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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Working Party on the Medium-term Plan  
and the Programme Budget

Fortieth session, second part

Geneva, 21-23 May 2003

Agenda item 6

**UNCTAD'S TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

**Note by the UNCTAD secretariat**

1. At its thirty-ninth session, the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget adopted agreed conclusions on "Evaluation of technical cooperation activities". In paragraph 4 of those conclusions, it requested the secretariat to initiate a process of consultation with member States with a view to integrating into UNCTAD's technical cooperation strategy the appropriate elements arising from the thematic evaluation on capacity building. The secretariat was also requested to present the outcome of such consultations, including proposals, to the Working Party in May 2003.
2. Two series of such consultations with the members of the Working Party and other interested delegations were held in November 2002 and February 2003. They were carried out in conjunction with consultations requested in Board decision 472 (XLLX) on "Review of technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD". In paragraphs 3 and 9 of that decision, the Board requested the secretariat: (a) to initiate consultations with member States with regard to the implementation of those recommendations of the internal review of UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities which require consultations with member States; and (b) to prepare a note, in consultation with member States, on a possible UNCTAD approach to capacity building for consideration at a future session of the Working Party.

3. The consultations resulted in an understanding that the above provisions hinge mainly on strategy and capacity building, and they are therefore interrelated. Thus, it was felt that issues emanating from the internal review and the thematic evaluation of capacity building should be dealt with in the context of a new strategy for technical cooperation. It was also agreed that the 1997 UNCTAD technical cooperation strategy, while still relevant, needs to be updated, and that in order to reinforce that strategy, it is necessary to incorporate a number of elements from the recommendations of the independent evaluation team on the thematic evaluation of capacity building (TD/B/WP/155). Those elements are concerned with: identification of capacity gaps in final programme design; national ownership; a more focused approach in terms of technical scope and geographic coverage; an integrated approach; concentration on those activities in which UNCTAD has strong substantive competence; assessment of effectiveness; increased reliance on expertise available in developing countries for the implementation of activities; favouring long-term goals over short-term perspectives; exit strategy; greater emphasis on institutional capacity building; harmonized training of trainers; and the logical framework approach.

4. Should the Working Party endorse the result of the consultations, as reported above, it is proposed that a draft of a new strategy of UNCTAD technical cooperation be prepared and be presented to the September session of the Working Party for consideration by member States. In formulating the draft strategy, account will be taken of the recent initiative of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD with regard to a more integrated approach to capacity building in trade, investment and development in UNCTAD. The Working Party will be briefed orally on this initiative.

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