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**Plenary on Item 6:
Economic development in Africa: Intra-African trade:
Unlocking Private Sector Dynamism**

Speaker: Asian Group

Thursday, 19 September 2013
*Not checked against delivery **

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Asian Group

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Mohammad Sabir Ismail,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq,
on behalf of the Asian Group,
at the sixty session of the
Trade and Development Board**

**Agenda Item 6: Economic Development in Africa
Intra-African Trade: Unlocking Private Sector Dynamism**

Thursday, 19 September 2013

**Mr. President,
Mr. Deputy-Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,**

Mr. President.

At the outset I wish to thank the secretariat for its presentation as well as for the preparation of this year's Development in Africa report. Allow me also to align this statement of the Asian Group with that of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. President.

This year's report, as in years past, provides much useful food for thought, as well as interesting ideas on how to stimulate development in Africa. This year's focus on how to further stimulate the growth of the private sector, and the important role of the enabling role of government, is especially timely given the urgent need to overcome the global economic and financial crisis, as well as the process to articulate the post-2015 global development agenda.

Of particular interest to my region are the report's discussions of regional integration, especially in the area of trade, particularly the interplay of regional trade liberalization complemented with policy measures to boost supply capacities.

We also as a region place special importance on the crucial role of the developmental state, working in close partnership with the business sector in terms of the formulation of national development policy, and in broader terms of regional integration and cooperation.

This enhanced engagement with the private sector can bring about greater clarity on the various ways that the public sector can provide a better enabling environment, including in terms

of regulation and infrastructure development. A closer partnership can also bring about a clearer view of the most promising economic opportunities on the horizon, therefore bringing about more effective government action in promoting economic activities in those areas.

Nevertheless, the role of the state should not be underestimated and perhaps one of the lessons of the global economic and financial crisis is that excessive deregulation and a philosophy of minimizing governmental intervention in the economy may foster conditions of instability and unpredictability which undermine national development efforts, and may indeed lead to a loss of development gains. As we articulate the post-2015 global development agenda, it is important to ensure that the enabling role of the state is recognized, and fostered.

I also wish to underscore that we look to UNCTAD to continue serving as a bridge for the sharing of experiences and best practices between Asia and Africa. For several years we have emphasized the need for UNCTAD to play a constructive and proactive role in the New Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership (NAASP). We reiterate this call, and note that the historical roots of UNCTAD go back to the first Asia-Africa Summit, where both regions expressed their solidarity and articulated a common vision for a better world. We have reaffirmed this vision and this commitment, and continue to count on organizations such as UNCTAD to help us realize our aspirations for a brighter future for our peoples.

Thank you Mr. President.