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Trade and Development Board Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance

Eighty-fifth session

Geneva, 24, 25 and 27 January 2023

Report of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance on its eighty-fifth session

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 24, 25 and 27 January 2023

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Introduction

The eighty-fifth session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 24, 25 and 27 January 2023. The Working Party pursued its deliberations in an informal setting.

I. Action taken by the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance at its eighty-fifth session

A. Review of the draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2024, part A of the proposed programme budget

(Agenda item 3)

Agreed conclusions

The Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance

1. *Concurs* with the UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2024, part A of the proposed programme budget, as contained in document TD/B/WP(85)/INF.1;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to take account of comments and inputs provided during the eighty-fifth session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance and in document TD/B/WP(85)/INF.1 for the purposes of her submission of inputs for the proposed UNCTAD programme budget for the year 2024 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for subsequent consideration by the General Assembly of the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies, and further requests the secretariat to debrief the UNCTAD membership on the final document issued for consideration by the General Assembly of the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies, including proposed resources;

3. *Welcomes* the presentations provided by the secretariat, including by the Deputy Secretary-General, and calls upon UNCTAD to continue to mainstream the agreements outlined in the Bridgetown Covenant into its programme plans;

4. *Notes* the improvement in the quality of the results and performance measures presented, and of the document presented overall, and encourages continued efforts in this sense;

5. *Notes also* the ongoing work on strategic multi-year results framework and the effective implementation of result-based management, and looks forward to the presentation of the progress in the next months;

6. *Takes note with appreciation of* the information provided to member States and made available by the secretariat on the Delegates Portal on the resources for UNCTAD for the year 2023 and on the geographical and gender representation of UNCTAD staff, as well as on the use of internships within the UNCTAD secretariat in the year 2022, and calls upon the secretariat to continue providing such information and taking actions towards improving geographical and gender balance;

7. *Takes note of and expresses its appreciation for* the provision to member States of the performance report on the implementation of deliverables for the year 2022, in line with the agreed conclusions from the previous session;

8. *Takes note of and welcomes* paragraph 45 of resolution 77/262 of the General Assembly on the proposed programme budget for 2023, on the approval of the establishment of nine additional posts in UNCTAD, and encourages the secretariat to update member States on the functional attribution of these posts.

27 January 2023

B. Other action taken by the Working Party

Review of the draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2024, part A of the proposed programme budget (Agenda item 3)

1. At its closing plenary meeting, on 27 January 2023, the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance adopted agreed conclusions on the agenda item (see chapter I, section A, above).
2. Also at its closing plenary meeting, under the agenda item, the Working Party concluded discussions on the draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2024, as contained in document (TD/B/WP(85)/CRP.1). The revised draft of the document would be published as document TD/B/WP(85)/INF.1.

II. Chair's summary

A. Opening plenary meeting

3. The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD opened the discussion at the session. The following speakers made opening statements: the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; the representative of the European Union, on behalf of the European Union and its member States; the representative of Canada, on behalf of the JUSSCANNZ group; the representative of the Russian Federation, on behalf of the Eurasian Economic Union; the representative of Maldives, on behalf of small island developing States; the representative of the State of Palestine, on behalf of the Arab Group; the representative of Cambodia; the representative of Cuba; the representative of Pakistan; the representative of Peru; the representative of Jamaica; the representative of Kenya; and the representative of the State of Palestine.

4. In his opening statement, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD recalled the current global context in relation to the work of UNCTAD. The cascading crises of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), climate change and the cost of living were rapidly increasing poverty and hunger. Geopolitics rather than economics were steering globalization. Funding gaps for investment in the Sustainable Development Goals in developing countries were rising, while debt burdens were becoming unbearable for countries in the global South. The gaps in the ability to cope between developed and developing countries, and men and women, were unequal and widening. People were falling into poverty in record numbers and becoming increasingly disillusioned with Governments and political systems.

