



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
13 June 2024

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination

Sixty-fourth session

New York, 13 May–14 June 2024

Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2025

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 10

Trade and development

1. At its 7th meeting, on 16 May 2024, the Committee considered programme 10, Trade and development, of the proposed programme plan for 2025 and programme performance information in 2023 ([A/79/6 \(Sect. 12\)](#) and [A/79/6 \(Sect. 13\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2024/6).

Discussion

2. Delegations expressed appreciation for the presentation of the proposed programme plan and programme performance information. Several delegations stressed the importance of the work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) and expressed support for the proposed programme plan. A delegation expressed appreciation for the timeliness of the reports.

3. Delegations noted that 2024 was the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of UNCTAD and expressed their congratulations. Delegations expressed appreciation for the work of UNCTAD and ITC. A delegation voiced its firm support for the work of UNCTAD and ITC in seeking to find consensus on matters related to resilient, sustainable and inclusive development. A delegation emphasized the unique nature of the role of UNCTAD in building consensus among countries and providing technical assistance and in its analytical work. Another delegation commended UNCTAD and ITC for their work on the inclusion of enterprises within the countries in their efforts to foster integration into international trade.



4. The importance of the commitment of UNCTAD to safeguarding the interests of developing countries and the role that UNCTAD played in promoting trade and development in developing countries and North-South dialogue and as a think tank for developing countries were cited by a delegation. Another delegation expressed its commitment to supporting UNCTAD in the integration of developing countries into the global economy so that they could benefit from trading opportunities.

5. A delegation highlighted the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation and geopolitical tensions, suggesting that those factors had exacerbated economic vulnerability for developing countries. Several delegations recognized the importance of achieving inclusive, resilient and sustainable growth. Another delegation emphasized the importance of maintaining the competitive advantage of UNCTAD on issues of trade and development and related issues of financing, investment, entrepreneurship, raw materials and technology. The delegation also said that the global context had changed dynamically, and thus cooperation in those areas had also changed, with new challenges requiring swift responses.

6. A delegation expressed the view that the emphasis of the Bridgetown Covenant on transforming economies through diversification and sustainable growth was crucial as it sought to reduce countries' dependency on the trade in commodities and broaden their economic base. Furthermore, the UNCTAD programme was intended to increase the participation of developing countries in international trade, fostering structural transformation through economic diversification, which would boost export potential and deepen integration into global value chains.

7. With regard to the full and beneficial integration of all countries in the global economy, a delegation stressed the importance of integration as a factor in the advancement of peaceful and sustainable development for all Member States.

8. A delegation highlighted the quality and timely preparation of information and statistical products of UNCTAD, which served as a valuable basis for negotiations and consensus-building in New York. The delegation said that it counted on the impartiality, objectivity and scientific validity of UNCTAD analysis.

9. The fundamental importance of international cooperation for development and the strengthening of synergies with strong linkages between global, regional and local systems was emphasized by a delegation.

10. A delegation emphasized that having a cross-cutting gender perspective in all trade issues was an indispensable requirement for development. Another delegation expressed support for its country's partnership on trade and gender, welcoming the mainstreaming of gender considerations throughout the programme and the specific provisions within the proposed programme plan for UNCTAD.

11. With regard to climate change, a delegation expressed the view that integrating inclusiveness and environmental sustainability into global trade and development frameworks was important for the resilience and continued economic growth of developing countries and that enhancing climate resilience, scaling up climate finance and promoting sustainable investments stressed the priority of achieving climate-resilient development. Another delegation said that excessive attention had been paid in the programme to climate change issues, including the energy transition and assistance with more active implementation of nationally determined contributions in fulfilment of the Paris Agreement. The delegation also expressed the view that the consideration of that issue should occur in strict alignment with the mandate of UNCTAD. For example, UNCTAD, in the context of its forthcoming analysis of the link between trade development and environmental conservation, could focus more on the emerging economy and climate protectionism and its possible repercussions

for developing countries, many of which already had low potential in terms of access to international markets.

12. A delegation expressed its support for the programme's focus on frontier issues, such as digital trade and investment, as key drivers of future economic opportunity. Another delegation recognized that, while innovation could give rise to opportunities to create well-being, the fast pace of digital change could be a challenge for developing countries.

13. A delegation expressed appreciation for the programme's support for technology and logistics as contributing factors to efforts to harness the potential of e-commerce and digital trade. The delegation recalled that it was one of the 12 countries where port entities had adopted policy measures to improve resilience by enhancing the skills and capacities of practitioners with the aim of ensuring efficient port management to increase trade flows and create port networks.

14. With regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a delegation emphasized that it was important for UNCTAD to focus on its three pillars of policy analysis and research, intergovernmental consultations and technical cooperation to promote trade and economic development in all Member States, developing countries in particular, to support accelerated implementation.

