



European Union

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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66th session of Trade and Development Board

24-27 June 2019

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Item 4 - Annual Report of the Secretary-General

On behalf of the European Union and its Member States

Geneva, 26 June 2019

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

UNCTAD

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Mr President, Secretary General, Excellencies, distinguished Delegates,

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

First of all, the EU and its Member States thank the Secretary-General for his Annual Report to the TDB. The report is crucial for the strategic function of the TDB as UNCTAD's central governing body, in particular to exchange, on a regular basis, with the SG on the priorities of the institution. These strategic deliberations are even more important at a time where the UN Development System undertakes a substantial reform process. We believe that UNCTAD needs to continuously adapt in order to ensure its relevance and to strengthen its position in this new UN system. UNCTAD has reached a defining moment for its institutional future and we encourage the SG to develop a strategic vision for the organization.

The EU and its Member States note that the 15th Ministerial Conference will take place already in less than 1.5 years. We look forward to receiving the SG's report on UNCTAD XV in fall 2019, based on the input by the Eminent Persons' Group. Here, responding to the expectations of the entire membership is of particular importance. In this context, we would like to invite the Secretariat as well as the membership to engage in collective discussions on whether UNCTAD XV should be conducted along the lines of previous Conferences. At previous Conferences negotiations proved to be rather time-consuming and lengthy, often driven by divisive discussions on "policy analysis". As a more pragmatic way forward – and as a mean to build bridges amongst the membership – the EU and its Member States would like to suggest to re-consider the Conference process. This could entail drafting an up-to-date fixed mandate for the organization that refers to

UNCTAD's 1964 founding document. This fixed mandate could be accompanied by a working programme for UNCTAD, re-negotiated every four years. We believe that this would be a pragmatic way forward that allows a strong focus on concrete action and would underpin UNCTAD's further institutional development.

On a broader note, the EU is convinced that in any case, the upcoming 15th Conference should entail a **specific focus on institutional reform and internal governance issues**. As we have raised repeatedly in previous sessions of this Board, we continue to see major room for improvement on UNCTAD's accountability, transparency and effectiveness. We thus reiterated our call for a **standing item on the agenda of the Trade and Development Board on issues pertaining to governance, accountability, transparency and effectiveness of the organisation**. The EU has persistently called for such an item – but, unfortunately, our calls remained unanswered by the Secretariat thus far. The item could be included in an Annual Report/"State of the Organization" statement by the Secretary-General; it could also form part of a reinvigorated item on institutional and organizational matters (item 13). We highlight – as we have done previously – that we need to hear more about the functioning of the organisation.

Chair, it is a central pillar of accountability of any organisation to report to its stakeholders on the results and challenges of its work on an annual basis. The reporting of the Secretariat needs to entail several areas which have been addressed only unsystematically and incompletely in the past. Despite efforts by DSG Isabelle Durant, informal management briefings, that have taken place on an irregular basis, did not provide the membership with enough clarity on a number of relevant management topics. The following broad issues deserve a formal, inclusive and informed discussion by the Board:

- a) Updates on the implementation of results-based management as required by the UN system regulations;
- b) the organisation's monitoring and evaluation capacity, including the status of and follow-up to evaluations;

- c) issues of enhancing outreach and communications, including with the Geneva-based missions;
- d) enhanced coordination of activities internally and externally, including through improved processes and procedures;
- e) transparent and effective human resources management;
- f) gender ratios and updates on follow-up measures on UNCTAD's gender strategy, released in fall 2018;

To this end, we will constructively work with all partners to make this element of accountability a pillar of a revitalized UNCTAD ready for future tasks.

Thank you.