5. Against that backdrop, he reviewed the work of UNCTAD in 2022. Within three weeks of the start of the war in Ukraine, UNCTAD produced a rapid assessment, drawing on inputs from all subprogrammes, that was widely read by member States and within the United Nations system. The institution was thus well positioned, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations asked UNCTAD to coordinate the task team of the United Nations Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance. Through the Group, UNCTAD produced three policy briefs, providing substantive inputs, and became a leading member of the negotiating team for the two agreements on food and fertilizers. The research and analysis pillar saw a marked increase in the number of media articles (92,200) published on all UNCTAD topics. Reports and specialized publications were downloaded nearly 1 million times, and social media accounts added almost 100,000 followers, reaching more than 500,000. Within the United Nations, UNCTAD trade and development stories featured on un.org 19 times, and United Nations global social media accounts (with over 16 million followers) regularly posted UNCTAD content, a marked increase in support. In consensus-building, the 2022 cycle of meetings was successful, with much higher participation than in previous years, for example, for the annual session of the Trade and Development Board. The high-level segment, with the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Netherlands and the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, drew record attendance by all stakeholders, namely

countries, academia, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies. In addition to higher numbers of participants in general, participants also engaged at more senior levels. Technical cooperation had a breakthrough year in 2022, with a new and bold technical cooperation strategy as well as increasing budgets and delivery of programmes. In 2021, extrabudgetary contributions reached an all-time high of \$51.2 million, a 45 per cent increase, while delivery (total expenditures) rose by 33.5 per cent, reaching a record high of \$46.8 million.

6. With regard to the proposed programme plan for 2024, the selected results for 2022 reflected the multidimensional nature of work in terms of themes, areas and geographical focus. The *UNCTAD Annual Report 2022*, to be published in the second quarter of 2023, would complement those results. A performance report on programme budget deliverables for 2022 had also been prepared for the membership, for transparency and in response to the request for more information at the eighty-fourth session of the Working Party in October 2021. The proposed programme plan was prepared in the context of 2024 marking the institution's sixtieth anniversary. It would be a time to reflect and celebrate how the institution, with its universal membership, had been a forum to discuss and develop ideas that were relevant globally, but particularly for developing countries. The uncertainty and complexity of predict what the world would look like then was taken into consideration in drafting the proposed 2024 programme plan, which reflected the commitment to the three pillars of work to confront those crises and build a resilient, inclusive and sustainable future. Work of the Global Crisis Response Group and on the grain and fertilizer agreement were on a parallel track to the programme plan.

7. The strategic direction of the proposed 2024 programme plan was aligned with the priorities of the Bridgetown Covenant and thus focused on supporting member States in achieving its four transformations. The "Overall orientation" section of the proposed programme plan emphasized the commitment to work on climate change. Externally, the focus would be to continue advancing the issue of the integrated treatment of development economics and climate change in international forums, such as the Conference of the Parties and, internally, on ensuring organizational coherence and synergies on climate and the environment through the cross-divisional environment and climate change working group. To support consideration of gender as an integrated and cross-cutting issue, UNCTAD would support member States in designing and implementing policies that supported women's economic empowerment, by examining gender-specific trade barriers and obstacles and enhancing statistics on gender in trade. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD saw the gender perspective as central to moving forward on the institution's strategic vision, and she had set up a gender committee at the director level that would begin meeting that week. The institutional change in 2022 of a stand-alone and cross-organizational Statistics Service was reflected in the "Overall orientation". Statistics Service deliverables were incorporated into table 12.1, on cross-cutting deliverables. For 2024, the Statistics Service would also be reflected separately in part B, the financial requirements, falling under Executive Direction and Management and with dedicated post and non-post resources. When New York issued the document in final form, including the programme plan and proposed budget (parts A and B, respectively), the secretariat would share it with member States.

