

**Statement of the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD to the Working Party on the
Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget, 75th session
4 September 2017**

This fall's Working Party focuses on two topics: one is to review last year's technical cooperation - our operational activities and their financing; the second is to discuss the evaluation of UNCTAD activities and their follow-up.

- Technical cooperation is an important element of UNCTAD's work, benefitting from synergies with our research and consensus building work to support policy changes, reinforced institutions and stronger capacities in support of the gainful integration of developing countries into the world economy.
- Evaluation is a powerful tool for supporting learning and promoting accountability in how we deliver our support to countries. Through evaluation, we are able to independently assess what works, for whom and in what circumstances.
- With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda our technical cooperation efforts and our evaluation functions have become even more important to shaping an UNCTAD that is fit for purpose in supporting countries in their quest for sustainable development. It is timely that we address these topics in our Working Party this fall as the entire UN development system is repositioning itself to better assist countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs.
- In many ways, UNCTAD remains ahead of the curve in these efforts, since thanks to your deliberations at Nairobi last year, we already have a well-defined role to play in implementing the SDGs and the Financing for Development follow-up, which is detailed in the Nairobi Maafikiano. Our ongoing implementation of the Maafikiano, together with the wider re-purposing efforts underway in the broader UN development system, can work hand in hand to improve the effectiveness and volume of our support to developing countries in pursuit of the new Agenda.
- It is our hope that our efforts in this Working Party go a long way to enhancing funds mobilization and the functioning of operational activities to ensure our technical cooperation and evaluation function are fit for purpose and delivered in the best possible way.

First let me address some of the issues related to Technical cooperation, beginning with its financing.

- In terms of **fund mobilization**, I am pleased to report to you that in 2016, the overall voluntary funding that went into UNCTAD trust funds reached about \$40 million, representing an increase of 16% compared with 2015 and the highest level since 2012. This is a ringing endorsement of our strengthened role in support of the new challenges of the 2030 Agenda. This improvement was largely due to enhanced funding support by both developed and developing countries. Over the past year, developed country

contributions have increased by 13% to \$10 million. Funding from developing and transition countries reached a new peak at \$20 million, which accounted for half of trust fund resources received by UNCTAD in 2016.

- Over the past three years, funding from developing and transition countries has exhibited a very positive and encouraging trend. The vast majority of developing country funding (96% in 2016) was for self-financing activities in their own countries, with only a fraction (4% in 2016) being of the nature of South-South cooperation. This clearly shows the effectiveness of UNCTAD operational activities and the trust of developing countries in UNCTAD's technical assistance; on the other hand, this also implies the necessity of scaling up South-South cooperation to complement contributions from developed countries.
- However, despite the rising trust fund resources, unpredictability, fluctuations across years and earmarking to specific activities continue to be the main features of UNCTAD's extrabudgetary funding. To better serve the people who need us most, it is crucial to ensure the availability of adequate quantity and quality of voluntary funding for UNCTAD. Member States are encouraged to make more predictable, flexible and less earmarked contributions to UNCTAD trust funds.
- Effective and efficient **delivery** is key for meeting the ambition of the 2030 Agenda on the ground. UNCTAD is working seamlessly with partners from the public and private sectors to better respond to the evolving national priorities, in particular those from the poor and vulnerable countries. In 2016, total expenditures on UNCTAD technical cooperation activities amounted to \$39 million, almost equivalent to the 2015 level. As in previous years, ASYCUDA and DMFAS continued to be the two leading technical cooperation programmes of UNCTAD, representing, respectively, 48% and 11% of total expenditures in 2016.
- Despite the declining share of expenditures for operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the LDCs, UNCTAD continued to prioritize its technical assistance to the most vulnerable group of countries. In 2016, technical cooperation expenditures in support of LDCs totaled \$18 million, representing 46.5% of total technical cooperation delivery. This is just below the record-high share of 48% in 2015.
- In the coming years, the delivery of UNCTAD technical cooperation will continue to focus on the needs of people and governments of the most vulnerable countries (i.e. LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS). This cannot be realized without increased funding support from traditional and emerging donors. Development partners in a position to do so are called on to make multi-year contributions to UNCTAD, including to the dedicated Trust Fund for LDCs, which haven't received new contributions over the past two years.
- **Sound management** is critical for the prompt and effective delivery of technical cooperation on the field. In 2016, UNCTAD concentrated its work on some key areas of the management of technical cooperation to make it more results-oriented, more

accountable, more transparent, more geared towards gender equality, and more on integrated support to the 2030 Agenda.

- As you know, technical cooperation is a key area where we have been strengthening our use of **results-based management** focusing on how it can help us scale up our impact in support of the 2030 Agenda.
- The 10 minimum requirements for RBM, launched in July 2016, ensure a focus on results during project planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. They were piloted for one year and will now be fine-tuned for full and effective implementation.
- Some of the **main lessons from this RBM pilot** are the following:
 - First, efforts by most programme managers to implement RBM principles increased; but remained insufficient overall (for example, less than 15% of programmes reported results data).
 - We've also learned that programme managers require additional support in developing detailed monitoring and evaluation plans. This will clarify *who* collects *what* data, *when* and *how*.
 - UNCTAD should also develop its own customized training on RBM and deliver this training to individual teams.
 - We have also identified an urgent need for an IT-based project management and reporting tool to streamline multiple reporting requests facing programme managers.
 - Finally, programme managers should work with the Communications unit to prepare and disseminate more stories on UNCTAD's impact on the ground.
- To further enhance the transparency on the demand for UNCTAD technical assistance, UNCTAD has also developed a **database of formal requests for UNCTAD technical cooperation**. In 2016, UNCTAD cross-checked the data information, updated new requests and created a dashboard to provide an illustrative overview of the request data. An improved database has now been put in place.
- As you know, UNCTAD is committed to mainstreaming **gender equality and women's economic empowerment** in its three pillars of work. With regard to technical cooperation, UNCTAD has taken firm steps to integrate the gender dimension in technical cooperation projects. These include piloting gender checklist, involving divisional gender focal points in project clearance, and organizing gender-related training.
- Finally, let us recall that the universal and transformative 2030 Agenda represents a real paradigm change. It calls for integrated planning, strategic thinking and policy-making to