15. With regard to unilateral coercive measures, a delegation noted that the programme plan lacked any plans to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the impact of such measures on trade and development. The delegation recalled that that issue had been repeatedly raised by a number of States, including at the eighty-seventh session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance of UNCTAD, held in Geneva. The delegation expressed the view that studying that issue in the context of international trade, as well as the repercussions of the use of such measures for developing countries, would align with the mandate of UNCTAD and be in keeping with the spirit and letter of the Bridgetown Covenant. Another delegation expressed concern about the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures and sought further clarification from UNCTAD. The delegation also expressed concern that there was no specific paragraph in the programme plan related to such measures and the impact of technological monopolies and unilateral coercive embargoes on the supply chain of global products and services. The delegation also said that unilateral economic, financial or trade measures invariably disrupted trade flows, exacerbated poverty and hindered development efforts in targeted countries and that such measures constituted a violation of the principles outlined in the Charter of the United Nations and in international law, as well as the values of multilateralism and fundamental norms of international relations.

16. A delegation recalled that, in the review of the results of the performance of UNCTAD for 2023, there was no information about the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Russian Federation and the Secretariat of the United Nations on promoting Russian food products and fertilizers to the world markets. While matters relating to parts of the programme dealing with resources were not within the mandate of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the delegation recalled that \$2.3 million had been allocated from the United Nations regular budget in 2023 for that programme and that the Memorandum would be in force through 2025; the delegation further noted that the tasks for ensuring its fulfilment had not been included in the programme plan for 2025, with anticipated continuation of the appropriate financing.

17. With regard to paragraph 12.5, a delegation noted that UNCTAD would be guided by four major transformations, including transforming multilateralism, which was a key planning assumption.

18. With regard to paragraph 12.11, a delegation welcomed the ongoing collaboration between UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization (WTO) to support the integration of developing countries into the global trading system. In the view of the delegation, the recent accessions of the Comoros and Timor-Leste to WTO at its thirteenth Ministerial Conference demonstrated the forum's value for non-members, notably those described as least developed countries.

19. The same delegation described paragraph 12.12 (c), "there is political will to achieve consensus in intergovernmental meetings", as a key planning assumption underpinning the budget, saying that the outcome of the thirteenth Ministerial Conference of WTO cast considerable doubt upon the assumption that there was political will from all and that that situation impeded the ability of multilateral bodies to make progress. The delegation said that it supported the ambition but was cautious about being optimistic, given the failure to agree on Sustainable Development Goal-related items at the Ministerial Conference (i.e. the lack of agreement on fisheries subsidies), and asked on what basis UNCTAD assessed those planning assumptions regarding the prevailing political context as realistic.

20. With regard to subprogramme 1, Globalization, interdependence and development, paragraph 12.21 (f), a delegation sought further details as to how UNCTAD would analyse the relationship between trade and development and the environment and propose sustainable development policies in line with paragraph 75 of the Bridgetown Covenant.

21. With regard to subprogramme 2, Investment and enterprise, result 2, "Investment financing strategies and tools to decouple economic growth from environment degradation", a delegation asked why UNCTAD had decided to refrain from using in the title the expression used elsewhere in the text, namely "investment financing strategies and tools in support of the attainment of the climate and environmental goals of the 2030 Agenda".

22. With regard to subprogramme 4, Technology and logistics, result 2, figure 12.V, a delegation enquired about the number of new border regulatory agencies and partner governmental agencies participating in and benefiting from the Automated System for Customs Data Single Window system. The delegation asked why UNCTAD foresaw no increase for 2024 and therefore no new additions to the programme.

23. With regard to subprogramme 1, Globalization, interdependence and development, paragraph 12.30, result 3, a delegation sought further information and details on the lessons learned concerning enhanced data and enhanced data transparency, and how they should be implemented in practice, such as how the three pilot countries were identified.

24. With regard to subprogramme 2, Investment and enterprise, paragraph 12.34 (d), a delegation welcomed the focus on investment promotion and recalled that WTO members were working to incorporate the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement, which should generate significant economic benefits for developing countries.

25. With regard to subprogramme 2, Investment and enterprise, paragraph 12.43, result 3, a delegation welcomed the planned change and asked how UNCTAD would proceed to achieve the objectives set out in that paragraph.

26. With regard to subprogramme 3, International trade and commodities, paragraph 12.47, a delegation expressed appreciation for UNCTAD making institutional reform a priority and support for a peer review for UNCTAD. The delegation also expressed concern that the only reference to the peer review in the proposed programme plan was in paragraph 12.47, but that paragraph did not refer to

publications of UNCTAD per se; the delegation asked what steps UNCTAD would take to institute a peer review.

