the implementation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation of the World Trade Organization had continued in 2018, notably with support provided to national trade facilitation committees at both the national and regional levels. Over 50 countries had benefited to date from this programme and had reported positive impacts on the capacities of their national trade facilitation committees. Finally, the Division continued to implement its knowledge development activities in developing countries, often in close cooperation with other divisions. This included the train for trade programme, which had trained over 2,600 beneficiaries, including in port management issues, and the courses on key issues on the international economic agenda, delivered at the regional level and for delegates based in Geneva.

21. Several delegates and representatives of regional groups expressed their appreciation for the technical assistance provided by the Division, stressing its importance in support of their development. In addition, several delegates and representatives of regional groups

emphasized the positive impact of the technical cooperation delivered by the Division in their countries in several areas, including the Automated System for Customs Data and single windows, trade facilitation, transport, e-commerce and human capacity-building. In the area of e-commerce, the representative of one regional group expressed appreciation for the focus of the recent *Digital Economy Report* and hoped that this work would be reflected in technical cooperation. The representative of another regional group welcomed the extension of rapid eTrade readiness assessments to developing countries not in the least developed country category. In the area of international transport, the representatives of a few regional groups commended the work on supporting transport corridors, stressed the importance of the work on maritime transport and port resilience and requested that this work be further developed. The positive impact of the port management programme was noted by one delegate as enhancing the turnover in beneficiary ports, among other benefits. Finally, some delegates and representatives of regional groups expressed concerns with regard to the lack of sufficient resources for the Division to deliver on all the requests it received, including in terms of human resources, and requested that action be taken to increase the availability of resources.

22. The Director emphasized that funding was the main immediate concern for the Division, with teams stretched thin in emerging areas of work representing particular interests for developing countries, such as e-commerce and the digital economy. The Division was deploying efforts to ensure follow-up with regard to its capacity-building work, but the Director noted that such efforts were dependent on the availability of resources. She requested beneficiary countries to support the fundraising efforts of the secretariat, and noted that the Division was increasingly approaching donors with regard to projects with a regional dimension, to leverage economies of scale and mutual learning effects. Finally, she welcomed the expression of interest by one delegate to host a regional course on key issues on the international economic agenda.

23. With regard to subprogramme 5, the Director of the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes emphasized the linkages between UNCTAD research and analysis and the development of targeted technical cooperation strategies to test and implement policy recommendations at the country level. The Economic and Social Council had encouraged UNCTAD to pursue its methodological work to measure progress in and identify obstacles to the development of productive capacities in developing countries and, in this regard, the Director detailed the work being undertaken to develop a productive capacities index and to help build, maintain and utilize productive capacities in strategic sectors such as fisheries and services, including transport, tourism and finance. In addition, he noted the work of UNCTAD in designing and managing programmatic approaches to technical cooperation, emphasizing the success of multi-year, multi-component programmes. He highlighted the efforts of UNCTAD to build continuity into technical cooperation activities through the establishment of centres of excellence, as well as the emerging areas of work such as measuring tourism leakages in small island developing States and projects to support the development of higher value-added products such as superfoods and nutraceuticals based on marine bioprospecting. Finally, he noted that no new contributions to the trust fund for the least developed countries had been received in 2018–2019 and requested member States in a position to do so to contribute to the trust fund.

24. Some delegates and representatives of regional groups recognized the usefulness of linking analytical research and policy guidance to technical cooperation activities in key areas such as migration, tourism, rules of origin and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement. They stressed the continued importance of incorporating research and analysis findings into the design and planning of technical cooperation activities. With regard to the decrease in funding for technical cooperation in the least developed countries, a few delegates and representatives of regional groups recognized the ability of UNCTAD to deliver efficiently with limited resources and encouraged UNCTAD and member States to work together to find a fundraising solution. With regard to the fact that no new contributions had been made to the trust fund for the least developed countries, a few delegates and representatives of regional groups encouraged UNCTAD to continue to appeal for additional contributions and suggested that UNCTAD work with divisions and partners to increase such funding. The representatives

