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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
Forty-first executive session  
Geneva, 18-20 April 2007

Agenda item 3

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT OF THE PANEL OF EMINENT PERSONS  
ON ENHANCING THE DEVELOPMENT ROLE AND IMPACT OF UNCTAD**

Draft agreed outcome<sup>1</sup>

1. In accordance with the terms of reference established by the extended Bureau of the Trade and Development Board, informal consultations took up the 21 recommendations contained in the Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons (UNCTAD/OSG/2006/1) based on the mandate contained in paragraph 48 of the outcome of the Mid-term Review. The informal consultations discussed the follow-up to the recommendations either in the short term or in the context of the preparations for UNCTAD XII. In reviewing the recommendations, the consultations took into account, inter alia, the outcome of the 2006 Mid-term Review (TD/B(S-XXIII)/7 (Vol. I)), the “Reflections by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on the Panel’s recommendations” (TD/B/EX(40)/2) and the ongoing UN reform process. These informal consultations have been completed. The results will be reported back to the Trade and Development Board at its 41<sup>st</sup> Executive Session.

2. The informal consultations were constructive and forward-looking. There was a positive spirit of collaboration and partnership. Member States recognized that the Panel of Eminent Persons had made an important contribution towards enhancing the development role and impact of UNCTAD.

3. In the consultations, Member States underlined that the outcome of the Mid-term Review and the São Paulo Consensus are the guiding documents leading up to UNCTAD XII, and that the recommendations of the Eminent Persons’ Report that enjoy endorsement by the Trade and Development Board will be implemented in the light of UNCTAD’s mandate and in accordance with the agreed outcome of the Mid-term Review (as agreed in paragraph 48 of that document).

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<sup>1</sup> This document was adopted at the last session of the open-ended informal consultations, held on Tuesday, 17 April 2007.

4. Member States noted that a number of ideas in the Eminent Persons' Report have been addressed in the section on strengthening the three pillars of UNCTAD in the outcome document of the Mid-term Review, and that implementation of those recommendations that enjoy endorsement by the Trade and Development Board will be guided by the outcome document of the Mid-term Review.

5. The implementation of those recommendations that enjoy endorsement by the Trade and Development Board will be undertaken in the spirit of strengthening and not weakening the development role and impact of UNCTAD in accordance with its mandate. The Secretary-General is requested to consult and report on the implementation of those recommendations that enjoy endorsement by the Trade and Development Board.

6. There was an understanding (in discussing recommendation 3) that an objective is to maintain and enhance UNCTAD's core competencies so as to reflect their inherent interconnectness. One idea to explore is that thought could be given to reiterate and reinforce this message through a communication to the relevant UN bodies in New York. There was also an understanding (in discussing recommendation 8) that an objective is to improve the quality and coherence of UNCTAD's research and policy analysis. One idea to explore is to strengthen UNCTAD's research and policy analysis through interaction with the network of think tanks (referred to in recommendation 7). In addition, there was an understanding (in discussing recommendation 21) that there should be synergies among the three pillars by strengthening UNCTAD's central mechanism for vertical and horizontal coordination.

7. Member States discussed each of the recommendations in the Eminent Persons' Report in depth, and noted that the recommendations can be grouped into three clusters, namely:

*Cluster 1*

Recommendations containing ideas that enjoy convergence and that are recommended for endorsement by Member States at the 41<sup>st</sup> Executive Session of the Trade and Development Board, with a view to their implementation;

*Cluster 2*

Recommendations on which there is conceptual convergence on the ideas contained therein but that require continued and active deliberation in the context of the ongoing preparations for UNCTAD XII before a decision on them can be taken by the Trade and Development Board and/or at the Conference;

*Cluster 3*

Recommendations on which there is consensus not to pursue them either on grounds that there is divergence of views or that they are considered no longer relevant.

8. In their discussions, Member States focussed on the key ideas in individual recommendations and made specific comments with regard to some of them. Several new ideas also emerged in the course of the discussion. All these have been reflected below.

## 9. *Cluster 1*

*Recommendation 1*, with the understanding that the list contained in this recommendation is illustrative and non-exhaustive, and that there are other development issues where UNCTAD should be engaged in, in accordance with its mandate.