8. In addition, cross-fertilization and cooperation between UNCTAD subprogrammes and collaboration with United Nations entities and relevant stakeholders were necessary to address interrelated issues for sustainable and equitable growth and development and were key to the "Overall orientation". UNCTAD would continue working with resident coordinator offices and be involved in the preparation of common country assessments and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. Close work with United Nations regional commissions and partner organizations, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area secretariat, regional economic communities, business communities and strategic development partners, would continue. UNCTAD would likewise foster cooperation with international financial institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Group of 20, to continue bringing the voice and needs of developing countries to the negotiating table. The Deputy Secretary-General recalled that the Secretary-General had

established a dedicated working group on Group of 20 issues to build a stronger, whole-of-UNCTAD effort.

9. The planned results reflected the range of work and a strong connection with the four transformations of the Bridgetown Covenant. The secretariat had taken into account the feedback and comments from member States in discussions on the programme plan and performance information at the eighty-fourth session of the Working Party in October 2022. Among the planned results, he highlighted assisting the State of Palestine in formulating sound economic policies (subprogramme 1), supporting member States in decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation through financing strategies (subprogramme 2), diversifying economics through trade in services (subprogramme 3), assisting developing countries in achieving efficient and resilient port management (subprogramme 4) and enabling the least developed countries to graduate with momentum through the development of comprehensive strategies (subprogramme 5).

10. The Deputy Secretary-General provided an update on the 2023 proposed budget that the membership approved in 2022. In line with the budget implications and requirements of the Bridgetown Covenant, the final budget proposal, which was included in the 2023 fascicle, contained nine additional posts. The secretariat received confirmation from New York that the General Assembly had approved the 2023 UNCTAD budget of \$77 million, including those additional posts. He outlined progress on the development of a multi-year results framework, in collaboration with all divisions and guided by the Bridgetown Covenant, and implementation of results-based management. The institution's main goals were the four transformations. Results-based management best practices had been applied and a theory of change was developed to explain how activities were understood to produce results that contributed to achieving the intended impacts. The theory of change was the backbone of the UNCTAD results framework and was linked logically to the activities UNCTAD delivered, the results of those activities, the in-country impacts and the progress in achieving the four transformations. The logical framework distinguished between what UNCTAD was accountable for (activities and their results) and what UNCTAD contributed to (impacts and achievement of goals). Indicators were identified at each step, and work was currently ongoing on collecting data and information to measure them.

11. He expressed confidence that the results framework being development was a good start that would complement the annual programme plan. Also, in accordance with paragraph 120 of the Bridgetown Covenant, as promised by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, a register of decisions of the Trade and Development Board was made available on the Delegates Portal prior to the end of 2022. The Delegates Portal allowed access to a comprehensive register of decisions and outcomes of the Board and its subsidiary bodies. Finally, he proposed organizing a round of conversations with regional groups at the end of February 2023 to brief them and get feedback on the results framework proposal.

12. The representatives of many regional groups and many delegates thanked the secretariat for the timely provision of the draft 2024 programme plan and noted a clear improvement in the overall quality of the document, including in the planned results and performance measures. The representatives of several regional groups stated that, nonetheless, there was room for improvement, including through the improvement of performance measures, particularly those related to publications, and by improving the balance in the different areas of work of a given subprogramme, including the regions highlighted, over consecutive yearly programme plans.

13. The representative of one regional group and one delegate expressed appreciation for the performance report on the implementation of deliverables for 2022 provided by the secretariat for the first time and said that, in future iterations, the document would benefit from greater coherence to avoid potential overlaps in reporting, particularly in the area of substantive servicing of meetings.

14. The representatives of some regional groups and several delegates welcomed the approval of additional resources for UNCTAD for 2023. They encouraged the secretariat to brief member States on the specific allocation within subprogrammes of the nine posts. The representative of one regional group encouraged UNCTAD to restart the practice of

informal briefings for member States on the final version of the fascicle issued for the consideration of the General Assembly, and to inform the membership of any changes applied to the document after approval by the Working Party.

15. The representatives of many regional groups and one delegate welcomed the progress on defining a multi-year results framework with measurable indicators for the implementation of the Bridgetown Covenant, as requested by member States, as well as the upcoming briefing on the matter.

16. The representatives of some regional groups said that they looked forward to the issuance of *UNCTAD Annual Report*, to complement the reported results for 2022 in the programme plan document.

