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Opening Plenary

Speaker: United States of America
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**Statement at UNCTAD Trade and Development Board
U.S. DPR to UN Agencies in Geneva Peter Mulrean
Delivered September 18, 2012**

Good morning. On behalf of the United States, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Seilenthal and Ambassador Tileuberdi, on their joint election as President of the Trade and Development Board. I would like to thank Ambassador Maruping, as outgoing President, for his service during a very challenging year. Under your leadership, we were able to successfully conclude the 13th UN Conference on Trade and Development in Doha, Qatar. I would also like to thank Dr. Supachai for his hard work and dedication, and we look forward to his leadership in the final year of your tenure as Secretary General.

This is the first annual meeting of the Trade and Development Board since the successful conclusion of UNCTAD XIII. In Doha we reaffirmed the role of the Trade and Development Board to provide guidance for the work of the Secretariat in all three pillars of UNCTAD: research and analysis, technical assistance, and consensus building. Over the next two weeks we should strive to build a strong consensus to guide the Secretariat as it implements the Doha Mandate.

The United States is committed to leadership in global development; President Obama laid out this vision in our country's first Global Development Directive. New budget realities underscore the importance we place on results and impact across the entire development spectrum. Just as we are asking our own American development agencies to work smarter and do better, we are also asking multi-lateral organizations - including UNCTAD - to do the same. We stand ready to support and promote effective organizations. In this vein, we are asking UNCTAD to join us and other Member States to look for ways to achieve efficiencies and improve effectiveness, to focus on its core mandate and to empower evidence-based decision-making. We believe this will lead to greater impact and better results for the developing world.

I am pleased to note that the Trade and Development Board will discuss the Secretariat's action plan to address the findings of the Joint Inspection Unit report. I commend the Secretariat for working through August (while many of us were on vacation) to produce an action plan before the start of this meeting. The plan, however, raises concerns for my delegation. First, it only addresses seven of the twelve recommendations of the JIU report. Also, the work plan dedicates more effort to an evaluation of the status quo than to remedial action. There is only one deadline in the action plan - the next annual TDB. This means that progress will only be reviewed one year from now and annually thereafter. Lastly, the plan seeks additional funds for core institutional activities such as monitoring and evaluation, and results-based management - activities that should be funded out of the regular budget. To address these concerns, we will take a pragmatic, solution-oriented approach in the informal discussions, which may help facilitate consensus. The United States stands ready to

seize this opportunity to enhance UNCTAD's operations. We look forward to a robust and interactive discussion that should ultimately lead to agreed conclusions.

With a successful conference behind us and a new year ahead of us, this is an opportune moment to reflect on UNCTAD's future. I would like to briefly address two areas in particular where we believe UNCTAD has the potential to make an important contribution:

By mainstreaming gender throughout its work, UNCTAD can advance equality and opportunity for women and girls and help unlock the potential of half of the world's population. Secretary Clinton has made this issue one of her highest priorities. Most of us are aware of the growing body of evidence that nations that invest in women tend to have stronger economic growth and be more productive, healthier, and have a better educated population. It is incumbent upon us to make sure that men and women alike have ample opportunity. We call on UNCTAD to underscore in all of its programs the special role that women and girls can play in fueling economic growth and alleviating poverty.

Also vital in promoting development is the private sector. Today, official development assistance represents just 13% of capital flows into developing countries. Harnessing the private sector for growth and development is indispensable in this environment. In this vein, we applaud UNCTAD's engagement on private sector investment.

There is much work to be done in UNCTAD's core mandate to study the nexus between trade and development, and how trade can reduce poverty and spur economic growth. No international institution is better positioned or equipped to do this work than UNCTAD. We would like to see UNCTAD focus on its core competency in this area. We believe in the power of trade to spur economic growth and development, and we will continue to be engaged and committed to long-term success.