

Farewell statement

**FOR THE PRESIDENT OPENING THE SESSION**  
**H.E. Ambassador Mothae Maruping,**  
**President of the previous fifty-eighth session of TDB**

**Plenary session- Monday, 17 September 2012, 10 am, Room 18**

Thank you (Minister al-Kuwari) for those thought provoking remarks, as well as your kind words directed at me. I would now like to say a few words before we move to our first agenda item, the election of speakers.

It is with a mixture of relief, satisfaction, and a little bit of reluctance that I enter my last few moments as President of the Trade and development Board.

It has been a very tiring year, with many challenges, many surprises, and many a late night along the way. Yet it was also a very fulfilling year. Together, we accomplished much. We overcame tests that would strain the hardest person and challenge the faith of the most devout. Yet we did succeed. And we did make a difference. Hence my reluctance to bid you farewell, for we have much more to do.

As I relinquish the Presidency, and as I look back over the past year, I am humbled by the collective wisdom present in this very room, and in this institution to which we have all given so much.

Most of our efforts over the past year centered on the preparations for UNCTAD XIII. We began our process towards Doha benefitting from the work and wisdom of my illustrious predecessor Ambassador Luis Manuel Piantini, who continued to serve us all as a friend of the Chair and more importantly as a friend of Anthony Mothae Maruping.

Were it not for the efforts of Ambassador Piantini as President of the Trade and Development Board, and subsequently as my own steadfast friend, our circumstances today would be far different. Rounding off my friends were Ambassador Juri Sielenthal, Jaques Pellet, and our dear departed friend – but happily only to Beijing – Atsuyuki Oike.

Together, this team worked hard and diligently to support me in my endeavor to bridge the gaps, substantive and otherwise, leading to a consensus outcome to the conference which would strengthen UNCTAD.

Along the way we were guided by certain principles. Perhaps the most important was to foster an atmosphere of otherness. Too often in our daily affairs, including our multilateral work, we focus on ourselves: our interests, our objectives, even our prejudices. Sometimes we forget to think of others: their needs, their perceptions, and their priorities. It is only when we can embrace the other - when we can actively and

consciously strive for good for others as for ourselves - that we can truly say that we are working for true consensus building.

This, for me, is perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from the UNCTAD XIII process. It was at the most challenge times, when you seemed most apart and when the situation seemed most volatile, that the voices of wisdom emerged from both sides and embraced the spirit of otherness. They saw in part that some concessions should be made because they are right and because they address the core needs and concerns of the other, and not because it was part of some equation perceived equilibrium.

It is my fervent hope that you will continuously embrace the spirit of otherness in your work, because it is right, and because it is pragmatic and it works. For example I have been asked why I did not push harder during the process, why was I not more assertive. My answer is a simple one: I believed in you. I believed you would embrace otherness and eventually do the right thing. My faith may have been challenged –I must admit seriously at times. In the end, however, my faith was proven right. We achieved a good outcome because of the approach we all took together.

You have all seen that a lesser approach breeds mistrust, misunderstanding, and mischief. Rather than achieving an optimal level of consensus in the long run you are left with a short-term agreement that lacks ownership and legitimacy. A good outcome, grounded in the spirit of otherness, builds trust, promotes greater understanding and appreciation, and leads to collective action through a long-lasting and truer consensus. Is this not what UNCTAD is supposed to be about?

UNCTAD is also supposed to be about doing right and doing good. Our founding fathers in 1964 established UNCTAD in part to realize a more just and equitable global system of trade and economic relations for the benefit of humanity. They did not intend UNCTAD to be a place of conflict and confrontation for its own sake. I hope that you all remember this. This is not to say that friction should be avoided. No - even the best of friends disagree, sometimes quite energetically and passionately. What is important is to focus on the friendship and move forward continuously seeking to do the right thing.