17. The representative of one regional group also called on the secretariat to continue to explore ways and means to strengthen existing mechanisms for member States to exercise an oversight role, including at the time of the annual report of the Secretary-General to the Trade and Development Board.

18. The representative of another regional group reiterated the importance of incorporating the lessons learned and findings of evaluations into the programme plan. It was important for projects to be continuously monitored for impact, particularly for project recipients.

19. The representative of another regional group underscored the importance of non-politicized implementation of programmes and noted that the priorities of the group, in line with the Bridgetown Covenant, were duly addressed in the document, including those related to increased integration. He thus welcomed UNCTAD collaboration with regional organizations. He also welcomed the commitment to addressing the environmental dimension and called on the secretariat to use its comparative advantage to tackle the trade and development dimension in order to avoid duplication with other organizations.

20. One delegate observed that the phrase “war in Ukraine” was present in several paragraphs of the document. He stated that that was considered unacceptable. Furthermore, in paragraph 12.12, he urged the authors to approach forecasts of the crisis in Ukraine exerting economic consequences globally with greater caution. It was difficult to guess, at the start of 2023, whether the crisis would continue into 2024, get worse or dwindle. He suggested rather wording such as “geopolitical tension” or “geopolitical challenges”. He noted that his delegation would instruct New York colleagues in the Fifth Committee on changing the wording. The representative of one regional group, in response, stated that the United Nations membership had clearly defined their view in General Assembly resolution ES-11/1 of 2 March 2022, which deplored the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, and suggested as more appropriate use of that agreed language.

21. The representative of another regional group stated that it was crucial for the vulnerabilities of the small island developing States to be taken into consideration and reiterated the need for UNCTAD to have a dedicated programme on small island developing States with suitable financing. Another delegate noted that the four transformations were clearly set out in the programme plan document and called on the secretariat to take into consideration, through planned activities, the specific vulnerabilities of small island developing States, including debt management, climate change, financing for development, maritime transport and logistics.

22. The representative of another regional group stressed the importance of technical cooperation activities and urged the secretariat to fundraise and ensure necessary extrabudgetary resources, including for the assessment of the impact of World Trade Organization decisions on developing countries. He stressed the importance of ensuring the necessary resources to the UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit, in line with the commitments in the Bridgetown Covenant.

23. One delegate asked the secretariat to provide clarification on the nine new posts and whether any of them would be dedicated to the Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit.

24. Some delegates stressed that one of the external factors mentioned for the 2024 programme plan was to continue to have sufficient extrabudgetary funds and urged

member States to maintain and, if possible, increase their extrabudgetary contributions to ensure the implementation of all planned activities.

25. Another delegate stated his appreciation of the rebound in extrabudgetary funding in 2022 and highlighted its importance for the implementation of activities in 2024.

26. Another delegate urged UNCTAD to maintain and increase its work on the effects of the non-tariff measures.

27. Several delegates stressed the importance of reflecting and implementing all three pillars of work of UNCTAD, in line with the commitments in the Bridgetown Covenant, and acknowledging specifically the challenges faced by developing countries.

28. One delegate appreciated the provision of management information report on gender representation of UNCTAD staff and urged the secretariat to increase its efforts in addressing the gender balance of the institution.

29. Some delegates called on the secretariat to ensure the necessary resources so that the commitments under the Bridgetown Covenant could be implemented, taking into consideration that 2024 was the last year before the next quadrennial conference.

30. Addressing the comments and questions, on the allocation of the nine newly established posts, the Deputy Secretary-General clarified that the posts consisted of a P-3 post and a P-4 post, approved for the Statistics Service; two P-2 posts approved for subprogramme 1; one P-3 post and one P-4 post, approved for subprogramme 4; and one P-2 post, one P-3 post and one P-5 post, approved for subprogramme 5. He also confirmed that the secretariat was committed commitment to reinstituting the practice of informal briefings starting in 2023. With regard to the request on having an assessment of the World Trade Organization decisions, the Deputy Secretary-General said that the secretariat welcomed the idea and would explore on how it could be taken forward. On ensuring gender equality, he said that the issue would be considered at the next meeting of the Gender Committee and that the Secretary-General of UNCTAD would develop a strategy with directors to address the matter in each division.

