

**GRULAC UNCTAD
G E N E V A**

**STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN AND THE CARIBBEAN
STATES (GRULAC) AT THE 74TH SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY ON
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND THE PROGRAMME BUDGET**

Geneva, 28 November -2 December 2016

Madam Chair, H.E. Ms. Tehmina JANJUA (Pakistan)
Mr. Joakim Reiter, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. At the outset, the Members of GRULAC extend our sincere condolences to the government and people of the Republic of Cuba on the passing of President Fidel Castro. President Castro who led his country for almost 50 years has left an enduring legacy.
2. Madam Chair, I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC). GRULAC congratulates you on assuming the Chair of this *Seventy-Fourth session of the Working Group on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget*. We are sure that we will achieve concrete and fruitful results, for which you have the full support of our Group.
3. GRULAC also expresses its thanks to *Deputy Secretary-General Reiter* for his introductory statement and we would like to express our most sincere appreciation to the UNCTAD Secretariat for organizing this meeting.
4. Madam Chair, we once again, meet to determine the strategic framework and programme budget of this Organization. This year the meeting takes on even greater meaning, as we prepare to implement UNCTAD's new mandate the Nairobi Maafikiano which requires UNCTAD to contribute to the implementation of and follow-up to outcomes of relevant global conferences and enhance its work, in support of addressing trade and development aspects of all developing countries across all regions. For GRULAC member states, translating these global decisions into a national reality remains elusive given the myriad of obstacles we in the region face.
5. The role of UNCTAD has become increasingly important and relevant as we face the slowdown of the global economy, investment, and trade and the increasing trend of protectionism. Despite an increase in the share in world trade by some developing countries, high debt, unemployment, extreme poverty, economic and environmental vulnerabilities, coupled with low growth rates continue to plague many developing countries, particularly the least developed countries. Emerging challenges such as terrorism, the impact of climate change, environmental degradation, mass movement of people due to social and political unrest, declining trade flows, together with increasing economic challenges have stymied the growth of many developing countries.
6. We in GRULAC have not been spared and in many cases, the economic progress in most of our countries has been stagnant. According to UNCTAD statistics, GRULAC Countries will experience an economic recession for the year 2016 with a growth rate predicted to be -0.2%. UNCTAD also forecasts that FDI inflows in Latin America and the Caribbean could decline by 10 per cent in 2016.

7. GRULAC therefore, considers the Nairobi Maafikiano important to refocusing the objectives of UNCTAD to enhance the efforts of developing countries to increase investment opportunities, improve the wellbeing of their people and build capacities to enable them to become further integrated into the global economy through technical assistance and relevant policy analysis.

8. Further, GRULAC reaffirms UNCTAD as the focal point in the UN system for Trade and Development and interrelated issues in such areas as finance, technology, investment and sustainable development all of which are of acute importance to GRULAC member states.

9. This meeting affords us the opportunity to reflect on the strategic framework of the Organization, while reviewing our successes, reorganizing but more importantly, reinvigorating our processes to ensure that it meets the needs of those most vulnerable through the incorporation of decisions in the Maafikiano.

10. In terms of areas for further future development within this organization GRULAC would like to emphasize the following as priorities for the Group:

- a. the strengthening to the of the intergovernmental machinery,
- b. the midterm review, the reform of the international investment regime, reducing commodity dependence and addressing illicit financial flows,
- c. technical cooperation in all forms in the areas of debt management and debt sustainability,
- d. customs management,
- e. globalization and development strategies,
- f. investment facilitation, non-tariff measures, and
- g. development strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, and analyze fisheries subsidies and their effects, as determined in the Maafikiano document.

11. Our Group recognizes the efforts made by the Secretariat to improve the structure and functioning of the technical cooperation framework with the creation of the “UNCTAD Toolbox”. We also commend the Secretariat’s work in the creation of a *Database of Formal Requests for UNCTAD Technical Assistance* and the proposed new funding mechanism. We hope that some of the Group’s suggestions regarding the availability of the database in all official languages, as well as the inclusion of the basic information and objectives for each request are considered and included in the future.

12. GRULAC also reiterates the importance of maintaining a fair and balanced allocation and distribution of financial and human resources among the various UNCTAD Divisions and Subprogrammes, in a manner that faithfully reflects the development priorities identified by member States.

13. Madam Chair, we are confident that the outcome of the deliberations during the present meeting will serve to strengthen the UNCTAD 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 Biennium Plan and we also hope that the results of this session will motivate development partners to support the Implementation of the aforementioned Biennium Plans.

14. The members of GRULAC who are part of the Group of 77 and China associate ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished Chair of the G77 and China.

I thank you.