27. With regard to subprogramme 3, International trade and commodities, paragraph 12.48 (h), a delegation expressed the view that the term “environmentally sustainable products” was not intergovernmentally approved. The delegation asked why that term had been used as that use could lead to the imposition of standards on trade that might not be well founded.

28. With regard to subprogramme 4, Technology and logistics, paragraph 12.59, a delegation welcomed the focus on frontier issues, such as digital trade and investment as areas of considerable opportunity. The delegation expressed concern over the firm expiration deadline of the e-commerce moratorium and a consequent risk of increasing barriers to digital trade, noting in particular the potential impact on small and medium enterprises and on women traders, and sought clarification in that regard.

29. With regard to subprogramme 5, Africa, least developed countries and special programmes, a delegation encouraged UNCTAD to work more closely in 2025 with developing countries, specifically landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

30. Also with regard to subprogramme 5, paragraph 12.73 (e), a delegation expressed appreciation for the technical support provided to least developed countries who had recently graduated or soon would graduate.

31. With regard to subprogramme 6, Operational aspects of trade promotion and export development, delegations expressed support for the ITC programme of work. A delegation said that it viewed ITC as a close and trusted partner. The delegation expressed appreciation for the ability of ITC to innovate and bring realism to key policy instruments such as the country’s new, simpler and more generous Developing Countries Trading Scheme. Another delegation emphasized the unique mandate of ITC within the United Nations and WTO systems and expressed appreciation for the ability of ITC to leverage resources to work on a wide range of important themes, in particular women’s economic empowerment, disability inclusion and more sustainable global and regional value chains.

32. A delegation expressed the view that, for the majority of developing countries, the work of ITC was much needed when it came to building capacity for small and medium-sized enterprises and improving the quality and diversification of their products and easing access to regional and international markets. In that regard, the delegation expressed its expectation that the Centre would continue to pay close attention to those issues in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The same delegation also said that the issue of accessing information on rules and requirements for international market participants was equally important, and, in that regard, expressed support for, in 2025, the task of broadening comprehensive, internationally accessible data systems about trade, including databases, such as the Sustainability Map, the Market Access Map, the Digital Education Platform and the Trade Academy for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. The delegation also noted that a critical goal was making those products more convenient to use for producers and exporters that lacked the skills in international trade and in international economic relations.

33. A delegation expressed support for the work of ITC in areas of trade and capacity-building in developing countries to support developing countries in economic and social development and better implement the 2030 Agenda.

34. With regard to landlocked developing countries, a delegation suggested that ITC should actively participate in 2025 and beyond in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–

2024 when it came to the development of export-oriented industries in the areas of services, agriculture and the creative economy.

35. The view was expressed that ITC should strengthen its aid for trade cooperation with developing countries and countries with economies in transition and thereby assist developing countries to expand their exports and improve their imports. Another delegation stressed the importance of ITC capacity-building for small and medium-sized enterprises, and improving the quality and diversification of their products, as well as easing access to regional and international markets. In that context, it was expected that the Centre would continue to pay close attention to those issues in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

36. A delegation said that it would work collaboratively with ITC on issues related to e-commerce and digital trade and on further developing tools that addressed sustainable growth and climate change and provided market access information for the private sector.

37. A delegation recalled that the question of digital inclusion and connectivity, including for entrepreneurs in developing countries, was a principal objective of its country's digital development strategy. The delegation asked about progress towards the ITC goal of tripling the number of micro-, small and medium enterprises supported to compete digitally by 2025.

38. In reference to paragraph 13.8, a delegation expressed appreciation for the open approach of ITC to developing additional partnerships with relevant stakeholders, as well as the continued focus on women and trade.

39. With regard to paragraph 13.12 (d), a delegation expressed appreciation for the recognition of the Trade Partnerships Programme and for the fact that the 2023 evaluation had informed the 2025 programme of work. The delegation emphasized that partnership with ITC helped it to understand what businesses needed to take full advantage of preferential access to its markets.

40. A delegation, in reference to result 1, paragraph 13.17, and result 2, paragraph 13.19, asked why there were such large differences between the planned target and the actual achievement.

41. With regard to paragraph 13.21, a delegation requested further information on the effective functioning of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the nature of the partnership between ITC and the African Economic Community. The delegation also sought more specific details on the number of companies with specific examples by subregion. Further information was sought on the work of ITC to ensure that fair assistance was provided to all of the African economic communities in all areas of activity that its mandate covered.

Conclusions and recommendations

42. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution 78/244, consider the programme plan for programme 10, Trade and development, of the proposed programme budget for 2025 under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning" at the seventy-ninth session of the Assembly.**