



# United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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## Trade and Development Board

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

Fifty-third session

Geneva, 7–9 September 2009

# Report of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget on its fifty-third session

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 7 to 9 September 2009

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## **I. Draft decision and agreed conclusions adopted by the Working Party at its fifty-third session**

### **A. Draft decision for consideration by the Trade and Development Board**

#### **Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing**

(Agenda item 3)

##### *The Trade and Development Board*

1. *Takes note* with appreciation of the technical cooperation activities carried out by the UNCTAD secretariat in cooperation with the beneficiaries and development partners, and the reports prepared for the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget;

2. *Reaffirms* the role of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget as the main mechanism for consultations among member States on all issues regarding technical cooperation and for interactive debate between the secretariat, potential beneficiaries and donors, in accordance with paragraph 220 of the Accra Accord;

3. *Expresses* gratitude for the support provided by bilateral and multilateral donors, and invites donors and potential donors in a position to do so to provide adequate funding for the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD;

4. *Takes note* of the decrease of 8 per cent in total trust fund contributions experienced in 2008, while noting that 2007 was an exceptional year in terms of contributions;

5. *Thanks* the contributors to the UNCTAD Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Trust Fund, expresses concern that the fund never reached its intended level, and invites donors and potential donors in a position to do so to make financial contributions to the LDC Trust Fund to ensure, inter alia, full and effective participation of the LDC representatives and their civil society actors in the preparatory processes of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries and at the conference itself. Also invites extrabudgetary contributions from donors and potential donors in a position to do so to enable the UNCTAD secretariat to enhance its substantive and technical contributions to the preparatory processes and to the conference;

6. *Calls for* the full implementation, by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, of the previous decisions of the Working Party – especially paragraph 12 of the agreed conclusions of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget at its resumed fifty-second session in June 2009 (TD/B/WP/210) – to strengthen the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes to fully enable the division to discharge its mandated responsibilities, including the task of providing substantive and technical support to the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries;

7. *Recalls* paragraph 10 of the Accra Accord and requests UNCTAD to deliver its technical cooperation pursuant to the relevant paragraphs of the Accra Accord;

8. *Notes* with satisfaction the increase in total delivery of the technical cooperation programmes of UNCTAD. As LDCs' special needs require special attention, urges donors, potential donors and the UNCTAD secretariat to further enhance their assistance to these countries;

9. *Expresses* concern regarding the decrease of the funds allocated to the technical assistance projects for developing countries acceding to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and in particular LDCs. In this regard, invites donors and potential donors in a position to do so to make contributions to the UNCTAD Trust Fund for WTO accession for financing these projects and, in accordance with paragraph 90 of the Accra Accord, encourages UNCTAD to strengthen those technical assistance projects and to explore new finance mechanisms for them;

10. *Notes* with appreciation the creation of the new UNCTAD project portal website and its potential contribution to greater transparency and improved monitoring and reporting of projects, and requests the secretariat to continue to improve the project portal website;

11. *Requests* the secretariat to enhance its activities at the regional and subregional level, and ensure that the regional dimension is given adequate attention in the delivery of technical cooperation. Also requests the secretariat to upgrade data and analytical tools on South–South flows and cooperation, and promote South–South and triangular cooperation, in accordance with paragraph 43 of the Accra Accord;

12. *Thanks* the secretariat for the information provided regarding requests for technical cooperation and requests the secretariat to continue to provide this information, with particular emphasis on their follow-up and funding status;

13. *Recalls* its decisions 492 (LIV) and 495 (LV), and paragraphs 215 (c), 216 and 217 of the Accra Accord regarding the need for more coherence in the planning and implementation of technical cooperation programmes, in particular through the establishment of thematic clusters;

14. *Reaffirms* that the establishment of thematic trust funds should aim at enhancing the effectiveness and impact of UNCTAD technical cooperation activities without compromising the scope, content, delivery and quality of reporting. They should also enhance the links between the operational activities and the analytical work of UNCTAD and the results of intergovernmental deliberations;

15. *Notes* that financial consolidation of projects is the necessary prerequisite for the establishment of thematic trust funds and that financial consolidation of projects requires the commingling of contributions, entailing donors' consent, and further notes with concern limited progress with respect to consolidation of projects and establishment of thematic trust funds, thanks donors who have provided the secretariat with the necessary instructions for making progress in that respect and invites other donors to provide the secretariat with necessary instructions;

16. *Requests* the secretariat to organize a retreat, before the end of 2009, with the participation of donors, beneficiaries and the secretariat, to address difficulties and find solutions for the implementation of recommendations regarding the establishment of thematic trust funds. Requests the secretariat to report back to the Working Party on the progress made on the further consolidation of the trust funds;

17. *Commends* UNCTAD's increased emphasis on results and encourages further development towards results-based management with clear objectives, intended results and monitorable indicators for higher-level outcomes;

18. *Takes note* of the active involvement of UNCTAD in the inter-agency processes related to the United Nations system-wide coherence process and its leading role within the Chief Executives Board cluster on trade and productive capacity, and would welcome any future intergovernmental decision in the General Assembly on United Nations system-wide coherence reform;

19. *Takes note* of UNCTAD's contribution to "programme country pilot" activities without prejudice to a future intergovernmental decision on United Nations system-wide coherence reform;

20. *Invites* the secretariat to explore the possibility of increasing partnerships with the private sector in the implementation and funding of technical cooperation activities.