define the best SDG implementation mix at the local level. UNCTAD is strengthening our **inter-agency collaboration to provide more integrated and coherent advice** to developing countries. In this regard, the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity, led by UNCTAD, is well positioned to respond to the integrated and inclusive nature of the 2030 Agenda.

Now let me turn to the issue of evaluation...

- **UNCTAD continues its efforts to strengthen its evaluation function** through improvements in the evaluation framework, partnerships with other UN Agencies and the UN Evaluation Group, and new initiatives to support evaluation in the 2030 Agenda. These include:
 - A revised mandatory mechanism for follow-up on evaluation recommendations where the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (EMU) requires programme and project managers to submit standardized action plans upon the completion of evaluation exercises. These are to be updated on an annual basis or until the evaluation recommendations are closed.
 - Revised guidelines and templates to improve the quality and credibility of evaluation reports. The Unit is now working on an evaluation handbook to guide programme and project managers.
 - Contributions to UN Evaluation Group, including on gender mainstreaming. In January 2017, UNCTAD paired with UNCDF as part of the UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator (EPI) to exchange experiences and practices in integrating gender within the evaluation process.
 - A first-ever risk-based evaluation plan for the research pillar in response to the 2015 OIOS evaluation of the research pillar.
 - 21 independent and self-evaluations were included in EMU's work-plan during the RBM pilot phase as part of EMU's project clearance role.
 - EMU is leading the ongoing revision to the 2011 Evaluation Policy in line with the revised 2016 United National Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards. This draft will be shared with member States in the next months.
- **Both monitoring and evaluation have a key role to play in the 2030 Agenda.** If we truly want to “Leave no one behind” then we require monitoring and evaluation to help to capture variations in development. In addition, monitoring and evaluating progress against the 230 indicators of the SDGs is an ambitious undertaking, and many countries will need support. This can only be done through meaningful multi-sector approaches and partnerships with national and local authorities, civil society, the private sector, other international actors and those hardest to reach.

- Recently, UNCTAD has made some important recent contributions in strengthening how our evaluation function feeds into our support to the 2030 Agenda. We look forward to expanding such efforts with your support.
 - This included a **pilot training on statistics and evaluation in Tanzania to support the measurement of progress against the SDGs** in June-July 2017.
 - UNCTAD also organized a **learning and practice exchange event on evaluation at the High Level Political Forum** in July 2017 with UNDP, UN Women and UNITAR.

Before I conclude allow me to address some points for Item 4a (Evaluation of UNCTAD activities: Overview TD/B/WP/286)b:

- Under evaluation Item 4a, you were able to study our **Evaluation Overview report**, containing valuable feedback based on four evaluation reports completed between April 2016 and April 2017 on what has worked and what needs to be strengthened to deliver better results.
- Lessons learned on project design and implementation have also been extrapolated in this report, in an effort to also guide programme managers better plan and implement programmes based on evidence generated by evaluations. These lessons learned on design include, among other things, the importance of integrating programmatic approaches and sustainability considerations, adequate attention and funding towards monitoring and evaluation, gender and human rights mainstreaming and customized capacity-building. On project implementation, lessons learned included working systematically with partners, adaptive management approaches, continuous training especially in the context of trade negotiations, utilization of short synthesis policy documents and addressing systemic constraints within the UN.
- I hope that this information will contribute towards allowing you, our primary stakeholders, to engage in the continuous improvement of UNCTAD's performance and I look forward to your feedback on these evaluation results.
- One key element in the report that I would like to draw your attention to is the Evaluation Plan for 2018-2020. With next year's presentation of the subprogramme 5 on Africa, least developed countries and special programmes evaluation at the 77th Working Party session, we will have completed the trial cycle of subprogramme evaluations. The Secretariat proposes a continuation of the subprogramme evaluation approach, starting with subprogramme 1 on globalization, interdependence and development in 2019. I look forward to your consideration of this proposal.
- I would like to invite you to expand your support to evaluations at UNCTAD –with your contributions, we can expand the coverage of evaluations, strengthen the evaluation culture and respond to the 2030 Agenda, including at the national level.

In closing

- Tomorrow you will also consider the report of the External Evaluation of UNCTAD subprogramme 4 on Technology and Logistics. Following established practice, the Report was prepared by an external evaluation team comprised of two independent consultants and two representatives of member States who participated in this evaluation in their personal capacity. The Secretariat has prepared a management response that addresses the recommendations of the evaluation and reflects upon ways of implementing them. This will be presented by Ms. Shamika Sirimanne, Director of DTL.
- My gratitude goes to the members of the evaluation team and to all staff and stakeholders that participated in this important exercise.