



**United Nations
Conference
on Trade and
Development**

Distr.
GENERAL

TD/B/50/7
TD/B/WP/167
12 August 2003

Original: ENGLISH

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Working Party on the Medium-term Plan
and the Programme Budget
Forty-first session
Geneva, 15–19 September 2003
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

DRAFT TECHNICAL COOPERATION STRATEGY OF UNCTAD

1. The draft strategy for UNCTAD's technical cooperation has been prepared in accordance with the agreed conclusions adopted at the second part of the fortieth session of the Working Party, held in May 2003, in which the Working Party "took note of the information provided by the secretariat in document TD/B/WP/161 'Note by the Secretariat', and the indication that a new draft strategy for UNCTAD's technical cooperation will be prepared and presented to the Working Party at its forty-first session for consideration by member States."

Draft technical cooperation strategy

2. The strategy sets out the operational activities of UNCTAD that address the practical problems of trade and development in an era of globalization and liberalization. It is designed to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of these activities as an essential complement to the institution's policy-oriented analytical and deliberative work.

3. The **objective** of UNCTAD's technical cooperation is to assist developing countries to reap opportunities to be derived from the process of their integration into the world economy, in particular by enhancing their endogenous capacity to set and implement their own development strategy.

4. In this regard, UNCTAD's technical cooperation will particularly emphasize the **development of human, institutional, productive and export capacities** of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and in particular least developed countries, with a view to supporting poverty reduction policies and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

5. In providing its technical cooperation services, UNCTAD will draw on its expertise as a knowledge-based organization. In doing so, **analytical work and operational activities will be further integrated** in a manner ensuring that they are supportive of each other and aiming at ensuring coherence among the thematic areas of UNCTAD's expertise.

6. UNCTAD's technical cooperation will be determined by the **work programme priorities** set out in the final document of UNCTAD X and as reflected in the relevant decisions of the Trade and Development Board, as well as relevant outcomes of recent global conferences, such as the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs, the fourth and fifth WTO Ministerial Conferences, and the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries.

7. UNCTAD's technical cooperation will **focus on capacity development**. This implies enhancing developing countries' endogenous capacity to formulate, implement and evaluate home-grown policies for (i) the development and diversification of their domestic productive sector, (ii) the design and implementation of trade and investment policies and negotiating strategies, and (iii) the development of trade support services, within the framework of their development goals and taking into account the evolving international environment.

8. Stemming from the focus on capacity development:

- (a) UNCTAD's technical cooperation will be **needs-driven**. Needs will be identified by beneficiary countries and regions;
- (b) Programme and project activities will be designed and implemented in a manner that ensures the **ownership** of the beneficiaries;
- (c) Programme design, formulation and implementation will be carried out in **close consultation with beneficiaries and donors**;
- (d) The main thrust will be to target **long-term development needs** such as human and institutional capacity;
- (e) Particular attention will be paid to the goal of **sustainability** of projects and programmes;
- (f) The programmes will be designed and implemented in cooperation with international and regional agencies providers of trade- and investment-related technical cooperation, and in **partnership** with academia, the business community and NGOs; and
- (g) UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities will be directed towards developing countries with the greatest needs. **Least developed countries** will have priority in assistance provided by UNCTAD.

9. An **integrated approach** to the delivery of technical cooperation will be pursued at both the UNCTAD and the inter-institutional level.

- (a) At the UNCTAD level, the integrated approach will provide for delivery of holistic and multidisciplinary technical cooperation and capacity development in UNCTAD's areas of expertise. This will provide more coherence in UNCTAD's operations and lessen the incidence of fragmented interventions;
- (b) At the inter-institutional level, UNCTAD will seek to strengthen cooperation and increase joint activities with other agencies providers of trade and investment technical cooperation, and in particular with the United Nations regional commissions, UNDP, WTO, ITC, the World Bank, UNIDO and other intergovernmental institutions, including regional and subregional institutions. The main goal of UNCTAD's cooperation with other providers of trade and investment technical cooperation will be to maximize the impact of operations and increase the complementarities between institutions, so as to take advantage of their respective expertise, taking into account their mandates and comparative advantages, increase synergy and avoid duplication. Instruments such as Memoranda of Understanding and inter-agency task forces will be used as appropriate.

