



**United Nations
Conference
on Trade and
Development**

Distr.
LIMITED

TD/B/WP/L.87
20 January 1999

Original : ENGLISH

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Working Party on the Medium-term Plan
and the Programme Budget
Thirty-third session
Geneva, 25 January 1999
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

IN-DEPTH EVALUATION OF THE TRADE POINT PROGRAMME

**Agreed conclusions submitted by the Chairman of the
thirty-second session of the Working Party ***

The Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget,

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Government of Switzerland which provided funding for the preparation of the in-depth evaluation of the Trade Point Programme, as well as for the work undertaken by the evaluation team ; and reiterates its interest in and support for programme evaluation, in particular with respect to impact evaluation;
2. Reaffirms the importance it attaches to the Trade Point Programme and recognizes the work achieved so far by UNCTAD in this area;
3. Notes the conclusion of the evaluation report (TD/B/WP/110 and Add.1) that the Trade Point Programme appeared to be valued quite highly by Governments, Trade Point managers and end-users of the Trade Point services and that in some cases the Trade Points have been able to act as a catalyst for improvements in trade efficiency within government as well as in the local business community;

* Agreed at the informal consultations (14-15 January 1999) of the Chairman of the Working Party at its thirty-second session.

4. While recognizing the difficulty of the task, the time limitation faced and the efforts made by the evaluation team, regrets that the report does not provide sufficient information on the concept and design of the Programme at the time of its launching as well as its actual impact;

5. Decides that the implementation of the Trade Point Programme should be refocused on more realistic objectives, to concentrate primarily on the consolidation of the basic functions of the Programme as well as on providing the necessary support required by the Trade Points; in this respect, member States should be consulted regularly within the framework of relevant UNCTAD intergovernmental bodies;

6. Expresses concern that interconnectivity among Trade Points, one of the key components of the Programme, has not been achieved and that exchange of information and experience among Trade Points as well as, on a collective basis, between Trade Points and the UNCTAD secretariat is, to date, limited; and encourages the secretariat to facilitate exchanges among the Trade Points;

7. Decides that the work on the Secure Electronic Authentication Link (SEAL) should be interrupted taking into account the analysis contained in the evaluation report;

8. Regrets that the United Nations Trade Point Development Centre (UNTPDC), designed to assist Trade Points, appears rather to have impeded their efforts to market their products and services;

9. Invites the secretariat to prepare a Trade Point Programme strategy for further consideration by the Working Party, thereby paying particular attention to the content of the evaluation report and to the deliberations of the Working Party thereon; this strategy should contain proposals on the financial and technical feasibility of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report; requests in this context the secretariat to prepare a comprehensive report detailing all the activities undertaken to implement various mandates entrusted to it since the inception of the Trade Point Programme;

10. Invites the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to consider convening, within his current budgetary provisions, a meeting which would involve in particular Trade Point managers and end-users to advise him on the proposals to be made by the secretariat with respect to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the evaluation report, and to advise on future actions aimed at enhancing programme delivery, especially with regard to the assistance to be provided to the Trade Points; its conclusions should be transmitted for consideration to the fourth session of the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development;

11. Invites further the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to report to the thirty-fourth session of the Working Party on the follow-up action pursuant to the recommendations in the evaluation report as well as on the implementation of these agreed conclusions;

12. Decides to review on a regular basis, under the item on evaluation of technical cooperation programmes, reports by the secretariat on the implementation of the agreed recommendations and related follow-up action arising from evaluation reports.