

Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget
Sixty-First Session, Geneva, 23-25 July 2012

**Agenda Item 3: Review of the Implementation of UNCTAD's
Communications Strategy and Publications Policy**

Introduction by the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Madam Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to introduce the latest Report on the Implementation of UNCTAD's Communications Strategy and Publications Policy, contained in document TD/B/WP/240, and covering the activities carried out during the period from February 2011 to April 2012.

The report shows that progress has been made since the strategy was first adopted by member States in 2009. We have received some encouraging feedback regarding improvements in communication with member States, media response to major events and press campaigns, and enhanced civil society engagement in the work of UNCTAD. Nevertheless, more work needs to be done to strengthen UNCTAD's communications and outreach.

As you are aware, UNCTAD's communication activities have recently been the subject of several evaluations. Besides the annual review by this session of the Working Party, communication aspects have been touched upon in the recent JIU Report and, in 2010, OIOS reviewed the work of the CIO (Communications, Information and Outreach) Section as well as activities undertaken across the house. The implementation of the OIOS recommendations is reviewed and reported on every six months. In addition to these reviews by intergovernmental

and oversight bodies, UNCTAD is also routinely eliciting feedback on its communications activities. This includes the evaluation of major civil society events, the monitoring of web downloads and the review of press clippings. We have also taken careful note of your references to communications-related issues in recent intergovernmental deliberations and we are discussing internally how to best address them. All of these processes provide valuable insights into where we can do better. This session of the working party is an occasion to continue the debate, and we look forward to your constructive views on how best to move forward.

Allow me therefore to briefly outline some of the key activities noted in the report. During the period under review, UNCTAD was engaged in two major conferences, the UN-LDC IV and the thirteenth quadrennial conference, UNCTAD XIII. In addition, two major projects were carried out to build new communications tools, namely the formulation and adoption of UNCTAD's branding policy and the launch of a new website.

As part of our branding initiative, we have formulated a mission statement and a motto ("Prosperity for All"), identified a set of core global messages, and designed a unified graphic identity for UNCTAD. This has been a collaborative process over several months, consulting with representatives from different target audiences, colleagues in-house, experts and other UN agencies. Elements of the graphic identity are now systematically being rolled out to all of our print, online and information materials.

After in-depth consultations with a wide range of target audiences, including particularly our member States, we have also launched our new website on 15 March 2012. The preparatory process in 2011 included the implementation of a new content-management software (Sharepoint 2010), as well as a profound revision of the structure and layout of the site, based on an analysis of users' needs and of the institution's outreach objectives. Adopting the new UNCTAD graphic

identity, the website unifies the Organization's online presence, promoting the One UNCTAD concept. Work is ongoing to further improve the site to ensure a better organization of content and improved search facilities to make it a more user-friendly tool for member States and other target audiences. With this in mind, we thank you for your feedback and we look forward to working with you in the coming weeks on improving the technological aspects and the information provision of the new website.

Since the launch of the new site, the testing and refining of content and technical features – within existing resources – has been a priority. Feedback is crucial in this process. UNCTAD has set up a system to receive and address user comments in a systematic manner. However, as feedback is dealt with by the same staff who both maintain the website and are responsible for ensuring timely updates, there is limited capacity to respond to feedback in real time. It should also be noted that in parallel to launching the new UNCTAD website, UNCTAD developed a dedicated UNCTAD XIII website to provide timely information and background documentation for the Conference with a state-of-the-art tool. The UNCTAD XIII website received more than 150,000 page views in April 2012 alone.

Beyond the launch of the website and the new graphic identity, UNCTAD has also taken measures to improve its outreach and communication activities for specific key audiences. Let me mention a few examples.

1) Policymakers: Policymakers, UNCTAD's principal target group, are reached through face to face meetings with UNCTAD staff and presentations of reports or research findings to delegations, as well as participation in debates, panel discussions, and document dissemination at high-level inter-governmental meetings, such as the Special High-level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization in

New York (March 2012), the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly (October 2011), and meetings of the G-20 Group. The UNCTAD XIII Conference in Doha also provided a key opportunity to reach policy-makers and stakeholders from capitals. The third World Investment Forum (WIF), held in parallel to UNCTAD XIII, was an example of an effective approach aimed at reaching a wide spectrum of audiences. At the WIF, UNCTAD was able to communicate its research and policy analysis to over 1,400 participants from 145 countries, including Heads of State, government ministers and officials, global CEOs, heads of international organizations, academics, representatives of civil society and others. Similarly, the Global Services Forum at the Conference served to create a new global network of policy-makers on the Services Sector, and the high-level Event on Women in Development took the gender issue to a new level of political prominence.

2) Media: We have also made important strides in our media outreach. In the course of last year, UNCTAD's media exposure has increased significantly. Our efforts to nurture relationships with the more than 200 Geneva-based international media representatives accredited to the U.N., as well as to strengthen links with journalists in media hubs throughout the world, and working with the U.N. Department of Public Information, have resulted in thousands of press clippings, features in international radio and television reporting, and an increasing number of electronic media alerts. During the reporting period, 90 press releases and 43 information notes were sent to over 2,000 journalists.

