

Trade and Development Board, fifty-ninth session
Geneva, 17–28 September 2012

Opening Plenary

General statements by regional groups
Speaker: Sri Lanka on behalf of the Group of 15

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GROUP OF FIFTEEN
Summit Level Group of Developing Countries

G-15 Joint Statement at the 59th Session of UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board,
17 September 2012

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Fifteen (G-15), a Summit Level Group of Developing Countries for South-South and North-South cooperation and consultation, comprising 17 member States.* At the outset, permit me to express our congratulations on your election as President of the TDB. We are sure that your thoughtful leadership will ensure a very successful outcome of the present Session.

1. With the promotion of international engagement to foster development through cooperation in all its facets as one of its founding objectives, the Group has consistently emphasized many themes that are in congruence with UNCTAD's established role as the focal point within the United Nations system for the integrated treatment of trade and development and related issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development.
2. In view of the macroeconomic turmoil prevailing on the world economy outlook, UNCTAD has –now more than ever– to continue to assist developing countries in designing policies for dealing with persistent and emerging challenges for development, achieve internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals, and create the right environment that enables developing countries to take advantage of the benefits that international trade can bring in fostering sustainable, socially inclusive development.
3. We congratulate both developed and developing countries for arriving at a successful outcome at UNCTAD XIII in Doha, Qatar. We fully support the Doha outcome document that lays out areas of future work, including any additional issues that build upon the Accra Accord and reinforce UNCTAD's three pillars of policy analysis, consensus-building and technical cooperation.

Globalization, Development (Poverty Eradication & MDGs) and Trade

4. Globalization must be development centred and should ensure inclusive and sustainable development with less poverty and deprivation, raising of standards of living with less disparity among nations; integration of all developing countries into the international economy on a fair and equitable basis; sustainable economic growth; democratization of international relations and respect for and promotion of human rights, in particular the right to development.
5. We call for renewed efforts at all levels to implement fully and effectively the commitments relating to the eradication of poverty. In this context, we urge specific and speedy fulfilment of those commitments to improve social conditions, particularly, in the areas of capacity building in trade and development.
6. We reaffirm the importance of world trade in the economic and social development of our countries and emphasize the crucial role that a fair and equitable multilateral trading system can play in responding to the expectations and legitimate concerns of our countries. The effective integration

of developing countries, in particular LDCs, into the multilateral trading system should remain a priority, and special attention should be given to their capacity building to generate added value, in order to achieve the gradual, equitable integration of these countries into the global economy. The Group also reiterates the need for expediting the accession of developing countries and LDCs to the WTO.

Financing for Development (FfD)

7. External capital flows for development remain a critical means for our countries to generate sustained economic growth and sustainable development. In this context, the recent decline in the level of Official Development Assistance (ODA) is a matter of serious concern and has to be reversed. In this era of global economic downturn, we also encourage the examination of innovative sources of development finance, both short-term and long-term, in particular for LDCs while reiterating that such voluntary mechanisms should supplement and not be a substitute for traditional sources of financing. While the LDCs are facing a severe tightening of capital resources, middle income countries, that are mainly members of the G-15, are also affected being beyond ODA thresholds.

8. The Group stresses the importance of conducting a review conference in 2013 to assess the progress of implementation of the Monterrey consensus to support a new drive for international partnership for financing development, taking into consideration the commitment of achieving the MDGs by 2015.

South-South Cooperation

9. We reaffirm our commitment to deepen and broaden South-South cooperation as a complement but not a substitute for North-South Cooperation. The role of North-South cooperation remains essential, and developed countries should still take the primary responsibility in international development cooperation. South-South cooperation is an ongoing process which helps developing countries to take advantage of existing and potential complementarities in their economies, sharing experiences and affinities and promoting their own sustainable development. The driving force behind international cooperation to, and among, developing countries should be a sense of solidarity with the developing world. In this context, we favour initiatives which are demand driven and untied from conditionalities, among other cooperation principles in favour of developing countries.

10. UNCTAD should promote the strengthening of cooperation ties between donors and other development partners, and facilitate regional integration, improve coordination between institutions, and seek complementarity and greater coherence with the actions undertaken by other agencies.

Expression of Support for UNCTAD

11. We acknowledge the important role of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the need to strengthen the role of the Conference as the focal point in the United Nations for the integrated treatment of trade and development, and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. We encourage UNCTAD to continue to implement full and effective technical assistance and capacity building programmes and commend it for its incisive and independent economic research on global economic issues. We urge the Conference to continue its work within its mandate – through its three pillars.

12. Finally, the Group of Fifteen member countries undertake to actively participate in the discussions of the fifty-ninth session of the Trade and Development Board and to support efforts

aimed at enhancing UNCTAD's role in the evolution of a stronger global consensus on issues falling within its mandate. UNCTAD's mandate and its universal membership make it a valuable forum for development dialogue that can support international economic policies, programmes and global partnerships that would facilitate sustainable development and poverty eradication, particularly in developing countries.

* *Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Zimbabwe*