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fifty-sixth session**

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II. President's summary

Opening statements¹

1. Many delegates stressed the importance of strengthened cooperation, particularly for the most vulnerable members of the international community. The world economic and financial turmoil had created a massive hardship for the international community, particularly for developing countries, as they were experiencing lower demand for their goods and services, as well as reduced financial inflows (including foreign investment and remittances). The global crisis thus needed a global solution.

2. It was felt that overcoming the global difficulty required a series of policy measures at the national level, such as implementing stimulus packages, strengthening the domestic financial system and resisting protectionist temptations. At the global level, there was a need for regulation and reform of the existing international financial architecture. Here, some delegates emphasized that the new system should ensure greater voice and representation for emerging and developing countries.

3. Many delegates concurred that the successful conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations should be beneficial to all, as it would respect the development dimension. Some delegates anticipated that the role of UNCTAD would increase as multilateral trade negotiations were expected to intensify in the coming year. It was generally agreed that regional integration could be an important policy option for developing countries to use to realize their potential for development. In that regard, delegates from some donor countries acknowledged that the Aid for Trade programme remained important to developing countries in maximizing market access opportunities resulting from the successful conclusion of the Doha Round.

4. Many donor delegates reaffirmed their commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and to the fulfilment of other existing commitments. Some delegates stated that development, as a matter of principle, should be socially, economically and ecologically sustainable, and that principle should guide the efforts of the international community to reach a new climate change agreement in Copenhagen later in the year.

5. Some delegates from developing countries expressed their belief that South–South cooperation – as manifested in the New Asian–African Strategic Partnership, for example – should complement, rather than replace, North–South cooperation. They also stressed the importance of transforming ideas and suggestions into action on addressing the special needs and concerns of various groups of countries, including African countries, least developed countries and landlocked countries. Several delegates revealed their disappointment with the lack of resources which has hampered UNCTAD's activities in its assistance to the Palestinian people.

6. It was noted that balancing the three functional pillars and building synergy among them was a challenging task. Some delegates said that emphasizing technical cooperation at the expense of consensus-building and research and analysis had become a trend. Others expressed concerns about a recent fall in the overall financial contribution to UNCTAD's

¹ Electronic versions of statements by delegates are available in PDF format on the UNCTAD website in the form and language in which they were received (www.unctad.org/tdb56/statements). Audio files (floor/English) of general statements and statements made at the high-level segment, among others, are also available on the website (www.unctad.org/tdb56/audio).

technical cooperation activities. Referring to the pillar of research and analysis activities, one delegate stressed that those activities should be “development-oriented” and “ahead of curve”. Another delegate suggested that UNCTAD should assess the effectiveness of various technical cooperation activities and intensify its efforts in those activities where effectiveness was recognized.

7. As for UNCTAD’s research and analysis activities, some delegates welcomed efforts to address new and emerging issues, such as migration, climate change and the food crisis; others, however, questioned the soundness of some of its analytical results, particularly those on climate change contained in the *Trade and Development Report, 2009*. One delegate cautioned that UNCTAD should not duplicate the work ongoing in other bodies, particularly the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was the internationally-recognized forum for negotiating climate change issues and setting the relevant policy agenda.
