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**Trade and Development Board
Working Party on the Programme Plan
and Programme Performance**

Eighty-fourth session

Geneva, 3–7 October 2022

Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda

**External evaluation of UNCTAD
subprogramme 1: Globalization,
interdependence and development**

**External evaluation of UNCTAD subprogramme 1:
Globalization, interdependence and development**

Management response

Report by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Note

In this document, consideration is given to each recommendation that is addressed to UNCTAD and member States of UNCTAD. The recommendations are discussed in the order in which they are presented in the external evaluation report contained in document TD/B/WP/318. The format used is a management response matrix (see table below) that includes:

- (a) The recommendations, extracted in order, from the external evaluation report;
- (b) An indication of whether each recommendation is accepted (in full or partially) or rejected;
- (c) A description of actions to be taken, with comments as required on the conditions to be met during implementation or on reasons leading to a partial acceptance or rejection of a recommendation;
- (d) The office(s) responsible for implementing the action(s);
- (e) The time frame or schedule for implementation, if required;
- (f) An indication of if and what resources are required for implementing each recommendation.

(a) Evaluation recommendation (Extracted from paras. 44–51 of document TD/B/WP/318 and Corr.1)	(b) Management response (Accepted, partially accepted or rejected)	Management plan			
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To the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies

<p>1. It is recommended that [subprogramme 1] SP1 adopt a set of indicators to allow for tracking the use of knowledge products. In addition to web-based and social media metrics and scholarly citations, a new system to collect quantitative and qualitative indications of utility by key users should be established. Key users should include at least member States and policymakers receiving ad hoc advice and participants of intergovernmental meetings, seminars and training sessions. The set of indicators could form the basis of an internal monitoring and reporting system that provides evidence for reporting against the programme plan and budget and enriches the showcasing of highlighted results in such documents.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The recommendation is well noted and accepted. Some of the changes are under way in the context of the wider UNCTAD communications and external relations strategy, which aims, among other objectives, at having more coordinated and coherent communications by UNCTAD as a whole.</p> <p>Among the actions taken, an UNCTAD communications group has been established, led by the Office of the Secretary-General, and an outreach unit was established in the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies.</p> <p>The ongoing work on results-based management, which includes the development of an organization-wide results framework and a series of indicators that will allow UNCTAD to track its progress towards priorities identified by member States, will also contribute to addressing this recommendation.</p>	<p>Office of the Director of the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies and individual branches</p> <p>Office of the Secretary-General</p>	<p>Procedures to be put in place over the next 6 to 12 months, such as establishing indicators to keep track of the use of knowledge products and ways of monitoring the indicators and analysing them.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Additional funds would be needed for both broader and more targeted outreach activities.</p>
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To the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies

<p>2. Considering the difficulties in reaching intergovernmental consensus on the Trade and Development Report overview and the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>The secretariat takes note of the findings resulting in this recommendation and respectfully points out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The secretariat reiterates its commitment to do everything in its hands to support consensus- 	<p>Office of the Secretary-General</p> <p>Office of the Director of the</p>	<p>A more focused approach to meeting documentation deadlines to start being implemented</p>	<p>No</p>
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 Management response to the external evaluation of UNCTAD subprogramme 1

