

**Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme
Budget**

Sixty-First Session, Geneva, 23-25 July 2012

Opening Statement by the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Madam Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to this sixty-first session of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget.

This session of the Working Party follows what has been an intense few months for UNCTAD. The UNCTAD XIII Conference in April successfully concluded long and sometimes arduous negotiations on the future work-programme for the organization, and agreed the "Doha Mandate". In addition to re-affirming the Accra Accord, the Doha Mandate builds on it by providing additional guidance and emphases in certain areas, in light of the most recent development challenges.

The Doha Conference was followed by intergovernmental deliberations on how best to further improve UNCTAD's Management and Administration, so as to strengthen its effectiveness and impact in delivering its mandate. One of the key features of this ongoing discussion is a call for continuing our efforts to enhance outreach and communications and strengthening the mechanisms for consultations between member States and the Secretariat.

This session of the Working Party is an opportunity to translate both of these into action. The agenda before you includes two key items. Firstly, a review of the implementation of UNCTAD communications strategy and publications policy. This item allows not only for a review of the progress achieved, but also for a constructive exchange on how we can improve our outreach activities to member States as well as other stakeholders and the general public. The report submitted to you by the UNCTAD Secretariat provides an overview of the activities related to the implementation of UNCTAD's communications strategy between February 2011 and April 2012.

As you will recall, the Communications Strategy, adopted by the Trade and Development Board in September 2009, reflects the strong commitment of the Secretariat to strengthen its outreach activities. Since then, considerable progress has been made in our outreach in terms of engagement with stakeholders, customization of content, use of new communication tools, adoption of a unified and improved branding and visual identity and media response. We have also launched a more modern and user-friendly website. Nevertheless, we still need to do better, and find innovative ways of overcoming the remaining technical obstacles and resource constraints. I will make a more detailed presentation of the Secretariat Report under this agenda item. However, I would like to emphasize that we greatly value your input on how we can improve our outreach and communication efforts, and I hope that the discussion at this Working Party can make a useful contribution in this regard.

The second item relates to the review of our programme budget for the present biennium (2012-2013) as well as the draft programme plan for

the next biennium (2014-2015). Here, today's meeting provides a key opportunity to update these documents in the light of the outcomes of UNCTAD XIII, and thus transform the work-programme you have given us in Doha into tangible outputs.

This afternoon and in the next two days, my colleagues will take you through the specific changes that the Secretariat proposes for each Subprogramme in each of the two documents. I will therefore not go into details at this point. Nevertheless, allow me to clarify some general and procedural issues related to this agenda item that have been raised by delegations.

As you are aware, the budget cycle in the United Nations happens in two stages. First, a Programme Plan is developed for a given biennium, about two years prior to the start of the biennium. Once approved by the General Assembly, this Programme Plan becomes the basis for our Programme Budget, about one year ahead of the start of the biennium. At several points during the year we are therefore dealing with two biennia: Today, for example, we are looking at an adjustment of the Programme Budget for the current biennium (2012-2013) and of the programme plan for the next biennium, 2014-2015. Unfortunately, the budget cycle of the UN Secretariat does not fully coincide with the scheduling of the meetings of all Departments of the UN Secretariat, e.g. UNCTAD Ministerial Conferences, which can lead to some confusion, in the process of adjusting them.

Allow me therefore to clarify. As far as the programme budget for the current biennium 2012-2013 is concerned, you will have noted that the Secretariat has issued a list with proposed revisions of outputs. The

reason for this is that, for the current biennium, we are dealing with a programme budget that has already been approved by the General Assembly last December after a lengthy inter-governmental process. As this is an already approved document that is being implemented since January 2012, our room for manoeuvre, as well as time remaining until the end of the biennium, is very limited. In accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, we can reformulate outputs within the resources approved, but it is not possible to change other parts of the programme plan and budget. Let me spell out what this actually means: any new outputs would need to be compensated through the termination, change or reduction of equivalent outputs as no additional resources will be made available.

With regards to the biennial programme plan for 2014-2015, this document has already been discussed by the Membership prior to the Doha Conference last November and, on this basis, it was issued by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has been considered by the Committee for Programme and Coordination - CPC - in June. The report of the CPC, which was made available to us last week, includes a number of recommended changes to the General Assembly. To inform your discussion during this session, we have included these changes into the document CRP.2 and circulated it last Friday. It should be noted that the CPC has only considered the document on the basis of mandates prior to the Doha Conference, that is the Accra Accord and other relevant General Assembly resolutions. Therefore, regardless of the recommendations of the CPC, you have the opportunity now to reflect the new mandates of

Doha into a revised Programme Plan, which will then be reviewed in June 2013 by the CPC.

In general, the guiding principle for your revision here is defined in the terms of reference of the Working Party that have been informally agreed, that is: these documents are presented for your review and, more specifically, for your views on whether the balance of activities and priorities is appropriate in light of the relevant legislative mandates. We look forward to a useful discussion and, as usual, we are ready to provide any information, support or clarifications that you might require.

Thank you very much.