of a few regional groups requested development partners to contribute to the trust fund for the least developed countries. The representative of one regional group emphasized the importance of enhancing cohesion among divisions in the delivery of technical cooperation activities and encouraged UNCTAD to continue to underline the importance of cooperation, including with other United Nations entities in future activities, such as the International Organization for Migration. One delegate noted that the comprehensive and programmatic approach to technical cooperation of UNCTAD, as for example in Angola, had been requested by several States, and expressed the interest of the Government of Sudan in developing a similar programme. The representative of one regional group requested clarity on the impact of the process of reform of the United Nations development system on the delivery of technical cooperation projects and on how UNCTAD coordinated with the United Nations resident coordinators and in actions implemented at the country level. One delegate requested clarifications on UNCTAD efforts to help the least developed countries in preparations for and following their graduation from the least developed country category, as well as whether UNCTAD had dedicated financial resources to supporting graduating countries in this regard. In addition, the delegate emphasized the importance of the tourism sector in small island developing States and requested increased discussions at UNCTAD on the challenges facing such States, in the light of the forthcoming midterm review of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway.

25. The Director emphasized that availability of resources presented the greatest obstacle to technical cooperation and that programmatic approaches needed to be more effective and enable UNCTAD to scale up support. Conversely, however, UNCTAD had had to scale back the launch of research and policy guidance in some countries due to a lack of resources. To secure additional resources, UNCTAD was exploring new funding mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility. The Director highlighted the continued willingness of UNCTAD to support countries graduating from the least developed country category and noted that some Enhanced Integrated Framework funds were available to assist such countries to ensure a smooth transition. Finally, with regard to the process of reform of the United Nations development system, he noted that UNCTAD advised resident coordinators in advance of missions or activities and, whenever possible, provided briefings to country teams.

D. Evaluation of UNCTAD activities

(Agenda item 4)

26. The Working Party considered the documents “Evaluation of UNCTAD activities: Overview” (TD/B/WP/298), which summarized the findings and lessons learned from five evaluations completed in April 2018–April 2019 and provided guidance to management on implementing subprogrammes based on evidence generated by the evaluations; and “Synthesis of the five subprogramme evaluations and update on the status of implementation of recommendations” which presented a review of the five subprogramme evaluations conducted to date, including an update on the status of implementation of the recommendations from the evaluations (TD/B/WP/299 and TD/B/WP/299/Add.1).

27. Some delegates and representatives of regional groups noted the usefulness of the subprogramme evaluations, including the synthesis report, and emphasized that evaluations were central for the transparency, accountability and efficiency of UNCTAD. The representative of one regional group, looking ahead to a new evaluation cycle of the five subprogrammes following UNCTAD XV, expressed support for the expansion of evaluation activities to cover all aspects of the work of UNCTAD, including the intergovernmental machinery. The representative also emphasized the need to improve the evaluation process and methodology, in particular by standardizing the terms of reference.

28. The representative of one regional group noted that the integration of gender and human rights considerations had been weak across UNCTAD and the majority of evaluated projects lacked a thorough and proactive gender strategy. The representative requested future technical assistance programmes to include a sophisticated, in-depth gender policy and to pay particular attention to structural gender inequalities in partner countries. The

secretariat noted in this regard that all projects had a gender-related checklist, to assist gender mainstreaming in technical cooperation, and that the interdivisional task force on gender was working to incorporate gender-related aspects into the substantive work of the divisions, for example with regard to work on entrepreneurship and migration.

29. With regard to the observed limited interdivisional cooperation, the representatives of a few regional groups requested UNCTAD to enhance internal governance to achieve a stronger impact in the United Nations system. The representative of one regional group noted that some efforts were being made at the divisional level but that further work and support from the Office of the Secretary-General was required. The secretariat noted in this regard ongoing work on this issue and examples of such cooperation from each division, such as the courses on key issues on the international economic agenda, and highlighted attempts to incorporate such cooperation into the day-to-day work of divisions.

30. The representative of one regional group noted that linkages with United Nations regional coordinators and country programmes remained at a low level and that the low-profile presence of UNCTAD at United Nations Headquarters affected its visibility and influence within the development agenda of the United Nations system and with regard to budgetary issues. Several delegates and representatives of regional groups requested UNCTAD to work closely with its New York office to ensure that UNCTAD was included in discussions of the Economic and Social Council and to further enhance its strategic partnership with other United Nations entities. One delegate noted that some recent intergovernmental meetings at UNCTAD had not produced agreed conclusions and that these were an important mechanism for communicating with Headquarters.

