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**Trade and Development Board
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Geneva, 15–26 September 2014

**Opening Plenary
General Statements**

Speaker: Group of 15

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GROUP OF FIFTEEN
The Summit Level Group of Developing Countries

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G-15 JOINT STATEMENT
AT THE 61st SESSION OF THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Geneva, 15 – 26 September 2014

Mr. Chairman,
Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,

1. As we convene the 61st Session of the Trade and Development Board today, it is with a great honour for me to use this opportunity to present the statement on behalf of the Group of Fifteen, a Summit Level Group of 17 developing countries aimed at fostering, promoting, and sustaining the South-South cooperation. In this regard, G-15 has further the privilege to extend a call for more dialogue and cooperation on global trade and development that suits the interest of developing countries.
2. On behalf of the Group, I would also like to, first and foremost, pay tribute and extend our most profound appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Triyono Wibowo of Indonesia, the outgoing President of the Trade and Development Board, for his esteemed leadership and assiduous work in the service of our organization during his chairmanship. He has impressed us by the level of dedication and commitment, and especially his leadership. Many accomplishments came to mind, including his hard work in putting together the celebration of the 50th anniversary of UNCTAD, which was both timely and of great success, and his active participation in a number of important meetings on behalf of all Member States.
3. Mr. Chairman, at this particular occasion, we extend our warmest congratulations and high appreciation to you and all the members of the new bureau. I have witnessed first-hand how committed you are to a number of trade and development issues in front of us. I am therefore confident that you will be able to provide the needed strong leadership to move us forward. You can rest assured of our continued strong support and cooperation. The Group of Fifteen also wishes to thank and congratulate Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, UNCTAD Secretary-General and all his staff for their continued efforts to ensure that UNCTAD remains relevant in the increasingly complex and challenging times. We are confident of the fact, that Mr. Kituyi would bring greater dynamism and commitment to help address the tasks ahead. We wish to also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report, which has raised a number of important issues that we need to focus during the course of this meeting.

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*Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished colleagues,*

4. The world economy remains sluggish, slowly recovering from the economic and financial crisis of 2008/2009. This, however, should not deter us from our endeavour to identify and implement initiatives that lie within UNCTAD's mandate and address our pressing concerns on trade and development. Trade and development are important ingredients in international affairs and must be collectively addressed, as UNCTAD continues to advance independent thinking and discussions on the interplay of international trade, economic growth and development.
5. This 61st Session of the Trade and Development Board is of great importance, for it marks the 50th anniversary of UNCTAD. At this special anniversary year as we celebrate the achievements of the past, we should also look forward and position ourselves for better addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities that lie ahead in light of the evolving economic situation. Needless to say, the challenges ahead of us remain far more intricate and complex than what we have faced in the past.
6. Over the years, UNCTAD has played a critical role in supporting developing countries in their development efforts and providing them with policy options. UNCTAD should indeed continue to play such a role and assist in advancing the frontiers of development. Most importantly, UNCTAD should concentrate on advancing new and pragmatic policy responses to assist developing countries in addressing the multifaceted challenges of development.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Allow me now to emphasize some issues which our Group believes to merit special attention during this session of the TDB.
8. **First**, we believe that UNCTAD can play an important role in the follow-up to major conferences and summits in the trade and development arena. The post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals is a process which, given UNCTAD's mandate, history and expertise, should continue to benefit from this organization's contribution particularly through the identification of key indicators on trade and development to be included in the post-2015 and sustainable development framework.
9. **Second**, we have to guarantee that the evolution of the international trading system reinforces the role of trade as an enabler to sustainable development and prosperity. In that regard, quantitative targets related to trade might need to be accompanied by qualitative assessments, where UNCTAD has a contribution to make.
10. **Third**, it is incumbent upon UNCTAD to transform ideas and suggestions on how to address the special needs and concerns of Africa, Least-Developed Countries, and the most vulnerable countries, into real actions. However,

despite much discussion in the past, progress remains particularly slow. We believe that this session of the TDB is an opportunity to further examine what could and should be done, as well as how to strengthen UNCTAD's work in this area.

11. Let me finally stress that G-15 supports the work of UNCTAD in assisting the Palestinian people economic development by means of technical cooperation activities and attaches great importance to being acquainted with the challenges faced in the implementation of such activities. We sincerely appreciate the Secretariat's efforts and work but remain disappointed by the lack of resources which has hampered the ability of UNCTAD to fulfil our expectations. We believe that UNCTAD should further strengthen its important work in this area for the benefit of the Palestinian people. We have to encourage this process as it resembles a sound and just development for all on the planet.
12. Apart from these issues, Mr. Chairman, we will be highlighting other specific points during our discussion in the relevant agenda items, such as the issues of development strategies in a globalized world and investment for development.

Mr. Chairman,

13. In closing, the Group of Fifteen looks forward to working with you and to fruitful deliberations and discussions with our development partners in order to ensure the successful conclusions of this meeting, and to send out, as you said, a strong common message of our joint commitment to development.

I thank you.