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<p>Development, it is recommended that these outputs be reoriented to capture different sides of existing debates on selected topics while including UNCTAD contributions to each debate on the basis of its independent analysis. Related documents should be circulated in a timely manner to allow for appropriate consideration by member States, that is, within the time frame of the intergovernmental setting in which they are presented. The defence of concrete ideas related to each debate and resulting from the SPI intellectual tradition and research areas could be published as working papers under individual authorship, meeting the new quality requirements set out in the note of the Secretary-General on instructions and guidelines applicable to UNCTAD publications, dated 27 January 2022.</p>		<p>building as one of the three pillars of UNCTAD. Consensus-building is a complex process driven by member States based on their national positions, the complexity of issues at stake and political will to advance on specific aspects. The contribution UNCTAD presents in the outputs mentioned is critical, but not the only factor in determining results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moreover, the nature of the two outputs is different given that they fall under different pillars of UNCTAD work and are therefore governed by different mandates. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development is an intergovernmental meeting governed by the relevant mandates, most notably the Nairobi Maafikiano and the Bridgetown Covenant, with terms of reference revised in October 2021. Those terms of reference request an issues note outlining the key issues to be examined by experts, which is consistent with the reorientation recommended by this evaluation. Concerning the overview of the <i>Trade and Development Report</i>, it should be noted that, despite taking the place of a parliamentary document, it is in fact a subproduct of this output of the research and analysis pillar of UNCTAD. The secretariat would like to highlight that the report is presented in compliance with the longstanding mandate given to this organization to provide policy recommendations in its research and analysis work. Said mandate, established since the creation of UNCTAD and most recently 	<p>Division on Globalization and Development Strategies and individual branches</p>	<p>from 2023.</p> <p>This will involve creating and updating a table with all documents to be prepared for intergovernmental meetings at the beginning of the year and regularly checking deadlines.</p>	<p>The Office of the Secretary-General has already started oversight on the <i>Trade and Development Report</i> and issues notes for the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development through involvement at the executive level and in the framework of the publications committee. This</p>

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		<p>captured in the Bridgetown Covenant, is intended not only to merely monitor trends, policy and debates, but also to make an expert assessment of such evidence and propose reasoned recommendations to policymakers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nevertheless, the secretariat does intend to discuss the issues addressed in the evaluation report and this recommendation in the framework of the publications committee to ensure executive oversight, as well as to address those concerns through this mechanism. • The secretariat is also gradually implementing the recently issued instructions and guidelines applicable to UNCTAD publications, and complementary documents, with a view to continued improvement and delivery of the different types of UNCTAD publications approved annually by the United Nations Publications Board • The secretariat takes note of the occasional late submission of documents, in particular those for sessions of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development, and will strive to enhance internal procedures to avoid such occurrences in the future. 		will be a permanent involvement.	
<p>To the Office of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD</p> <p>3. In addition to coordinating the publications agenda, it is recommended that the publications committee oversee the goals, thematic</p>	Partially accepted	The secretariat takes note of this recommendation and informs member States that it is progressively working on the restructuring process of the	Office of the Secretary-General	6 to 12 months for the review process and, if so decided, a proposal for the	No

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<p>choices and quality requirements of UNCTAD flagship publications and other key publications with a focus on responding to member State decisions on UNCTAD products, mainly those channelled through a new dedicated session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance. The publications committee should also support the Office of the Secretary-General in the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations related to policy clearance, internal peer reviews and cross-divisional collaborations on flagship publications. In doing so, it should play an oversight role in the early stages of the publication process by reviewing a concept note of each product, directly or through the policy clearance unit.</p>		<p>publications committee.</p> <p>The publications committee plays a key role in following up and implementing recommendations derived from different processes of evaluation. For example, the publications committee played a fundamental role in addressing and implementing the recommendations made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its report of 2015 and subsequent triennial evaluation in 2018. This evaluation focused on the UNCTAD research and analysis pillar and has been instrumental in the ongoing efforts to enhance the work of the UNCTAD secretariat in its research and analysis pillar.</p> <p>The secretariat has already used the outcomes of these and other evaluations as tools to strengthen the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of its research and analysis outcomes. In the context of these processes, the secretariat, through the Office of the Secretary-General, has put in place measures and tools to strengthen policy clearance, internal peer review and cross-divisional fertilization, in particular in producing the seven UNCTAD flagship reports and other key publications.</p> <p>In this framework, due consideration will be given to relevant documents approved by the Trade and Development Board and the results of this evaluation to further decide on specific tasks or normative actions of publications committee, that can improve its usefulness and practical operational work.</p>		<p>restructuring of the publications committee</p> <p>Ongoing process for enhancing the publications committee role in supporting the Office of the Secretary-General on the implementation of recommendations of prior evaluations.</p>	

