



**United Nations
Conference
on Trade and
Development**

Distr.
LIMITED

TD/B/EX(16)/L.2
10 February 1998

Original : ENGLISH

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Sixteenth executive session
Geneva, 9 February 1998
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**EFFICIENCY AND FUNCTIONING OF THE UNCTAD
INTERGOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY**

Draft guidelines presented by the Vice-President of the Board

Within the framework of the intergovernmental structure established at UNCTAD IX, the Trade and Development Board at its sixteenth executive session has reviewed the functioning of its intergovernmental machinery and has adopted the guidelines set out below in order to improve the working methods and enhance the functioning of that machinery. The various bodies at the different levels of the machinery, with the support of the secretariat, will apply these guidelines immediately and in a flexible manner to ensure maximum effectiveness.

General considerations

1. The role of bureaus should be an active one, both during and between sessions of the bodies concerned. Bureaus should deal with organizational and procedural matters. Should they wish to take up matters relating to the preparation of substantive issues, they should meet as extended bureaus. 1/
2. The UNCTAD calendar of meetings should be designed to ensure that expert meetings take place before the sessions of the relevant commission, and that commission sessions take place prior to sessions of the Board.
3. Delegations should be briefed on all aspects of a meeting at least four weeks before the meeting. Pre-session documentation should be distributed on time and in all languages.

1/ An extended bureau comprises the officers of the bureau, the regional group coordinators and interested delegations.

4. Panels should be organized only when they can add value to the discussions of the bodies concerned. Member States should be consulted well in advance in connection with the topics of panels and the choice of panellists. The selection of panellists should be based on the need to ensure a balanced presentation of the topics selected, as well as linguistic and regional balance. Permanent missions should be informed of invitations extended to panellists or resource persons from their countries. Panellists should be properly briefed prior to meetings, and they should provide written summaries of their presentations for distribution to participants. The length of time spent on panels and the number of panellists should be limited in order to allow sufficient time for intergovernmental discussions. A written summary of the panel discussions should be produced by a rapporteur in order to ensure the necessary link with the intergovernmental debate.

5. To improve transparency and allow maximum participation, simultaneous meetings during a session should generally be avoided, and discussions on texts on which decisions must be taken, in particular agreed conclusions, should normally take place in informal plenary meetings, not in closed consultations.

6. All information relating to meetings, including preparations, documentation and outcomes, should be made available on UNCTAD's web site, which should be regarded as an integral part of meetings arrangements. Information on pre-session preparations and documentation should in principle be made available six weeks before a meeting.

7. Brief summaries should be prepared by the secretariat of all informal substantive discussions, without attribution of views to individual delegations.

**Trade and Development Board and Working Party on the
Medium-term Plan and Programme Budget**

8. The agenda for sessions of the Board should be prepared in such a way as to allow the Board to cover all issues addressed to it in the final outcome of UNCTAD IX. It should be well focused.

9. The Board should examine and evaluate the work of the Commissions and determine the direction of new work; it should not just take note of the Commissions' reports.

10. The Board should strive to achieve better coherence between its sessions and the sessions of the Commissions in terms of choice of items and preparation of the calendar to enable the expertise of the expert meetings to find its way up to the Board and to allow the Commissions to take account of the deliberations of the Board.

11. Preparations for the high-level segment, including the selection of the theme, the chairman and the panellists, should be transparent and based on consultations with all member States.

12. The theme of the high-level segment should be of international importance in order to attract high-level participation; the selection of the theme should take place in the first half of the year. In principle, there should be a direct link between the theme of the high-level segment and the agenda for the Board's session.

13. High-level representatives at the segment should be given an opportunity to present their views and participate fully, with the high-level segment being treated as a high-level intergovernmental debate.

14. The secretariat should prepare a summary of the discussions at the high-level segment as rapidly as possible and, if timing permits, before the end of the regular session of the Trade and Development Board.

15. The work of the Working Party should be coordinated and synchronized with the work of the relevant bodies in New York in order to ensure that the views of the Working Party are taken fully into account. Its work should also be organized in such a way as to give members sufficient time to consider documentation.

Commissions and Expert Meetings

16. The organization of work of the Commissions should be such as to allow the Commissions to devote themselves to substantive issues.

17. The bureaus of the Commissions, meeting in the appropriate configuration, should continue to function between Commission sessions with a view to dealing with, among other things: preparations for and follow-up to Commission sessions and expert meetings; preparation of proposed topics for Commission agendas and expert meetings; organization of work; documentation.

18. The number of expert meetings to be convened by a Commission should be determined by the Board.

19. Each Commission should consider the findings of its expert meetings and discuss their policy implications. It should have before it an indication by the secretariat of the nature of those policy implications and of possible action to be taken.

20. In selecting the topics for expert meetings, Commissions should ensure that topics are demand-driven, are closely related to the Commissions' work and take into consideration issues of current interest to member States and in particular developing countries. Account must be taken of UNCTAD's comparative advantages and of the secretariat's expertise and capacity.

21. The Commissions should discuss and evaluate technical cooperation activities linked to their work programmes and make proposals to the Board. Special attention should be given to strengthening the synergy between policy dialogue, study and analysis, and technical cooperation.

22. Wherever possible, as the outcome of their work the Commissions should seek to adopt agreed conclusions of relevance to the international community, Governments and the UNCTAD secretariat. Recommendations for work to be carried out by the secretariat should be practical and realistic in terms of capacity.

23. When the Commissions request work to be carried out by the secretariat, the latter should inform the Commissions in particular of the schedule of work, the probable time of completion and reporting modalities.

24. The Commissions should have before them, at the following session, progress reports on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations by the secretariat. These progress reports, which should include an evaluation of the work undertaken, should be presented to the extended bureaus before being submitted to the Commissions.

25. Experts attending expert meetings convened in accordance with paragraph 114 of "A Partnership for Growth and Development" are nominated by their Governments. All participants at expert meetings have the status of expert and serve in their personal capacity. In all matters relating to participation of experts in expert meetings, the secretariat should deal with permanent missions. Governments are encouraged to nominate non-governmental experts also.

26. To improve the effectiveness of expert meetings, the secretariat should provide experts with appropriate information on UNCTAD, its activities and procedures, and the anticipated nature of the expert meetings in question.

27. The agenda of each expert meeting should be clearly established by the Commission convening the meeting.

28. Wherever possible, as the outcome of their work expert meetings should seek to identify possible policy options relating to capacity-building and general policy guidelines.

29. After each expert meeting, it is recommended that the extended bureau of the relevant Commission meet in order to discuss the outcome of the meeting.

30. With a view to facilitating the participation of experts in expert meetings and thereby helping to improve the effectiveness of these meetings, member States are encouraged to explore means of enhancing such participation, including through contributions to the trust fund established by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and other resources possible to finance the participation of experts from developing countries.