

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

Opening Plenary

Speaker: Thailand

Monday, 16 September 2013

*Not checked against delivery **

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Statement by
H.E. Mr. Thani Thongphakdi
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations
Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
at the Opening Plenary Meeting, 60th Session of the Trade and Development
Board, Monday, 16 September 2013 at 10.00 hrs
Palais des Nations, Geneva

4 minutes time limit/ text: around 509 words

Mr. President,
Secretary-General Mukhisa Kituyi,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,

First, allow me to congratulate Ambassador Wibowo on his election as President of the TDB, and welcome Dr. Kituyi, our new Secretary-General. Second, let me place on record our sincere appreciation to Dr. Supachai for his contribution UNCTAD and its ideals during his two terms. I also thank Ambassador Seilenthal and Ambassador Tileuberdi for their work as President of the TDB over the past year.

Mr. President,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Ambassador Benites on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The 60th Session of the TDB comes at a pivotal time. First, UNCTAD and the Group of 77 and China will be celebrating their 50th year anniversary next year. The celebration for this occasion must be forward-looking, whilst providing a platform for us to reflect. But as the Secretary-General has previously stated, we must not use too much time looking into the rear-view mirror, but must drive forward.

Looking ahead, taking into account the uncertainties of ongoing international trade negotiations, I believe that UNCTAD is one of the best equipped organizations to address the difficult questions facing us on the global economy and development. We must, however, make sure that its role is not diluted in an environment where an ever increasing number of

organizations wish to establish themselves as the authority in this field. Here, I believe it is incumbent upon us to ensure that UNCTAD's expertise and know-how continue to contribute meaningfully to the policy discourse on the world's economic situation and its recommendations more effectively translated into action on the ground. This is crucial if UNCTAD is to remain relevant and be a key player contributing to the debate on the post-2015 development agenda.

The Doha Mandate has underlined the goals of UNCTAD as inclusive and sustainable growth and development. Though a lot has been achieved, there still remains much work to be done. It is important for all our countries, developed and developing, to work closely together to achieve this end, looking beyond our diverse immediate concerns to our common long term interests.

This year's Report of the Trade and Development Board is very pertinent to the current state of the world economy. With sustained recovery yet to be achieved, perhaps it is time for us to re-examine the merits of the export-oriented growth model and look into other models that are more balanced with increased emphasis on domestic demand.

The debates and exchange of ideas on these and other issues over the next two weeks will benefit all members. With this in mind, I am also eager to learn from the report in Item 6 on how Intra-African trade can help the African economy, and adapt the lessons learnt to our own economy and region.

Mr. President,

As I conclude, I wish to underline Thailand's commitment to UNCTAD. We are keen to see UNCTAD shape the future of development, and stand ready to play our part.

Thank you.