



European Union

Statement

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

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Agenda Item 2

Annual report of the Secretary-General

**Statement by the European Union Delegation to the UN and other
international organisations in Geneva**

Geneva, 2 July 2020

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr President, Secretary General, Excellencies, distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The EU and its Member States would like to **thank the Secretary General for the 2019 Annual Report**. This report, substantiated by the Secretary General's words, is at the centre of UNCTAD's transparency and accountability mechanism, and as such crucial for the deliberations of this Trade and Development Board.

Allow me to **focus on two elements of the Report – key thematic issues and management efforts**. These two elements are not only instrumental to understanding recent developments and UNCTAD's corresponding actions, but also for guiding our future efforts for building back better.

We note very positively two of the overarching thematic issues highlighted by the Secretary General in the foreword. Actions done by UNCTAD in 2019, as well as before, on **digitalisation for development and on the trade and environment nexus**, have been central for the 2030 Agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis have ruthlessly highlighted the importance of these two issues. In view of this and given the recognition of the positive role played by UNCTAD, we would expect an important shift of resources in this direction. Clearly, within the existing mandate and based on robust Result Based Management and lessons learnt.

This brings me to the **second element** that we would wish to raise – **governance, accountability, transparency and effectiveness of the organisation**.

The part of the Report on UNCTAD's contributions towards the Agenda 2030 rightly notes that **"UNCTAD is called upon to focus its resources"**. However, there is **no evidence** in the Report **that this might have been done in 2019**. And more preoccupying, there have been **no indication of such efforts for the future**, as already highlighted during the January Working Party meeting on the 2021 Programming.

As noted on previous occasions, **lack of effective transparency and accountability actions debilitates an organisation**. Unfortunately, in the case of UNCTAD, Result Based Management, evaluations and explicit comments made by the membership during past meetings, do not appear to find their way into much-needed management decisions for

improving the effectiveness of the organisation. In the absence of decisive action, it is likely, therefore, that it will be increasingly difficult for UNCTAD to identify additional budgetary, and especially extra-budgetary resources not earmarked to specific actions. As already witnessed and something that we are eager to avoid.

Dear Secretary General, dear President,

Now, more than ever, it is crucial for UNCTAD to deliver on the many governance issues that have been signalled systematically for a number of years. Effective and transparent management decisions need to translate the lessons learnt and member States' comments into concrete organisational, programming and budgetary decisions. Only like this will UNCTAD be able to deliver on its mandate and be an effective member of the building back better efforts.

To this end, **I revert to our explicit calls made during the previous two TDB sessions.** As UNCTAD's central governing body, this Trade and Development Board should be effectively informed on:

- i. the implementation of results-based management as required by the UN system regulations;
- ii. the organisation's monitoring and evaluation capacity, including the status of and follow-up to evaluations;
- iii. issues of enhancing outreach and communications, including with the Geneva-based missions;
- iv. enhanced coordination of activities internally and externally, including through improved processes and procedures;
- v. transparent and effective human resources management; and
- vi. gender ratios and updates on follow-up measures on UNCTAD's gender strategy, released in fall 2018.

Thank you.