

**GRULAC UNCTAD
GENEVA**

**STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN AND THE CARIBBEAN
STATES (GRULAC) AT THE 75TH SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY ON
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND THE PROGRAMME BUDGET**

Geneva, 4 - 6 September 2017

Mister Chair Taavo Lumiste (Estonia),
Mr. Raul Javaloyes, Chief, Technical Cooperation Service, UNCTAD
Distinguished delegates,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC). GRULAC congratulates you on assuming the presidency of this session of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and Programme Budget.

2. Mr. Chair, this session of the Working Party provides us with an opportunity to review the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing, as well as the findings and recommendations of the evaluation of UNCTAD activities, in particular the external evaluation of UNCTAD subprogramme 4 on technology and logistics.

3. GRULAC notes with appreciation the fact that the availability of extra-budgetary resources increased from below US\$ 35 million in 2015 to around US\$ 40 million in 2016. Given the fact that the majority of this funding comes from beneficiary countries themselves, this indicates that the support and policy advice provided by UNCTAD are highly appreciated by developing countries and respond to their priorities.

4. With regard to technical cooperation in GRULAC countries, the Group appreciates the activities of UNCTAD in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the cooperation between national governments, regional organizations and UNCTAD in enhancing productive capacity and promoting sustainable development in the region. Even though we always wish to see the number of activities in the region growing further, we note the increase from US\$ 4.04 million to US\$ 4.13 million from 2015 to 2016 as a positive – albeit small – development.

5. A large number of projects in the region were related to customs automation, namely ASYCUDA. The region also benefitted from other technical cooperation products such as Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS), eRegulations and eRegistrations Systems, Trade Facilitation Programme, Empretec and Business Linkages, and the support to Competition and Consumer Protection Policies. The Group also stresses the relevance of the regional approach in the region. In fact, Latin America and the Caribbean recorded the highest share of regional projects in relation to country projects among developing regions in 2016.

6. With regards to interregional projects, we note that despite the increase in regional and country expenditures from 2015 to 2016, there was a drop in the expenditure in interregional projects. In this context, it would be useful to hear from the Secretariat the reasons they attribute to such a decline.

7. Mr. Chair, GRULAC recognizes the efforts by the Secretariat to structure the requests for technical cooperation through the Database of Formal Requests for UNCTAD Technical Assistance. We hope that members' views are taken into account in developing and enhancing it, including the availability of information in all official languages. With regards to the new funding mechanism being proposed, GRULAC notes the efforts by the Secretariat and expresses its expectation that this work is carried out in full consultation with and guidance by member States.

8. Mr. Chair, with regard to the evaluation of subprogramme 4, let me first congratulate the efforts of the evaluation team, including the member States representatives acting in their personal capacity.

9. Subprogramme 4 includes many activities that are highly appreciated and beneficial to countries in the region. Many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have in recent years benefited from support through ASYCUDA and to our national trade facilitation committees, an area in which the continued support from UNCTAD has proven to be valuable. The work on logistics and transport, including its sustainability aspects, is also highly valued by the region.

10. GRULAC further stresses the importance of the overall work of UNCTAD in the area of science, technology and innovation. In this context, GRULAC manifests its positive appreciation of the role of UNCTAD as the Secretariat of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and its inputs for the work of the Commission in providing high-level recommendations on how to assist developing countries in strengthening their technological capabilities and in bridging the digital divide.

11. We would also like to note the positive contribution of capacity-building activities including in areas such as trade in services and e-commerce. Of particular importance to the region is the regional course on key issues on the international economic agenda, held in Colombia. The course is unique in its scope and has been recognized for its high quality and relevance to improving negotiation and planning skills with regards to trade and development strategies.

12. With regard to activities pertinent to other subprogrammes – something that will be discussed in more detail in the next session of the Working Party in December –GRULAC supports to carry out specific activities for the effective implementation of the mandate of paragraph 38 r) on the impact of non-tariff barriers and development as outlined in the Nairobi Maafikiano

13. The members of GRULAC who are part of the Group of 77 and China associate ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished Chair of the G77 and China.

I thank you.