

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission,  
Fourth session  
Geneva, 26–30 November 2012**

**Opening Plenary  
General statements by regional groups  
Speaker: Iran on behalf of the Asian Group**

**Monday, 26 November 2012**

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**Statement by  
H.E. Ambassador Abbas Bagherpour,  
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran,  
on behalf of the Asian Group  
At the Fourth Session of the Commission on Investment,  
Enterprise and Development  
Geneva, 26 November 2012**

**Mr. Chairman,  
Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Asian Group. The Group aligns itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the G77 and China.

At the outset allow me to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election. We are confident that under your able leadership, the Commission will reach a successful outcome. I would also like to thank Dr. Supachai for his opening statement.

**Mr. Chairman,**

As we underlined in the Trade Commission, although we have no substantive agenda item for this session of the Commission, this has given us the opportunity to discuss, more deeply, the content of the expert meetings reports which provide us sufficient substantive inputs on issues related to the topic of the Commission. We are also pleased that this fact, as envisaged in the Accra Accord, was also reiterated in the Agreed Conclusion of the Trade Commission -- which would facilitate our future work.

The expert group meetings present us with a wide variety of solutions to face persistent and emerging global challenges. Their recommendations are valuable input for the work of the commissions. However the Commissions -- as important bodies of UNCTAD's consensus building pillar -- have the responsibility to discuss these recommendations and translate them into policy options through agreed outcomes. The successful completion of the above process would demonstrate the determination of the international community to address and overcome these challenges. Consequently, we are hoping that through the proper functioning of UNCTAD's Intergovernmental Machinery, we would be able to improve the global development agenda.

With this in mind, now I would like to address some of the key issues related to investment and development.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Investment is a crucial element for development. This is especially true for developing countries, which rely on investment to help build up their development infrastructure. Furthermore in light of the ongoing financial crisis and the serious risk of a widespread downturn, there is an additional need for productive investment in order to rescue the global economy from a prolonged depression and facilitate a sustained recovery.

Today developing countries are facing different challenges in promoting investment and development, while tackling fundamental persistent and emerging problems, such as the food crisis, climate change, unemployment and poverty. In addition, developing countries have to deal with challenges such as integrating the national and international investment policy framework into the overall development strategy, developing sustainable development strategies, and addressing the imbalance between their rights and obligations vis-à-vis the foreign investors, and the investment protectionism.

To face such challenges, it is essential to benefit from a developmental state. A state with a clear vision and a sustainable development strategy will facilitate and expedite the development process. Such a state would develop a coherent and inclusive strategy and implement sustainable policies in different areas such as trade, investment, technology, environment, infrastructure development and resource mobilization. A strong developmental state will not weaken the private sector but support and encourage it to better play its role in the development strategy.

The other important element is the role of investment in the strategy of the state. In this context it is essential that investment work for sustainable development. Having said that, all international investment agreements should rightfully include sustainable development stipulations. There is also a need to strike a balance between the rights and obligations of investors and States. The recent increasing claims against developing countries by investors show that there is a need to review current investment agreements in order to preserve the rights of such states against unfair claims. Developing countries also need expertise and more bargaining power to secure a fair deal in these contracts.

In Conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we call on UNCTAD to continue to address all such challenges through its research and analysis and technical cooperation activities. Also, since we are approaching the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UNCTAD and the MDG review process, we believe we must come up with new ideas, policy options and indicators to measure the impact of foreign investment on economy and development.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.

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