

Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget, 69th session
(programme narrative for the biennium 2016–2017)

1 December 2014

Opening statement by the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Madam Chair,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address this 69th session of the Working Party and present to you UNCTAD's draft proposed programme narrative for the biennium 2016-2017.

UNCTAD's practice of consulting member States on the elements of the programme narrative is important for the Secretariat. And we want to continue with the open dialogue on the strategic priorities and general approaches of our work. We see great value in the discussions planned for this week.

The document we are reviewing today is one of the elements in the preparation of the programme budget of all Departments of the United Nations Secretariat, including UNCTAD.

Let me briefly recall how our task today, under agenda item 3, fits into the overall budgetary process of the United Nations Secretariat.

UNCTAD's proposed Biennial Programme Plan for the biennium 2016-2017 was submitted by Secretary-General Kituyi to the relevant entities in New York, taking into account the recommendations made by the Working Party in its 66th session. And in the document before you, the text highlighted in yellow includes the recommendations of the Working Party and the changes made by the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts and by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in its 54th session in June 2014.

The Committee decided to maintain the balance when referring to the different groupings of countries in the biennial programme plan that was recommended by the Working Party and the Trade and Development Board. This was a contentious issue in the follow-up to the Doha Conference, as some of you may recall. And it was thanks to your intervention, through the Trade and Development Board, and the support of the secretariat, that Member States at the committee accepted your position on this matter.

At this point, the process builds on the priorities set by member States in terms of general objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. In brief, we drill down from those priorities by defining the actual targets — or performance measures — to be pursued, and the activities and outputs to be delivered in the process.

During the informal part of the session, the Directors responsible for the different subprogrammes will present the highlights from their respective areas. We will then have the opportunity to get your feedback and clarify any issues you deem necessary.

In line with the instructions of the United Nations Controller, the document before you includes a description of policy-making organs relevant to UNCTAD. In addition, the report includes two sections:

- The first one deals with the work of the Executive Direction and Management, or in the case of UNCTAD, the Office of the Secretary-General.
- The second deals with our Programme Support activities.

The secretariat would like to get your feedback on the text that is not highlighted in yellow, on whether the balance of activities and priorities is appropriate, given the mandate you have given us.

I would like to recall that this is not a negotiated document, but an input from member States to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. And it will help in the preparation of UNCTAD's proposed programme budget submission. For further information, a flowchart detailing the budgetary process of the United Nations Secretariat, from the perspective of UNCTAD, is available in the room.

The final document that will integrate the various elements agreed in this session, including resource requirements, will be issued around April or May 2015, for consideration by the relevant entities in New York.

Due to the clear division of labor between the General Assembly and specialized governing bodies such as the Trade and Development Board, it is beyond the

mandate of this forum to discuss the administrative and resource questions linked to the budget proposals. At this point, I can already tell you that the budget will be prepared on a zero-growth basis with some targeted reductions in programme support, stemming from the UMOJA Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project of the United Nations Secretariat.

We understand that you need to have the elements to be able to follow the budget consideration and to liaise with your counterparts at the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly. For this reason, we will hold a briefing in May or June 2015 on the final outlook of UNCTAD's budgetary proposal.

We have received queries from various delegations as to what will happen to the 2016-2017 programme budget once there is an outcome document from the Lima Conference in March 2016.

On this issue, the established practice is that the secretariat will generate proposed revisions to the activities and outputs to reflect any shifts in priorities and mandates arising from Lima. Such proposed revisions will then be discussed at a Working Party session probably around June 2016. Since the budgetary envelope will have been approved by the General Assembly in December 2015, the proposed revisions arising from Lima would need to be cost-neutral and thus, mainly around reformulation of topics, focus areas and the like.

My assumption is that the Lima outcome would be adopted without budgetary implications, which has been the case in recent UNCTAD conferences. However, it is not something we can prejudge at this point.

Finally, under agenda item 4, the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy has been included for discussion by member States. I would like to recall that this agenda item was presented during the 65th session of the Working Party in September 2013 and has been undergoing negotiations by member States. The Secretariat will not be making additional presentations, but will be available for any clarifications or additional information required.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to stop here in order to allow for an exchange of views.

Thank you for your attention.