10. Subject to availability of human and financial resources, **country-level programmes and projects** will be intensified. This in particular applies to topics and modalities of technical cooperation that require customized, long-term and intense national-based operations, in accordance with beneficiary interests and commitment in support of the operation. In this connection, cooperation and joint undertakings with United Nations Resident Coordinators and relevant agencies with field representation will be increased, particularly in the formulation and implementation of countries' national trade and development strategies. Similarly, UNCTAD will seek increased participation in country-level mechanisms such as the CCA/UNDAF, World Bank Consultative Groups, and UNDP Round Tables.

11. With regard to **forms of technical cooperation**, UNCTAD's technical cooperation will include, among others:

- (a) Exchanges of development experiences;
- (b) National case studies and thematic studies on particular development issues as part of the secretariat's work programme and as a contribution to intergovernmental and expert deliberations;
- (c) Policy reviews in the areas of investment and science, technology and innovation, and assessments of the efficiency of trade-supporting services;
- (d) Advisory services at the country, subregional and regional level;
- (e) UNCTAD-wide integrated country-level programmes for selected countries, within the context of country-level coordination, in particular for least developed countries; these should also contribute to policy dialogues at World Bank Consultative Groups and UNDP Round Tables;
- (f) Support for human resources development and institution-building, including the development of tool-kits (e.g. software and manuals on best practices) and

- (g) advice and training on their application and utilization by beneficiary countries;
- (h) Training activities encompassing both structured human resources development programmes that seek to strengthen local training and research capacities, and *ad hoc* training workshops and familiarization seminars; and
- (i) Dissemination of information on trade, investment and related matters from UNCTAD databases to developing countries, for use by Governments or civil society.

12. UNCTAD should also further develop **guidelines for partnerships with NGOs**, especially regarding their involvement in thematic discussions and in delivering technical cooperation services. Several NGOs are now full-fledged partners in some UNCTAD programmes, and this should occur more often in the future. Cooperation with the private sector, civil society and the academic community from all regions of the world will be strengthened, in part as beneficiaries of UNCTAD's operational activities in accordance with national priorities, and in part as sources of relevant experience and expertise for such activities.

13. In carrying out technical cooperation, and in order to facilitate the exchange of lessons of development experiences, efforts should focus on **institutional capacity building**. UNCTAD will:

- (a) Enhance and make full use of national expertise and institutions, so as to ensure that national stakeholders are active partners in the design and implementation of the activities, in terms of priority setting, skills and resources;
- (b) Promote networking, including twinning arrangements, among institutions working in similar or related fields, including with institutions in developed countries; and
- (c) Draw upon institutions and expertise in other developing countries by using TCDC modalities.

14. Projects and programmes will be **monitored** on a continuous basis for their development impact – particularly their impact on national capacities – and for their cost-effectiveness. To facilitate this, measurable targets will be set when projects begin. These will include **benchmarks and indicators of achievement** at the stage of project formulation that will also set the ground for project evaluation.

15. Selected projects and programmes will be subject to independent **evaluation**, in agreement with both the beneficiary country(ies) and the donor(s). Evaluations will examine the impact of activities against their objectives and will propose practical recommendations to deal with deficiencies. Each year, the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget will consider an in-depth study on a technical cooperation programme.

16. The Board will review the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD, including their cost-effectiveness. It will be assisted in this task by the Working Party, which will meet for this purpose immediately prior to the Board.

17. In order to ensure the effective integration of analytical work with technical cooperation, responsibility for project preparation and implementation will be entrusted to the corresponding secretariat entity responsible for the work programme. UNCTAD's Technical Cooperation Section will be proactive in ensuring the overall coherence of the secretariat's technical cooperation activities.

18. Strict quality control will be exercised by the secretariat through adherence to commonly established quality standards at the project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages.

19. The management of technical cooperation will be improved by streamlining administrative procedures. An appropriate share of the support costs received by UNCTAD for project execution will be allocated to the responsible substantive programme in a transparent and equitable manner.