These two principles – otherness and doing the right thing, complement and balance each other. We are working in the real world and not in a philosophical seminar. What one perceives to be right may not be the case for another. The spirit of otherness helps us to see past our own biases and limitations, and widens our horizons and helps us to better see a more global good. This is especially important now given the vast challenges that you have yet to confront.

Some of these were discussed in the UNCTAD XIII process and proved to be quite controversial. The first is the global economic and financial crisis. It must be addressed, and it must be confronted in UNCTAD. It is inconceivable that UNCTAD would not be involved in the global discourse on finding solutions to perhaps the most challenging global economic crisis of our time. I don't think anyone is advocating negotiating IMF reform or the global economic architecture in UNCTAD, but this

important institution has things to say, and they must be heard, including in the areas of promoting greater systemic coherence.

The issue of migration and its impact on trade and development has to be addressed. Often we see trade as dynamic in trade flows only. We forget how much more mobile humanity has become, and how inter-related the various global economic issues are. For a trade-focused institution to neglect migration in today's real world limits the effectiveness of the institution and does the membership a disservice.

You must also ensure that you adequately address the persistent challenges and emerging issues confronting us. Some are indeed emerging – climate change is a phenomenon recognized only relatively recently. Yet sometimes they are grounded on persistent challenges – such as poverty, lack of infrastructure, and lack of opportunity. It is good that you therefore treat them as an integrated and inter-related whole, rather than as individual issues.

Through your work, a focus needs to be placed on economic fundamentals. But you cannot lose sight of the human factor – what it is all about, and what it is all for. It is good that we discussed inclusive development at great length for at the end of the day, development must be about making people's lives better. It must be about providing greater opportunities to the youth; of empowering women; of promoting freedom of expression and opportunity to our people; of protecting them – especially the most vulnerable from shocks in the economic system; of ensuring that we give people the best government we are capable of.

Collectively, we must address all of these elements, holistically, integrally, and honestly. We should not pick and choose debates but engage on the plethora of issues, for all are important and all are connected. Some may give more emphasis to some issues over others. But otherness and a principles approach calls for all to be heard, and for all aspects to be addressed. Some may say that UNCTAD has limited resources and therefore some elements may have to be addressed elsewhere. Those are false economies, leading to our collective intellectual and moral impoverishment.

I hope that in the days ahead, and under the able leadership of your new President, you will work towards moral and intellectual enrichment in UNCTAD. You are in good hands. **I must thank Dr. Supachai for his contribution to the success of UNCTAD XIII, and for steering UNCTAD onto the right track to meet the various challenges facing developing countries.** I thank Mr. Draganov, Ms. Sahami, and the talented and wise people at UNCTAD for their support and assistance. They are the bedrock on which the institution is built, and through their dedication, tenacity, and fortitude, they have made it possible for us to accomplish great things. Even now, I am proud that despite the harsh global environment and the unfavorable global economic conditions, we had an outcome to the conference that we can all be proud of.

Allow me to close by underscoring and highlighting the extent of the challenge yet before you. The world is still in crisis. Despite signs of recovery, and despite encouraging performance on the part of developing countries, there remains great fragility and instability. In this environment, you will have to assess the implementation of the millennium development goals in barely three years. It is my

fervent hope that the MDGs will be strengthened and be made more effective by incorporating more of the economic element, especially a focus on addressing core economic fundamentals.

In barely two years, you will also celebrate a landmark event – you will celebrate a half century of UNCTAD. It is my fervent hope that you will celebrate in a manner which will make the founding fathers proud – by presenting to the world a contribution to the global development discourse that fundamentally affects for the better the course of development, leading to the uplifting of the lives of our fellow human beings.

I have faith in you and I have faith in my successor as President of the Trade and Development Board. I have thanked them before, and I shall thank them again – the various regional and group coordinators. You are sterling people. You are gifted diplomats. On your shoulders rests the future of UNCTAD. I am confident that you are worthy of the burden, and the honor.

I would now like to move to agenda item 1, election of officers...