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To the Office of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD					
4. With regard to policy clearance , it is recommended that staffing levels be increased, to allow for a broader range of elements to be considered, such as publication voice and alignment with other divisions. The reinforcement of this unit should include the unit head being given a higher level of seniority commensurate with the increased responsibilities of the unit, including the review of flagship publications led by division directors.	Accepted	<p>The secretariat welcomes this recommendation and, with the support of member States, will take effective measures to strengthen the policy clearance functions at the Office of the Secretary-General level.</p> <p>In accordance with the internal United Nations processes and regulations, the secretariat will put in place appropriate measures to tackle the structural limitations pointed out by this recommendation.</p>	Office of the Secretary-General	6 to 12 months	Yes Additional post to strengthen capacity and create a policy clearance unit. The request will be presented.
To the Office of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD					
5. To help facilitate the dissemination of SP1 research and publications, it is recommended that the new communications strategy provide guidance on the congruence of messages sent by various divisions, the balance of resources dedicated to producing and disseminating publications and the increased outreach of UNCTAD work within the United Nations system with the support of the UNCTAD New York Office.	Accepted	<p>The secretariat is already in the process of implementing the strategic communications plan 2022, in order to promote an institutional repositioning and internal alignment, to better deliver on its mandate.</p> <p>An UNCTAD communications group, led by the Office of the Secretary-General, was recently established to provide strategic guidance and oversight to all divisions. The objective of the group is to support each UNCTAD division and/or branches to successfully implement their communications plans, align objectives and establish regular shared editorial priorities, while</p>	Office of the Secretary-General	Six months to present the first set of deliverables and to review the implementation of the strategy	No

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integrating the values, norms and standards of United Nations communications.

To the Office of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD

<p>6. Considering that the recommendation on indicators could apply to other subprogrammes, it is recommended that the Office of the Secretary-General design and support the regular monitoring of standard performance indicators for the research pillar. Such indicators should be oriented to results that meet the needs of member States, the United Nations system and partners.</p>	Partially accepted	<p>The secretariat is already in the process of aligning its work with a results-based management approach, and it is therefore working closely with a consultant to develop performance indicators for work in all three pillars of UNCTAD to advance in the four transformations mandated in the Bridgetown Covenant.</p> <p>The first set of indicators is expected by the beginning of 2023, with a view to gradually aligning them with the mandates of quadrennial conference.</p> <p>It should be noted that the indicators need to be discussed by the divisions and tailored to the specific work UNCTAD carries out. Therefore, they are not necessarily standard in nature, and need to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.</p>	Office of the Secretary-General	<p>Six months for the introduction of the first set of indicators</p> <p>Ongoing process during next 4 years</p>	No
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To the Member States of UNCTAD

<p>7. Agreement by member States on the mandate of UNCTAD in the Nairobi Maafikiano and Bridgetown Covenant is not detailed enough to provide SP1 with guidance on the scope, choice of topics and style of key deliverables, such as <i>Trade and</i></p>	<p>Note: this recommendation will be considered by member States during the eighty-fourth session of the Working Party on the</p>
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<p><i>Development Report</i>, and since concerns about fundamental aspects of SP1 work are recurrent, it is recommended that member States reach a more concrete agreement on the UNCTAD publications policy on the basis of a proposal by the secretariat, without limiting its analytical independence. Such an agreement should provide general criteria on the purpose and approach of mandated parliamentary documents and flagship publications, including thematic priorities. An additional session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance held in the second quarter of the year would be the right setting to reach agreement on overall UNCTAD publications, as individual reports are considered at different sessions of the Trade and Development Board.</p> <p>To the Member States of UNCTAD</p> <p>8. Similarly, to avoid concerns related to the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development, it is recommended that member States agree on more concrete terms of reference and the policy focus. The terms of reference</p>	<p>Programme Plan and Programme Performance. The response to this recommendation will be recorded in the report of the session.</p>				
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could also include additional requirements on principles for the composition of panels, choice of experts and complementarity with other forums, to provide clearer guidance to the secretariat.	Programme Plan and Programme Performance. The response to this recommendation will be recorded in the report of the session.				