B. Review of the draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2024, part A of the proposed programme budget

(Agenda item 3)

31. The Director of the UNCTAD Programme Support and Management Service provided an overview of the process for consideration and approval of the proposed programme plan for 2024. The first step had been undertaking the “Preparatory session for the programme plan and performance information” (item 5) at the eighty-fourth session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance in October 2022, followed by consultations alongside the drafting of the proposed 2024 programme plan. The second step in the process was the formal review of the draft proposed programme plan for 2024 at the current session of the Working Party. He explained the subsequent steps of the programme budget process, ending in December 2023 with the approval of the document by the General Assembly.

32. He provided updates on the trial period for an annual budget cycle, confirming that, in 2022, the General Assembly in its resolution 77/267 approved the annual format of the budget. He also addressed some of the main features of the annual programme budget document and gave a brief overview of technical details of the document, including the limited word count and the preliminary nature of 2022 values for deliverables, which would be aligned with Umoja in the final fascicle. Finally, he clarified that the Statistics Service was reflected under the “Overall orientation” section of the document (under Executive Direction and Management) and that Statistics Service deliverables were moved to the cross-cutting deliverables table.

33. The representative of one regional group noted that the first paragraph in the “Overall orientation” section of the programme plan document did not mention “respect for

human rights, including gender equality gender”. He asked the secretariat to retain that agreed language, as in the document reviewed and approved by the Working Party in 2022. In addition, in reference to paragraph 12.2, he said that mention of “increased divergence” between developed and developing countries was not necessary and suggested that the secretariat revise the language to “be it within or between countries”.

34. The representative of another regional group suggested that, given the importance of collaboration and the work of UNCTAD with various institutions, including the World Trade Organization and the International Trade Centre, the secretariat should add a sentence at the end of paragraph 12.10 on the work with those institutions. She also asked the secretariat to clarify the objectives of the working groups and committees mentioned.

35. One delegate mentioned that the resolution entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba” and currently listed under the mandates part of the document should be updated with the most recent one adopted in 2022.

36. Addressing the comments and questions, the Director of the UNCTAD Programme Support and Management Service clarified that the mention of human rights and gender equality in the first paragraph of the document was revised by the Committee for Programme Coordination in 2022 and, thus, the secretariat had followed that approved language for the current draft document. Furthermore, any resolutions that were not updated before the document was submitted for the consideration of member States would be rechecked by the UNCTAD secretariat and also go through a revision process in New York. Finally, he confirmed that all proposed revisions of specific paragraphs would be addressed in the revised version that would be circulated for the further consideration of member States.

37. The Director of the UNCTAD Division on Globalization and Development Strategies presented the planned work of the division for 2024, which would focus on continuing to analyse financial and macroeconomic imbalances in the world economy. While challenges of structural transformation and industrialization continued to be a key concern for developing countries, the division’s research would also emphasize the need to integrate the impact of climate change on the development perspective of the global South.

38. As 2024 would mark the sixtieth anniversary of UNCTAD, additional work related to the event could be envisaged. The three highlighted activities in the document were: (a) debt sustainability issues in developing countries and the risk they posed to attaining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; (b) increased agility in providing evidence-based and data-driven analysis to implement the 2030 Agenda for all, reflecting the challenges of member States; of particular importance in that area of work was the *SDG [Sustainable Development Goal] Pulse*, with dynamic content; and (c) assistance to Palestinian policymakers and other stakeholders to formulate sound economic policies by using the UNCTAD macroeconomic model of the Palestinian economy.

39. Some regional groups stated that there has been a noticeable improvement in the reporting compared to the previous period. They suggested that the language of the performance measure for 2022 relating to result 1 (“advancement of analysis and policy proposals for monitoring the debt situation of developing countries”) should be changed. One regional group said that some further strengthening of how the impact of communication deliverables was reported would be welcome.

