

**CONFÉRENCE DES NATIONS UNIES  
SUR LE COMMERCE ET LE  
DÉVELOPPEMENT**



**UNITED NATIONS  
CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

CABINET DU SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL  
DE LA CNUCED

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL  
OF UNCTAD

Téléphone: +41 22 917 58 06  
Fax: +41 22 917 00 42  
Courriel : unctadsgo@un.org

Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Genève 10

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Dear Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for sharing the report of the 2019 MOPAN assessment of UNCTAD's technical cooperation pillar. On behalf of the organization, I would like to express my appreciation to MOPAN and its Secretariat for the consultative and collaborative manner in which the assessment was conducted. It followed a rigorous methodology, grounded in the analysis of several documents, interviews and partner feedback. I also thank the MOPAN Secretariat and IOD Park for their flexibility in accommodating the request of our member States to focus this assessment on technical cooperation and adjusting the MOPAN methodology accordingly.

Firstly, I would like to highlight that UNCTAD was among the first batch of organizations assessed against the new MOPAN 3.0 rating scale system. The change in the rating system was introduced towards the end of the assessment. Compared to previous cycles, the threshold for a rating was raised to reflect higher demands by MOPAN members for organizational performance. For UNCTAD, this meant that, under the previous scheme, all eight key performance indicators (KPIs) would have been rated "green" as satisfactory (with one as highly satisfactory). Under the new rating scale system, only three of the eight KPIs are rated as satisfactory.

With this in mind, the report provides a useful overview of where UNCTAD stands on the management of technical cooperation. I am pleased that it shows member States' and partners' appreciation of UNCTAD's technical expertise and our staff's dedication and responsiveness to their requests and needs. It very clearly recognizes recent improvements to results-based management, the upfront planning of technical cooperation activities (including the mainstreaming of gender issues), transparency and efficiency of the project clearance process, inter-divisional collaboration (such as on the Angola project), the quality of independent evaluations and distilling of lessons learned.

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His Excellency  
Mr. Masahiro Takasugi  
Chairman of MOPAN  
Deputy Assistant Minister  
Deputy Director-General for Global Issues, International Cooperation Bureau  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Tokyo

In line with the overall efforts to enhance managerial transparency and accountability, I am committed to strengthening the current monitoring mechanism to add other KPIs which might support decision-making. In addition, my team has tirelessly been engaging with the partners at the UN Headquarters and other external partners to develop innovative tools and learn best practices to enhance management efficiency, accountability and transparency for results, use of resources and overall compliance as per the overall United Nations Accountability framework.

UNCTAD continues to streamline its programme and project review processes while increasing the technical guidance available to staff in the organization to ensure that a quicker-paced process goes hand in hand with high quality. The aim is to improve the understanding of staff on how to better design initiatives that create long-lasting outcomes, while at the same time enabling teams to move quickly to full implementation.

I have taken note of the areas for improvement and requested my team to urgently set up a Task Force to review the current internal structure and propose the most efficient ways that will better serve member States and better deliver our technical cooperation services. With this in mind, it is worth noting that the changes suggested to the technical cooperation operating model would not be independent of changes to the other two UNCTAD pillars and would have to be considered carefully, together with our member States. While comprehensive, the MOPAN 3.0 methodology does not necessarily reflect the complexity of, and nuances required, in managing a United Nations organization. Faithful to the mandate of UNCTAD, we must emphasize that the MOPAN methodology represents the view of one group of member States and may not be consistent with the priorities of the majority of the membership (cross-cutting issues, Busan principles, high-priority areas, among others). Continued dialogue among our members on these priorities is necessary and will be ensured through intergovernmental meetings of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and Programme Budget. In this context, discussions on an updated UNCTAD technical cooperation strategy began in February 2019.

We should also emphasize that our demand-driven technical cooperation model continues to evolve thanks to the diversity of requests for technical cooperation that UNCTAD receives. Consequently, one model, such as that established for our Angola Train for Trade II programme, cannot be successfully applied to all cases. One fundamental principle of UNCTAD's technical cooperation work is that it is tailored to the needs of individual member States and does not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. Therefore, this requires some degree of flexibility, which is an advantage of the decentralized nature of UNCTAD's technical cooperation and its different operating models.

Notwithstanding this *de facto* decentralized approach, allow me to reassure you that UNCTAD is fully convinced that flexibility, agility, responsiveness and cost effectiveness are key ingredients of the model of the future. As a consequence, UNCTAD has been a leading voice in the United Nations Sustainable Development Group deliberations around the United Nations Development System repositioning and its impact on our technical cooperation activities. As a leading "non-resident agency" in the reform discussion, UNCTAD is working closely with the new Development Coordination Office to pilot approaches with a select group of UN Country Teams to put our technical cooperation offer at the disposal of the new Resident Coordinator (RC) system both for the new UN Cooperation Frameworks and the Common Country Assessments. Recently, we jointly prepared a document on UNCTAD's added value to the RCs and vice versa, and an action plan for engagement over the next year. I wish to emphasize that this operational reality – together with the alignment of our work towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as set out in the Nairobi Maafikiano – will be a guiding consideration in the formulation of the new Technical Cooperation Strategy under discussion with member States.

Furthermore, with more than 50 years of trade and development expertise and experience, UNCTAD already begun implementing a number of the Sustainable Development Goals. In fact, [the Report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to UNCTAD XIV: From Decisions to Actions](#), underscored four action lines needed to fulfil the ambitions of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda such as: building productive capacity to transform economies, more effective States and more efficient markets, tackling vulnerabilities, building resilience, strengthening multilateralism and finding common solutions.

Through these actions, in total, UNCTAD contributes to progress on 52 specific targets, grouped under 10 of the 17 SDGs. The two areas of critical importance to this transformative agenda in which UNCTAD contributes the most are Partnership and Prosperity.

Therefore, the current UNCTAD technical cooperation model provides enough flexibility to adequately and cost-effectively respond to member States' requests, as necessary. The current *modus operandi*, which is non-standardized and flexible, provides the necessary agile structure and allows the organization to customize the response to countries. This has been confirmed by the growing demand over the last few years.

In addition, UNCTAD will continue to strengthen the application of results-based management and the role of the evaluation function. In anticipation of the UN Secretariat-wide UMOJA-based solution, UNCTAD is developing an interim performance monitoring system that will address lacunae in the tracking, reporting and sharing of results. We are updating our Evaluation Policy to further clarify the standards, requirements and responsibilities for evaluation and improve the utility of evaluations, including through communication of key messages and lessons learned. In 2020, we also moved the monitoring function to our Resources Management Service, reinforcing the independence of the Evaluation Unit, and focusing its limited resources on an increasing number of requests for independent evaluations and support to programme and project managers for self-evaluation.

The assessment has helped validate a number of UNCTAD's successful performance indicators and resources management systems, while at the same time providing valuable insights on necessary further improvements. As illustrated above, work is already underway to refine our practices. MOPAN's recommendations are key to improving UNCTAD's technical cooperation services' effectiveness.

We look forward to remaining in contact with you regarding the progress made in implementing MOPAN's recommendations, as outlined in the report.

Yours sincerely,



Mukhisa Kituyi  
Secretary-General of UNCTAD