31. One delegate questioned the status of implementation and the mechanism used to implement the recommendation on the reporting lines of the UNCTAD office in Addis Ababa. The secretariat noted that terms of reference were being developed for this office. A few delegates expressed concerns about the gaps in funding thematic projects and requested UNCTAD to intensify its fundraising efforts. The question of whether fundraising should be done centrally or at the divisional level was raised by the representative of one regional group, and UNCTAD noted that divisions were making efforts to implement the new results-based management framework and that staff members were being trained on this topic. Finally, the representative of another regional group requested continued efforts by UNCTAD, as evaluations had found weaknesses in the application of results-based management.

E. Briefing on the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of UNCTAD

(Agenda item 5)

32. The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD provided a briefing on the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of UNCTAD. The representative of one regional group requested further information with regard to follow-up measures taken with regard to the recommendations. Further details on this issue would be provided at the next briefing on management issues, to be held on 22 October 2019.

III. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

33. At its opening plenary meeting, on 2 September 2019, the Working Party elected Ms. Soraya Zanardo (Belgium) as its Chair and Mr. Mahmoud Alatiyyah (Iraq) as its Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

34. At the same meeting, the Working Party adopted its provisional agenda (TD/B/WP/296). The agenda was thus as follows:

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 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.

C. Provisional agenda for the seventy-ninth session of the Working Party

(Agenda item 6)

35. At its closing plenary meeting, on 4 September 2019, the Working Party approved the provisional agenda for its seventy-ninth session (see annex II).

D. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

(Agenda item 8)

36. At the same meeting, the Working Party decided that the report on its seventy-eighth session would be finalized after the session.

Annex I

Draft decision for consideration by the Trade and Development Board

Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing

(Agenda item 3)

The Trade and Development Board

1. *Reaffirms* the role of UNCTAD technical cooperation as one of the three fundamental pillars of UNCTAD to be delivered in a mutually reinforced manner with the other two;
2. *Highlights* the relevance of UNCTAD technical cooperation in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and *stresses* the importance of UNCTAD actively participating in the reform of the United Nations development system;
3. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare a draft strategy for its technical cooperation in consultation with regional groups and to initiate a preliminary discussion at a session of the Working Party to be held in the first quarter of 2020;
4. *Encourages* the secretariat to further strengthen interdivisional and inter-agency cooperation for increased coherence and impact and the sharing of best practices when delivering technical assistance, taking into account the mandate of UNCTAD and the outcome of its internal task forces;
5. *Encourages* the secretariat to pursue its efforts in implementing results-based management in line with United Nations guidelines;
6. *Stresses* the importance of sufficient and predictable funding in ensuring effective technical cooperation in the implementation of the mandate of UNCTAD, paying particular attention to the fulfilment of objectives that might be lagging behind as identified in the midterm review of the Nairobi Maafikiano;
7. *Encourages* developed countries and developing countries in a position to do so to make multi-year contributions to UNCTAD technical cooperation, to increase the predictability of UNCTAD technical assistance;
8. *Supports* the efforts of UNCTAD in broadening and diversifying its donor base and in exploring new ways of funding such as the pooled funding mechanisms in support of the UNCTAD-led United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity and other funding sources, including blended finance and public–private partnerships.

Annex II

Provisional agenda for the seventy-ninth session of the Working Party

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 2021, part II of the proposed programme budget.
4. Provisional agenda for the eightieth session of the Working Party.
5. Other business.
6. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board.

Annex III

Attendance¹

1. Representatives of the following members of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget attended the session:

China
Malawi
Russian Federation

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

Albania	Mongolia
Austria	Morocco
Bangladesh	Nepal
Belgium	Netherlands
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Nigeria
Congo	Oman
Cuba	Pakistan
Côte d'Ivoire	Panama
Egypt	Poland
Ethiopia	Senegal
Finland	State of Palestine
France	Switzerland
Gabon	Syrian Arab Republic
Germany	Togo
Guatemala	Yemen
India	Zambia

3. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

European Union

¹ This attendance list contains registered participants. For the list of participants, see TD/B/WP(78)/INF.1.