40. With respect to the project entitled “Promoting economic diversification and resilience of small island developing States for a sustained recovery from COVID-19 shock”, one regional group noted that the descriptive paragraph was too heavily focused on “context” rather than on “impact”. Furthermore, he suggested that the result for 2022 needed to be reformulated to better reflect relevant activities.

41. The Director of the UNCTAD Division on Investment and Enterprise elaborated on how the Bridgetown Covenant reshaped the strategy of the subprogramme, with particular emphasis placed on the issues of global tax and investment, sustainable finance regulations and climate change finance. He stressed that all four indicators for the performance of the subprogramme were illustrative of the strategic approach to delivering mandates from the

Bridgetown Covenant. Two of the new indicators (the number of member States joining UNCTAD initiatives towards upgrading their national sustainability reporting infrastructure and the number of member States adopting UNCTAD investment financing strategies and tools in support to the attainment of the climate and environmental goals of the 2030 Agenda) responded directly to the objectives of transforming development finance and strengthening member States' capacity to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and greenhouse gas emissions (Bridgetown Covenant, chapter III, sections B and C). The draft programme budget provided evidence of the performance and achievements of the subprogramme, with all indicators showing that expectations were surpassed and that the number of deliverables had increased significantly.

42. Some regional groups commended the relevance and quality of the performance indicators selected by the subprogramme. One regional group highlighted the performance of the subprogramme for having exceeded many of its planned activities. Another regional group requested greater emphasis on the investment component of financing strategies when assessing the support provided in the attainment of the climate and environmental goal of the 2030 Agenda.

43. The Officer-in-Charge of the UNCTAD Division on International Trade and Commodities highlighted that the subprogramme had aligned work to the four transformations and specific objectives of the Bridgetown Covenant. She highlighted that the updates to the subprogramme, on actual 2022 outcomes and new 2024 planned results, addressed pressing issues facing the multilateral trading system in relation to addressing the climate emergency and facilitating a green energy transition. Deliverables had been disaggregated to enhance transparency and accountability. The subprogramme assessed value chains in 10 countries, focusing on developing regional green value chains and integrating the climate change dimension in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

44. Work supported landlocked commodity dependent developing countries, vulnerable to price shocks, by implementing activities to improve agricultural value chains and regional integration. Beneficiaries increased their capacity to collect data and integrated policy recommendations in export strategies to boost value added exports.

45. A total of 23,784 users of non-tariff measures data were registered across the trade portals of the division's corresponding databases, exceeding the targets of 2,000 additional users and 17,500 total users. Increased information use contributed to enhanced trade transparency. Delivery of updated data on export restrictions was relevant, for example, to analyse the impact of the war in Ukraine. Use of the information published on non-tariff measures on trade portals enabled policymakers to design better and targeted regulations.

46. Other updates related to services work. Lessons from policy reviews contributed to building capacity in several developing countries in formulating services trade policies for economic diversification and from multi-year expert meetings on trade, services and development, to pursuing opportunities and addressing challenges of increased tradability of digital services. Improved data collection and use took account of data gaps and supported evidence-based services trade policymaking.

47. One regional group suggested revising language to clarify the status of a working group on data for services trade policymaking and development. The secretariat confirmed acceptance of the suggestion.

48. The Director of the UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics mentioned that the current international context of cascading crises had resulted in sharply increased demand for the work of the division. The divisional mandate included the key areas of the digital economy and digitalization of trade procedures, including trade facilitation, to boost developing countries' productive capacities and accelerate recovery. The division accounted for over half of UNCTAD technical cooperation activities, two of seven flagship publications and a sizeable share of intergovernmental consensus-building work. She noted that the division had further strengthened its accountability framework, presenting the division's strategy to member States, which was closely aligned with the objectives of the Bridgetown Covenant. She also introduced division results, as detailed in the programme

plan, which focused on the digitalization of trade facilitation, supporting women entrepreneurs in e-commerce, the automation of trade procedures through single windows and building port resilience. The division had delivered on its deliverables in 2022 and expected to continue doing so in the future. However, delivery on an increased mandate and increased demands from member States was being hampered by a lack of resources, including regular budget posts.

