

**Trade and Development Board, sixtieth session**  
Geneva, 16–27 September 2013

**Opening Plenary**  
**General statements by regional groups**  
**Speaker: Asian Group**

**Monday, 16 September 2013**

*Not checked against delivery \**

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**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 - Inaugural session  
Monday, 16 September 2013**

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

1. At the outset I would like to congratulate you and the bureau on your election. I assure you of our full support as we work to complete the important work before us. Allow me to welcome Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi as he joins us for the first time as Secretary-General of UNCTAD and to extend my gratitude to his predecessor Dr. Supachai for all he has done for UNCTAD. I would also like to align my statement with that of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. President.

2. This cycle of the Trade and Development Board is a historical one. In a few months we will be celebrating under your presidency the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNCTAD. As we do so, we have agreed that the outcomes of the celebrations should be forward-looking and contribute to the implementation of the global development agenda. It is therefore fitting that the agenda for this 60<sup>th</sup> session of the TDB is forward looking, and aimed at addressing the types of issues that will need to be tackled as we move closer towards 2015 and the articulation of the post-2015 global development agenda.
3. The theme for the High-level segment could not be more appropriate or timely. UNCTAD has always been ahead of the curve, with a mandate to be forward looking and imaginative in addressing the development challenges and opportunities of the day. For the Asian Group, this topic takes us further: it pushes UNCTAD to think not only ahead of the curve but also out of the box. The topic therefore should help inspire deliberations at the High level Segment which we hope will be imaginative and creative. In turn, this should stimulate UNCTAD's work in preparation of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and beyond.
4. Such imagination and creativity needs to be grounded firmly in UNCTAD's roots. The ideas that emanate from this important exercise should contribute significantly to the efforts of the global community to realize a fairer and more prosperous world for all. In other words, the firm anchors should be UNCTAD's heritage and core values.
5. At this session of the TDB we will also reflect on this year's Trade and Development Report. We once again have a fine document before us - incisive and thought provoking.

The ideas and suggestions it contains especially on overcoming the global economic and financial crisis are important and bear serious reflection and indeed action, and we look forward to those agenda items.

6. We believe that the cumulative substantive discussions in the TDB, in turn, should greatly enrich what the Asian group has long believed to be a neglected agenda item: UNCTAD's contribution to the implementation and follow-up to the major UN conferences and summits on development. We have long been proud and appreciative of UNCTAD's work so it is unfortunate the preparations for this agenda item have often fallen short of our expectations. This is an agenda item that should include consideration of UNCTAD's ideas and suggestions on how to enhance the contribution of the three pillars to the broader work of the UN on development. It should also be an opportunity for member states to engage on how the intergovernmental machinery can best contribute to the work of the UNGA.
7. Perhaps one reason that the preparations and deliberations on this agenda item have repeatedly fallen short of our expectations is that, at least to our knowledge, there is no focal point for member states to engage with the secretariat on the broader implications of UNCTAD's work. Perhaps this is a matter that could be addressed soon, and could be discussed when we take up that agenda item. This takes on added urgency in view of the proximity to 2015, and the preparations for UNCTAD XIV which we hope would have greater complementarity with the broader development agenda especially after 2015.
8. We also look forward to the deliberations under agenda item 11 (b). UNCTAD's program of assistance to the Palestinian people has always been a high priority for our group and we look forward to engaging with our partners on this important issue.
9. I would like to close Mr. President by once again emphasizing my group's commitment to a successful outcome to this TDB, and we look forward to engaging constructively with all of our partners.

Thank you Mr. President.