*Recommendation 4*, with the understanding that these principal criteria should be translated into practice in a manner that preserves UNCTAD's mandated role.

*Recommendation 5*, with the understanding that cooperation with other organizations should be based on UNCTAD's mandate and core competence, and that such cooperation and partnership should be a collective exercise requiring efforts not only by UNCTAD but also by other organizations. Priority should be given to the development of partnerships with United Nations Regional Commissions.

*Recommendation 6*, with the understanding that the engagement with such partners is pursued in a flexible manner that preserves Member States' rights in UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery, i.e. not on the basis of an "equal footing", and that ensures the effective participation of civil society and small and medium-sized enterprises from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. One idea is to use virtual means and modern information and communications technology to engage these partners in a cost-effective manner. Another idea is to consider developing criteria for selecting NGOs, including regional criteria, in accordance with the established rules of procedure of the United Nations and as prescribed in the São Paulo Consensus.

*Recommendation 7*, with the understanding that the list of think tanks proposed by the Secretary-General in his reflections is not exhaustive and that the implementation would ensure the effective participation of think tanks from developing countries and countries with economies in transition and that the views of Member States will be taken into account in the process of implementation. In engaging think tanks, virtual means and arrangements should also be considered, including using the Virtual Institute as a basis for developing a virtual network.

*Recommendation 10*, with the understanding that at UNCTAD's intergovernmental processes there are no confrontational attitudes but only differences of views and approaches.

*Recommendation 18*, with the understanding that the aim is to ensure the effective participation of UNCTAD at the country level by providing analytical inputs to UN Country Teams and by improving cooperation with UNDP and UN Resident Coordinators, and not by creating a permanent physical presence in the field, and that UNCTAD's technical assistance remains committed to, and also goes beyond the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.

*Recommendation 19*, with the understanding that in the process of consolidation no specific technical assistance activity will be lost and that a decision on this should be taken in consultations with Member States, including through the established mechanisms, in particular the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Member States noted that the figure of 400-plus projects mentioned in recommendation 19 refers to the number of financial reports issued by UNCTAD and not to the number of actual technical cooperation projects.

10. *Cluster 2*

*Recommendation 9*, with the understanding that the decision on the criteria for consolidation of publications will be taken in consultation with Member States and that implementation will involve development of a publications policy, greater reliance on e-tools and the UNCTAD website for publication and dissemination, and the timely translation into all UN languages. One idea is to launch publications in partnership with national and regional organizations.

*Recommendation 12*, with the understanding that the trust fund already exists, but that funding it is the challenge and that there is a need to find a sustainable solution to predictable financing of the participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in UNCTAD expert meetings.

*Recommendation 13*, with the understanding that the implementation of this recommendation, in particular the phrase “pragmatic solutions”, will not exclude or replace UNCTAD’s traditional work on systemic issues, but will add value in a non-prescriptive manner.

*Recommendation 14*, with the understanding that this recommendation will be implemented in a flexible manner that would allow for both Standing Expert Groups and existing Expert Meetings on specific topics to co-exist.

*Recommendation 15*, with the understanding that the cross-cutting issues dealt with in the Enterprise Commission are not lost and the balance of treatment of issues in the remaining two Commissions would not be negatively affected, and that consideration be given to the possibility of creating a Commission on Globalization and Systemic Issues.

*Recommendation 16*, with the understanding that an annual think-tank meeting could be organized as a parallel event to the Trade and Development Board, and that the emphasis is on creating a multi-stakeholder dialogue that would not replace the High-Level Segment. With regard to the idea of a global forum, the understanding was that it should not duplicate existing international fora and that it should not take the form of a “Davos”-type meeting driven by the private sector.

*Recommendation 21*, with the understanding that the services mentioned in the second and third sentences of this recommendation will have to be explored further by Member States before they are offered on a demand driven basis and in response to requests from Member States, and that this will be coordinated with their Geneva missions, and that budgetary implications would be carefully considered.

11. *Cluster 3*

*Recommendations 2,3,8,11,17, and 20.*

12. The views of the groups and individual Member States on the Eminent Persons' Report are elaborated in the *Report of The Trade and Development Board on its Fortieth Executive Session* (available at: [http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/TD/B/EX\(40\)/3\\_en.pdf](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/TD/B/EX(40)/3_en.pdf)).