

63rd session of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the
Programme Budget
Geneva, 21–23 November 2012

Opening Statement by the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to this sixty-third session of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget. The sessions of the Working Party are a core opportunity for member States to review the biennial programme plans and programme budgets, which are results-based management tools that have been used in the United Nations Secretariat for many years now.

This session will be devoted to the preparations for the 2014–2015 biennium, and member States are called upon to guide the UNCTAD secretariat in ensuring that we faithfully translate the mandates you have given us into corresponding operational activities. Before I present the document that has been circulated for your review, I would like to briefly go over the main features of the budgetary process of the United Nations Secretariat, of which UNCTAD is a component Department.

The budgetary process of the United Nations Secretariat takes place in two stages: first, the biennial programme plans of all Departments of the Secretariat, contained in the document known as the Strategic Framework, are discussed on several occasions until they are finally approved at the level of the General Assembly. You will recall

that the Working Party had the opportunity last November to discuss UNCTAD's proposed biennial programme plan for the period 2014–2015. Moreover, on an exceptional basis following our thirteenth quadrennial Conference, we had the opportunity to look at this plan once again in late July and then in early October, in order to bring it into line with the Doha Mandate.

Then comes the second stage of the budgetary process, in which the approved biennial programme plan is completed by adding the remaining elements that make up the programme narrative, meaning all the elements that are *not* highlighted in the CRP.1 document. The programme narrative, once reviewed by the membership, will form the basis of the UNCTAD secretariat's budget submission to the relevant bodies in New York.

Therefore, your work in reviewing the document before you is fundamental, as it is the opportunity to formally communicate the priorities, balance of activities and focus that you expect from the work of the secretariat. And I say formally because your input will become part of our proposed programme budget, which is ultimately approved by the General Assembly.

Allow me to now turn to the CRP.1 document, the draft proposed programme narrative for the 2014–2015 biennium. I have referred to the items that are not highlighted in the document, so you may be asking yourselves: what about the areas that are highlighted? As reflected in the footnote on the cover page of the document, the highlighted parts are taken as approved by the membership during the 61st session (resumed) of the Working Party. These parts have been agreed and transmitted to

the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, in New York. Those elements are maintained in the document because it would not be a coherent piece without them.

It is thus the new elements of the document that are presented for your consideration. This includes three "general" sections, namely part A, which contains a description of our policymaking organs; part B, which contains the information relevant to the work and organization of the Office of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD; and part C, which refers to the work of the three Services that provide general support to the UNCTAD secretariat. At the beginning of the informal session, I intend to refer to these three parts in more detail.

The remaining items presented for your consideration are included under each of the five subprogrammes of UNCTAD's work. This is, if I may say so, the real substance of the document. For each subprogramme, you will find: (a) performance measures, meaning the specific target that the secretariat will try to achieve under each indicator of achievement; (b) external factors, meaning the conditions underpinning the achievement of the stated objectives; and (c) a list of outputs, meaning the specific activities that the secretariat will undertake during the 2014–2015 biennium. Again, this is an opportunity to influence the work of the secretariat and to help us ensure that we have correctly interpreted the mandates that you have given us. The officials responsible for each of the subprogrammes will be here to present the corresponding sections of the document and to provide any clarifications or further information that you may require.

Mr. Chairman,

I understand that informal consultations have resulted in an understanding that this session of the Working Party will take up the new draft evaluations plan. Following a decision by the Working Party in 2003 to invite the secretariat to propose future evaluation plans, and the expiry of the last evaluation plan in 2011, the secretariat has proposed a new evaluation plan for the period 2013–2015, which is now before you.

The new evaluation plan proposes that member States consider an external evaluation of one of UNCTAD's subprogrammes each year. This would be a more systematic approach towards the selection of programmes of work for evaluation, and would also respond to a strengthened results-based management system. Let me briefly explain.

Through each evaluation, UNCTAD's member States, management and stakeholders would be presented with a holistic review of the subprogramme's performance in the implementation of its work, as assessed against its stated objectives and expected accomplishments in the programme plans that member States consider and approve each biennium. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of such evaluations promote learning that will allow us to make more informed decisions in the planning and conduct of our work, thus contributing towards more effective delivery on our mandates, and of course enhancing our accountability to you, our member States.

In line with the recent decision of the Board at its fifty-ninth session regarding measures to strengthen results-based management and the evaluation of programmes of work, member States are therefore

invited to take this opportunity to help define our evaluation agenda based on our shared interest in strengthening this institution.

Let me stop here by thanking you for your attention and for giving us the opportunity to present UNCTAD's proposed programme narrative for the 2014–2015 biennium, as well as the proposed evaluation plan. We look forward to your comments and inputs.

Thank you very much.