49. Some regional groups commended the division for the positive impact of its work on beneficiary countries and called on member States to provide more resources in support of that work.

50. The Director of UNCTAD Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes presented the work and results related to divisional mandates, namely, the Bridgetown Covenant and mandates given by the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and programmes of action for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. He underlined the main points of the work under “Transforming through diversification” and “Transforming for a more stable and resilient economy” and support efforts under “Transforming multilateralism” of the Bridgetown Covenant. He also emphasized how research and policy work, consensus-building and technical assistance reinforced each other and guided the programme of work.

51. Emphasizing that UNCTAD had incorporated member States’ comments into the division’s 2024 work plan, he recalled lessons learned. The least developed countries that had graduated had made only limited progress in structural economic transformation. They needed to be supported as their development process was long term. Support would need to involve formalizing a dynamic strategy focused on development of productive capacities, rather than exclusively on graduation criteria. In terms of research and technical assistance, he highlighted the new targeted result proposed for 2024, provided an update on results achieved since October 2022 and reported on the overall performance of subprogramme 5. Key areas included the contribution to least developed country criteria; developing national productive capacities gap assessments; strengthening productive capacities and facilitating structural transformation in least developed countries of Asia and the Pacific; coherent strategies for productive capacities development in African least developed countries; alternative development strategies for small islands developing States; and coordinating UNCTAD participation at the upcoming Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Doha.

52. Commending the work of UNCTAD, one regional group requested that UNCTAD take due account of the orientations of member States and the political and multilateral nature of decision-making in the application of frameworks.

53. Another regional group noted the issue of updating data in tables 12.29, 12.24 and 12.25 of the draft programme plan to better understand the results and impacts.

54. One delegate recognized the importance of the work carried out by the division, particularly for Africa and the least developed countries, and requested further information on the allocation of posts to the division.

55. In response, the Director reassured member States that data in the tables would be updated, where possible, based on the availability of data, and indicated the number of posts allocated to the division.

C. Other business

56. One delegate recalled repeated interventions related to the budget for the Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit, including engagement in discussions with the current and previous Secretaries-General of UNCTAD. The Unit undertook a significant amount of sensitive and critical activities. The State of Palestine did not benefit from programmes such as that for the least developed countries. He noted that the work of the Unit was closely linked to the aims of UNCTAD when the institution was established and was evident in United Nations decisions. His regional group had also made the position clear before and after the sixteenth session of the Conference, and UNCTAD had a mandate to be

implemented that supported the building of an independent State. He invited UNCTAD to reconsider the vision for the Unit and staffing as the situation for 2023 was not adequate.

57. The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD took note of the request and assured him that the secretariat would look into a more comprehensive approach and consider how to reorganize the work.

58. Another delegate reiterated concern regarding geographical representation. While he appreciated reporting on the issue, he suggested that the secretariat work on the modalities for country representation and asked that reporting on geographical representation continue.

D. Closing plenary meeting

59. The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD underscored the successful outcome of the session, with consensus on a revised proposed programme plan for 2024 that would be submitted to New York. The process was one of continuous improvement. Work would continue on improving results and performance measures. The secretariat would organize a consultation on the proposed results framework, which would help to advance on implementing results-based management. He confirmed that a dedicated management briefing would be organized, probably in May 2023, on the final version of the 2024 programme plan issued by New York for the consideration of the General Assembly and its main committees. He would also update the membership on resources.

60. He summarized the objectives of the UNCTAD committees and working groups established by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. The gender committee would provide strategic guidance on substantive gender work to ensure relevance, policy coherence and adequate resource allocation for activities. The statistical coordination committee ensured the coordination of UNCTAD statistical activities and, thus, identified and took advantage of cross-divisional synergies. The working group on environment and climate change identified how to integrate environment and climate change from a development perspective throughout UNCTAD work. The group also ensured organizational coherence and synergies on climate and the environment across subprogrammes. The working group on the Group of 20 was tasked with building, internally, a stronger, whole-of-UNCTAD effort in relation to the Group of 20. He would provide more details at the management briefing as well.

