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## Report of the Trade and Development Board on its seventeenth executive session \* (Geneva, 8 May 1998)

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\* The present document is an advance version of the report of the Trade and Development Board on its seventeenth executive session, held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 8 May 1998. It will appear in final form, together with the reports of the sixteenth and eighteenth executive sessions and the forty-fifth session of the Board, as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 15 (A/53/15/Rev.1)*.





UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

**Report of the Trade and Development Board on its  
seventeenth executive session**

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on 8 May 1998

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The seventeenth executive session of the Trade and Development Board was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 8 May 1998. The executive session consisted of one meeting - the 893rd plenary meeting of the Board. The agenda of the seventeenth executive session is reproduced in annex I below.

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**I. DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
AT ITS SEVENTEENTH EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Decision 449 (EX-17): UNCTAD's publication policy**

The Trade and Development Board, taking into account the ongoing work in the secretariat to streamline UNCTAD's publications policy, the relevant reports, and the establishment of a Publications Committee within the secretariat, agrees that:

1. The efforts undertaken by the secretariat in this respect are most welcome; the Board also takes note of the Working Party's satisfaction with the mechanisms put in place within the secretariat to ensure the systematic oversight and improvement of UNCTAD's publications activities;

2. Member States be encouraged to take an active part in a transparent review of UNCTAD's publications policy through consultations between the member States and the secretariat, so as to ensure that publications meet their needs and fulfil the priorities set for UNCTAD;

3. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD be invited to hold meetings with member States regarding UNCTAD's publications policy at an appropriate stage of the planning and review process, as follows:

- (a) The Working Party will, at the start of each year, meet informally with UNCTAD's programme managers to discuss the specific list of publications planned for the year; at the same time, the Working Party will also consider a report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of UNCTAD's publications policy and will report to the Trade and Development Board; the two meetings will not exceed two days altogether;

- (b) In the autumn of the first year of each biennium, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD will meet informally with the members of the Working Party to discuss a draft list of publications proposed for the next biennium;
- (c) The Working Party will review the draft work programme early in the following year, including the draft list of proposed publications, after which the Secretary-General of UNCTAD will finalize his programme budget submission to the Secretary-General of the United Nations; the Working Party will review the proposed programme budget at the time it is submitted to the General Assembly and will report to the Trade and Development Board which, in turn, will endorse the recommendations to be transmitted to the General Assembly's review bodies;
- (d) The Working Party will also review the results of a survey of publications issued during the previous year, as well as any in-depth readership surveys of selected publications which will have been conducted; readership surveys should be conducted on an annual basis; in the light of recent experience, the secretariat should seek to improve the design, methodology and scope of readership surveys so that they fulfil their crucial role;
- (e) All member States are encouraged to respond as fully as possible to readership surveys.

893rd plenary meeting

8 May 1998



**Decision 450 (EX-17): Trust fund to enhance participation of developing countries' experts in UNCTAD meetings**

The Trade and Development Board, having received a progress report under item 3 of its agenda on the trust fund to enhance the participation of developing countries' experts in UNCTAD meetings in accordance with the decision of the forty-fourth session of the Board, decides that:

- (a) Informal consultations under the authority of the President of the Board shall be held on the operational modalities of the trust fund to enhance participation of developing countries' experts in UNCTAD meetings in accordance with paragraph 114 of "A Partnership for Growth and Development", with a view to enabling the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to modify the operational modalities of the trust fund to include *inter alia* two windows, one for earmarked and one for non-earmarked contributions;
- (b) The President of the Trade and Development Board is requested to complete these informal consultations by 3 July 1998 so that the operational modalities can be endorsed by the Trade and Development Board at its eighteenth executive session on 10 July 1998.

893rd plenary meeting

8 May 1998

**II. REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN AND THE PROGRAMME BUDGET ON ITS THIRTY-FIRST SESSION: BOARD DECISION 447 (EX-16) ON UNCTAD'S PUBLICATION POLICY; AND BOARD DECISION 448 (EX-16) ON SAVINGS RESULTING FROM IMPROVED OVERALL COST EFFECTIVENESS**

(Agenda item 2)

2. The representative of Mexico, speaking in his capacity as the Chairman of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget, informed the Board of the outcome of the deliberations of the Working Party on the question of savings resulting from improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the Conference, as contained in document UNCTAD/ISS/Misc.121.<sup>1/</sup> He also informed the Board that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 52/462, he would communicate that outcome to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He further presented for adoption by the Board a draft decision on UNCTAD's publication policy.

**Action by the Board**

3. In connection with the question of savings resulting from improved overall cost-effectiveness, the Board noted that the members of the Working Party had requested the President of the Board to undertake informal consultations on the establishment of guidelines and modalities, to be endorsed by the Board at its eighteenth executive session on 10 July 1998, for the distribution of the relevant funds for the financing of experts. The informal consultations were to involve the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and were to be completed by 3 July 1998.

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<sup>1/</sup> For the report of the Working Party, see document TD/B/45/5-TD/B/WP/107.