## **B. Agreed conclusions**

### **Evaluation of UNCTAD activities: an in-depth external evaluation of UNCTAD's commodities programme**

(Agenda item 4)

#### **1. In-depth evaluation of UNCTAD's commodities programme**

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

*Having considered* the report "In-depth external evaluation of UNCTAD's commodities programme" (TD/B/WP/213), its supporting materials (TD/B/WP/214) and the document prepared by the secretariat "Management response to the in-depth external evaluation of UNCTAD's commodities programme" (TD/B/WP(53)/CRP. 1),

1. *Commends and expresses* appreciation to the evaluation team for its report, and to the secretariat for the support provided to the evaluation process, and to the Government of Norway for its financial support;

2. *Takes note* of the findings of the report of the evaluation team, and expresses concern at the problems and shortcomings raised by the evaluation team, reiterates that UNCTAD has a central role to play as a thought leader on commodity-related development issues, recognizes the efforts since then to enhance performance in the area of commodities in implementing the Accra Accord, including the establishment of the Special Unit on Commodities under the direct guidance and leadership of the Secretary-General;

3. *Endorses* the recommendations contained in the evaluation report, taking into consideration the comments made on the report during the session, notes the steps already taken by the secretariat in this direction, and requests the secretariat to implement the endorsed recommendations within UNCTAD's mandate;

4. *Welcomes* the contributions made by donors to this programme of work, encourages the Special Unit on Commodities to increase its productivity along the lines of the recommendations, and encourages the donor community to increase its financial support for initiatives in this programme of work;

5. *Requests* the secretariat to report back on the progress made in the implementation of the endorsed recommendations at the next session of the Working Party on technical cooperation, bearing in mind some recommendations – e.g. filling of vacant posts with highly qualified staff with relevant skills – are immediate or short-term. Therefore requests the secretariat to report back on the implementation of all recommendations in the next Executive Session of the Trade and Development Board in 2010.

#### **2. Evaluation plan**

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

*Having considered* the evaluation plan proposed by the secretariat,

1. *Reiterates* the importance of the independent evaluation process in UNCTAD and requests the secretariat to implement the plan as follows:

(a) For 2010: An in-depth evaluation of UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities dedicated to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies;

(b) For 2011: An in-depth evaluation of UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development;

2. On an exceptional basis, *requests* an independent evaluation of UNCTAD's programme of assistance to the Palestinian people by an external evaluator, and recommends that the results of the evaluation be considered by the Trade and Development Board at its fifty-eighth session, under its agenda item on UNCTAD's assistance to the Palestinian people.

## **II. Proceedings**

### **A. Opening statements**

1. The following speakers made opening statements: Mr. Petko Draganov, Deputy Secretary-General, UNCTAD; the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries; the representative of Bangladesh on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries; the representative of Sri Lanka on behalf of the Asian Group; the representative of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the African Group; the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union; and the representative of China.

### **B. Informal meetings**

2. The Working Party pursued its deliberations in an informal setting.

## **III. Organizational matters**

### **A. Election of officers**

(Agenda item 1)

3. At the opening plenary meeting, on 7 September 2009, the Working Party elected Ms. Heli Niemi (Finland) as its Chair and Mr. Jesus Ricardo S. Domingo (Philippines) as its Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

### **B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

(Agenda item 2)

4. At the same meeting, the Working Party adopted its provisional agenda (TD/B/WP/211). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing

4. Evaluation of UNCTAD activities: an in-depth external evaluation of UNCTAD's commodities programme
5. Provisional agenda for the fifty-fourth session of the Working Party
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

**C. Provisional agenda for the fifty-fourth session of the Working Party**

(Agenda item 5)

5. At its closing plenary meeting, on 7 September 2009, the Working Party adopted the provisional agenda for its fifty-fourth session (see annex I).

**D. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board**

(Agenda item 7)

6. At the same meeting, the Working Party authorized the Rapporteur to finalize the report on its fifty-third session.

## **Annex I**

### **Provisional agenda for the fifty-fourth session of the Working Party**

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of the proposed UNCTAD Biennial Programme Plan for the period 2012–2013
4. Review of the implementation of the publications policy and the communications strategy
5. Provisional agenda for the fifty-fifth session of the Working Party
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

## Annex II

### Attendance<sup>1</sup>

1. Representatives of the following States members of the Working Party attended the session:

Albania	Japan
China	Mexico
Djibouti	Morocco
El Salvador	Peru
Finland	Philippines
France	Sweden
Indonesia	Switzerland
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	United States of America

2. Representatives of the following States members of UNCTAD but not members of the Working Party attended the session:

Algeria	Norway
Angola	Oman
Bangladesh	Portugal
Belgium	Qatar
Benin	Romania
Brazil	Rwanda
Burundi	Saudi Arabia
Cameroon	Serbia
Colombia	Slovakia
Côte d'Ivoire	Slovenia
Cyprus	South Africa
Czech Republic	Spain
Dominican Republic	Sri Lanka
Germany	Syrian Arab Republic
Greece	Thailand
Guatemala	Ukraine
Haiti	United Arab Emirates
India	Uzbekistan
Iraq	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Israel	Viet Nam
Kazakhstan	Yemen
Malaysia	Zimbabwe
Nepal	

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<sup>1</sup> For the list of participants, see TD/B/WP(53)/Inf.1.