3) Civil Society: With regard to civil society, 2011 has seen a number of positive experiences, which underlined the value of greater engagement with this key stakeholder. In particular, I would like to mention the constructive engagement in the UNCTAD XIII process and the quality of the debates at the UNCTAD Public Symposium last year. The growing level of interest is also reflected in the fact that our database of Civil Society organizations has grown by 40 per cent in 2011. The

creation of a specific section of the new website devoted to civil society and the dissemination of e-alerts and other forms of electronic mailings is showing positive results and has enabled UNCTAD to communicate to a larger civil society community. Against this background, it may be worth making an annual civil society event such as the Public Symposium a permanent feature of UNCTAD's calendar of meetings. Of course, doing so would require additional financial support from member States. Similarly, it should also be stressed that while UNCTAD continues to strive to find ways to strengthen its outreach to civil society, some of the recommendations contained in the communication strategy cannot be implemented from existing resources alone. In particular, this includes outreach at the regional and national levels, the promotion of multilingualism and an increased participation of civil society representatives from the South.

4) Private Sector: UNCTAD is also continuing to strengthen its links with the private sector, and the secretariat has set up a number of innovative partnerships. Beyond hosting the World Investment Forum, which is gaining prominence as a regular gathering bringing together the private sector with policy-makers and other stakeholders, at UNCTAD XIII we also launched the Global Services Forum, which brought together policy makers, business leaders, and representatives of coalitions and associations of services industries from around the world. Other examples include the relationships developed with some sectors in the context of the BioTrade Initiative.

5) Academia and Research Institutions: With regard to our link to academia, UNCTAD's Virtual Institute supports universities and research institutes in developing and transition countries, and has rapidly grown from five founding members in 2004 to 66 university members, eight think tank members, and over 2,600 registered individual users. The videoconferences of the Virtual Institute support the dissemination of the research findings of UNCTAD flagship

publications to students and policymakers in different parts of the world. In addition, since the beginning of 2011, UNCTAD economists have given some 100 lectures and presentations on topics related to the global economic and financial crisis alone.

6) The Wider Public: Beyond its engagement with specific groups, UNCTAD also reaches out the wider public. Over the period concerned, 89 groups of visitors with over 2,400 participants were hosted by UNCTAD. Within existing resources, UNCTAD also continues to produce audiovisual materials for the general public to showcase the work of the organization and displays its work through information stands at inter-governmental meetings and other major events.

As we implement the communications strategy, we will continue providing our different audiences with targeted information products and services, and we welcome an ongoing dialogue and feedback on the usefulness of our information sharing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to also say a few words about the implementation of our publications policy. In accordance with paragraph 186 of the Accra Accord, UNCTAD continued streamlining its publications programme, focusing on the quality and relevance of each publication. While we published 225 publications over the biennium 2008-2009, the number of projected publications in the programme for the current biennium is 184. At the current session the Working Party, you have an opportunity to review this programme in the light of the outcomes of UNCTAD XIII.

We have also made efforts to improve quality control for our publications. Peer reviews, both internal and external, are routinely used. In addition, every

publication and document produced undergoes policy clearance to ensure policy consistency and to monitor quality.

Let me also say a few words about an issue of particular concern to many of you, namely that of timely translation of documents. While resources constraints in UNOG continue to be the main obstacle in this context, we in UNCTAD have taken steps to make the production of publications, including their translation, more manageable. We have decided to try and reduce the length of recurrent publications by a minimum of 20 per cent and to limit the length of all publications, except for justifiable cases, to 100 pages. Authors were also encouraged to prepare overviews or executive summaries of some important publications, which will have a better chance of being translated fast. We feel that in addition to the practical advantages, these measures should attract more readers, especially among policymakers.

With regard to the dissemination of our publications, we have continued our efforts to broaden the reach and readership of UNCTAD publications. During the period covered by this report, UNCTAD organized 124 press conferences worldwide to launch 21 reports and publications. Paper copies and CD-ROM versions of UNCTAD publications are regularly handed out at conferences, seminars, meetings and exhibitions. We are also making greater use of our Virtual Institute's potential in boosting online dissemination through the full text-searchable online library. Publications on trade-related issues are regularly disseminated electronically through networks such as the Social Science Research Network. UNCTAD has also developed the online and interactive World Investment Network, which now includes more than 9,000 individual contacts.

More generally, with the growing use of information and communication technologies, we are working to achieve a better balance between traditional and electronic modes of dissemination, depending on the specific needs of each type of

audience and region. All publications can be accessed and downloaded free of charge from the UNCTAD website.

Finally, allow me to draw your attention to the survey on UNCTAD's main publications, which can be found in document TD/B/WP(61)/CRP.1. As you are aware, UNCTAD's publications policy provides that the Working Party review the results of a survey of publications issued during the previous year. This is the fourth systematic survey for which seven publications were selected.

The survey received 183 responses, covering a broader range of categories of respondents. The results showed that the readers rated the publications positively, with the average overall assessment for all publications of 4.2 (the rating was based on a scale of 1 to 5), with the most frequent single rating being 4. This rating, which is in line with previous results, implies that UNCTAD's publications continue to be valued highly for their analytical contribution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope that this report provides you with a useful insight into the efforts that have been carried out by the Secretariat, and I look forward to hearing your views.

Thank you very much.