4. In connection with UNCTAD's publication policy, the Board adopted the draft decision presented to it by the Working Party. (For the text of the decision, see decision 449 (EX-17) above).

**III. PROGRESS REPORT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF UNCTAD ON THE TRUST FUND TO ENHANCE PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' EXPERTS IN UNCTAD MEETINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DECISIONS OF THE FORTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

(Agenda item 3)

5. The representative of the UNCTAD secretariat said that, following consultations of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD in December 1996, the trust fund to enhance participation of developing countries' experts in UNCTAD meetings had been established in April 1997. The aim had been to seek contributions to an amount of \$680,000. In May 1997, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD had written to member States to request contributions to the fund. To date, \$3,000 had been contributed, and since no decision to disburse funds had been made, the trust fund had an unencumbered balance of \$3,000.

6. The President expressed appreciation to the Government of Iceland for having made the first contribution to the trust fund.

**Action by the Board**

7. The Board adopted a draft decision presented by the President. (For the text of the decision, see decision 450 (EX-17) above).

#### IV. CLOSING STATEMENTS

8. The representative of Japan said that, with regard to the question of the reinvestment of savings, the regular budget should not be used to finance the participation of experts in UNCTAD meetings. Such participation should be financed through voluntary contributions.
  
9. The spokesperson for the African Group (South Africa) welcomed the outcome of the Working Party's deliberations. Many had thought that such an outcome would not be within reach, and it was a credit to all concerned that it had been possible to send clear recommendations to New York.
  
10. The representative of Brazil expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the Working Party's deliberations. The financing of experts was an important priority for the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and the agreement reached in the Working Party was a step forward. Of course, further discussions were required, and she counted on the goodwill of all in order to make it possible to agree as expeditiously as possible on guidelines and modalities for the disbursement of funds.
  
11. The representative of Switzerland said that his delegation was pleased with the results achieved by the Working Party. It fully supported UNCTAD's publication policy, and it hoped that the dialogue provided for in the Board's decision would enhance the participation of member States in the evaluation of UNCTAD publications. With regard to agenda item 3, his delegation welcomed the progress achieved in connection with the trust fund. It was hoped that the Board's decision would help make the trust fund operational, in implementation of paragraph 114 of "A Partnership for Growth and Development". With goodwill, the remaining problems could be settled.
  
12. The representative of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of the European Union, noted that the outcome of the Working Party's session was satisfactory to all its members.

13. The representative of **China** said the fact that UNCTAD had savings to discuss was an excellent thing. The outcome of the Working Party's work was positive, and although the principles and modalities for the financing of experts still had to be defined, satisfactory arrangements would be found if all parties demonstrated flexibility.
14. The representative of **Bangladesh** said his delegation welcomed the fact that, in the Working Party, consensus had been reached on all issues. It particularly welcomed the fact that the concerns of developing countries and LDCs had been adequately reflected in the Working Party's conclusions.
15. The representative of **Norway** said that, in the Working Party, hard work and a willingness to compromise had led to an acceptable result. His delegation particularly welcomed the emphasis that the Working Party had agreed to give to LDCs and certain investment issues. It also welcomed the outcome on publications. With regard to agenda item 3 and the trust fund, it was hoped that the consultations to be held would result in the fund becoming fully operational.
16. The spokesperson for the **Latin American and Caribbean Group** (Venezuela) welcomed the results achieved by the Working Party. The compromise text reflected the will of member States to revitalize UNCTAD. The work of the Working Party had been particularly difficult because of the sensitivities involved, but all parties to the discussions had acted in good faith and had demonstrated that agreement was always possible if the will was there. Her Group looked forward to participating in the discussions on funding modalities in a climate of trust, transparency and compromise.
17. The representative of the **United States** said that her country had changed its long-standing position against the funding of experts because of its strong commitment to helping African LDCs. With regard to the methods of work of the Working Party, consultations should be held on how to make improvements; she noted, for example, that observers tended to dominate the proceedings at the expense of members, which did not make much sense. Documentation for Working Party sessions should be prepared in consultation with member States to ensure that the latter were not faced with a *fait accompli*.

18. The representative of Kenya welcomed the results of the Working Party's deliberations and expressed thanks for the goodwill shown by all to LDCs and African countries.

19. The representative of Uruguay said that the Working Party was a vital element in efforts to increase the transparency of UNCTAD's budgetary procedures and technical cooperation programmes. With regard to the financing of experts, a significant first step had been taken towards ensuring the effective participation of developing country experts in UNCTAD meetings, which was an important priority for his Group.

**V. INSTITUTIONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE  
AND RELATED MATTERS**

(Agenda item 4)

**A. Opening of the session**

20. The seventeenth executive session of the Trade and Development Board was opened on 8 May 1998 by Mr. Goce Petreski (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), President of the Board.

