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**Opening Plenary item 1:**

**Speaker: Thailand**

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**Statement by**  
**H.E. Mr. Thani Thongphakdi**  
**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand**  
**at the Meeting of the Trade and Development Board**  
**58th Executive Session**  
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Text: around 338 words

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, my delegation wishes to align itself with the statements made by Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by Iraq on behalf of the Asian Group.

Thailand also wishes to thank the Secretariat for producing the Least Developed Countries Report 2013. We are pleased to learn that, overall, LDCs registered positive GDP growth last year despite the slow global economic recovery. The progress of those 15 countries that have had a growth rate of over six percent are worth special mention. The increasing per capita income for the LDC group as a whole is also reassuring.

Be that as it may, there still remain many challenges ahead. Questions remain as to what extent the growth seen are really inclusive and have they effectively reduced the number of those living below the poverty line. The revision of domestic policies taking into account these questions, as well as new factors such as changes in demographic dynamics and the nature of labour markets in LDCs is fundamental for any step forward.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand also agrees with the Report that external factors affect greatly the development of LDCs. The recent downturn of developed economies has meant a significant decrease in international trade between them and LDCs, directly impacting the latter's growth.

We therefore believe that diversification of trade is important. On our part, I am pleased to inform you that during the recent Bali WTO Ministerial Conference, Thailand announced the granting of duty-free and quota-free treatment for imports from LDCs amounting up to 73 % of the total tariff lines.

We hope that this will open up new avenues of opportunity for LDCs as they look to expand their trading relations beyond their traditional trading partners.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, I wish to reiterate our belief in the principles of inclusivity and sustainable development—both of which are important for LDCs. As we work towards this goal, I wish to underline Thailand's commitment in being fully engaged in the process.

I thank you.