61. He noted that a top priority of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD was having a more balanced institution in terms of gender and geographical representation, as delegations had noted in their comments. In subsequent documents, the aim would be to present results covering various geographical regions.

62. The representatives of several regional groups noted that the preparation of and documentation for the session reflected clear improvements. One regional group encouraged continuous cooperation with the secretariat to ensure the work of UNCTAD improved, particularly to support developing countries. Another regional group expressed full support for the work on improving results-based management through a multi-year plan and results framework. Despite improvements in the current results reporting, there was still work to be done to ensure that reporting went beyond counting publications, meetings and activities, and instead painted a picture of the institution's impact on the ground. Another regional group, commending the constructive approach in listening to comments and suggestions of the membership, questioned whether the UNCTAD intergovernmental structure was fit for purpose as the session had concluded quickly. He encouraged decisive engagement by delegations at meetings as mandated in the Bridgetown Covenant. The Chair of the session concurred on the need for enhanced engagement by delegations.

63. Some delegates noted the importance of the presence of senior-level officials at meetings and expressed appreciation that that had been the case at the current session.

III. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

64. At its opening plenary meeting, on 24 January 2023, the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance elected Ms. Priyanka Chauhan (India) as Chair and Mr. Gabriel M. Okoko (Nigeria) as Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

65. Also at its opening plenary meeting, the Working Party adopted its provisional agenda, as contained in document TD/B/WP/320. The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Review of the draft UNCTAD programme plan and performance information for the year 2024, part II of the proposed programme budget.
4. Provisional agenda of the eighty-sixth session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance.
5. Other business.
6. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board.

C. Provisional agenda of the eighty-sixth session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance

(Agenda item 4)

66. At its closing plenary meeting, on 27 January 2023, the Working Party approved the provisional agenda of its eighty-sixth session, as contained in a non-paper dated 24 January 2023 (see annex I).

D. Other business

(Agenda item 5)

67. There were no further issues presented for consideration by the Working Party.

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

(Agenda item 6)

68. At its closing plenary meeting, on 27 January 2023, the Working Party approved the report of the session and authorized the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chair, to finalize the report to the Trade and Development Board.

Annex I

Provisional agenda of the eighty-sixth session of the Working Party

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:
 - (a) Evaluation of UNCTAD activities: Overview;
 - (b) Independent evaluation of UNCTAD subprogramme 2: Investment and enterprise.
5. Preparatory session for the 2025 programme plan and performance information.
6. Provisional agenda of the eighty-seventh session of the Working Party.
7. Other business.
8. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board.

Annex II

Attendance*

1. Representatives of the following members of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance attended the session:

Albania	Maldives
Angola	Mongolia
Bangladesh	Morocco
Barbados	Namibia
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Nepal
Botswana	Nigeria
Brazil	Oman
Cabo Verde	Pakistan
Cambodia	Panama
China	Peru
Colombia	Philippines
Congo	Poland
Côte d'Ivoire	Portugal
Cuba	Russian Federation
Czechia	Saudi Arabia
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Serbia
Djibouti	South Africa
Dominican Republic	Spain
Egypt	Sri Lanka
Ethiopia	State of Palestine
Gambia	Sudan
Haiti	Sweden
Honduras	Trinidad and Tobago
India	Tunisia
Indonesia	Türkiye
Iraq	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Jamaica	United States of America
Kenya	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Kuwait	Viet Nam
Latvia	Yemen
Lebanon	Zambia
Madagascar	Zimbabwe
Malawi	
Malaysia	

2. Representatives from the following States that are not members of the Working Party attended the session:

Fiji
Samoa

3. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

International Olive Council

4. The following specialized agencies and related organizations were represented at the session:

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

* This attendance list contains registered participants. For the list of participants, see TD/B/WP(83)/INF.2.