**B. Bureau of the seventeenth executive session**

21. There being no change in the elected officers of the Bureau since the forty-fourth session, the Bureau of the Board at its seventeenth executive session was as follows:

<u>President:</u>	Mr. Goce Petreski	(former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
<u>Vice-Presidents:</u>	Mrs. Anne Anderson	(Ireland)
	Mr. Michael Ray Arietti	(United States of America)
	Mr. Dhumahdass Baichoo	(Mauritius)
	Mr. Nacer Benjelloun-Touimi	(Morocco)
	Mrs. Eveline Herfkens	(Netherlands)
	Mr. Anthony Hill	(Jamaica)
	Mr. Gilberto Saboia	(Brazil)
	Mr. Vasili Sidorov	(Russian Federation)
	Mr. Bjorn Skogmo	(Norway)
	Mr. Bozorgmehr Ziaran	(Islamic Republic of Iran)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. Sek Wannamethee	(Thailand)

**C. Adoption of the agenda**

(Agenda item 1)

22. At its 893rd meeting, on 8 May 1998, the Board adopted the provisional agenda for its seventeenth executive session (TD/B/EX(17)/1). (For the agenda, see annex I below).

**D. Review of the calendar of meetings**

(Agenda item 4 (a))

23. The Board took note of the revised calendar of meetings as contained in document TD/B/44/INF.2/Rev.2.

24. The representative of the **UNCTAD secretariat** informed the Board that the secretariat would request an increase in the allotment of meeting units in order to cater for the increase in the number of informal meetings requested by the Board, as well as for the decision on publications policy as it affected the number of informal meetings in 1999.

**E. Administrative and financial implications of the actions of the Board**

(Agenda item 4 (b))

25. The Board was informed that there were no additional financial implications resulting from its action at its seventeenth session.



**F. Other business**

(Agenda item 5)

26. The Board approved the draft provisional agenda for its eighteenth executive session. (For the provisional agenda, see annex II below).

27. The **President** reminded the Board that he would be conducting consultations on the topic of the High-level Segment of the forty-fifth regular session of the Board in the coming weeks.

**G. Report of the Board on its seventeenth executive session**

(Agenda item 6)

28. The Board authorized the Rapporteur to complete the report on its seventeenth executive session under the authority of the President. It requested the secretariat to circulate a synoptic report of the proceedings as soon as possible; this synoptic report would serve as the Board's report to the General Assembly.

## **ANNEXES**

### **Annex I**

#### **AGENDA FOR THE SEVENTEENTH EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE BOARD**

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget on its thirty-first session: Board decision 447 (EX-16) on UNCTAD's publication policy; and Board decision 448 (EX-16) on savings resulting from improved overall cost effectiveness
3. Progress report by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on the trust fund to enhance participation of developing countries' experts in UNCTAD meetings in accordance with the decision of the forty-fourth session of the Trade and Development Board
4. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters:
  - (a) Review of the calendar of meetings
  - (b) Administrative and financial implications of the actions of the Board
5. Other business
6. Adoption of the report of the Board

**Annex II**

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE EIGHTEENTH EXECUTIVE  
SESSION OF THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**10 July 1998**

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Election of officers
3. Mid-term review
4. UNCTAD's contribution to the UN-NADAF: UNCTAD's activities in favour of Africa (agreed conclusions 443 (XLIV))
5. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters:
  - (a) Designation of intergovernmental bodies for the purposes of rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the Board
  - (b) Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board
  - (c) Designation of the President and Bureau of the forty-fifth session of the Trade and Development Board
6. Report by the President of the Trade and Development Board on his informal consultations on:

- (a) Guidelines and modalities for funds from savings resulting from improved overall cost-effectiveness for financing of experts
- (b) Operational modalities of the Trust Fund to enhance participation of developing countries' experts in UNCTAD meetings

7. Other business

8. Report of the Board on its eighteenth session

Annex IIIATTENDANCE \*/

1. The following States members of UNCTAD, members of the Board, were represented at the session:

Angola	Malta
Australia	Mauritania
Austria	Mauritius
Bangladesh	Mexico
Belgium	Morocco
Bhutan	Myanmar
Brazil	Netherlands
Bulgaria	Norway
China	Pakistan
Costa Rica	Panama
Cuba	Paraguay
Czech Republic	Philippines
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Portugal
Ecuador	Republic of Korea
El Salvador	Russian Federation
Ethiopia	South Africa
France	Spain
Gabon	Sudan
Georgia	Sweden
Germany	Switzerland
Iceland	Thailand
Indonesia	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Trinidad and Tobago
Ireland	Tunisia
Italy	Turkey
Jamaica	Uganda
Japan	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Jordan	United States of America
Kenya	Uruguay
Lebanon	Venezuela
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Yemen
Madagascar	

2. The following States members of UNCTAD, not members of the Board, were represented as observers at the session:

Rwanda  
Holy See

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

European Community  
Organization of African Unity

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

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
United Nations Industrial Development Organization

5. The Economic Commission for Europe was represented at the session. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO was also represented at the session.

6. The following non-governmental organization was represented at the session:

General Category

World Federation of United Nations Associations

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\*/ For the list of participants, see TD/B/EX(17)/INF.1.

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