

GRULAC UNCTAD
G E N E V A

**Statement by The Commonwealth of The Bahamas on behalf of the
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) at the
Sixty-fourth session of the Trade and Development Board**

**Item 10 – Activities of UNCTAD in support of small island developing States and
in support of landlocked developing countries**

Friday, 15 September 2017

Mr. Chair, Taavo Lumiste (Estonia)

Mr. Paul Akiwumi, Director, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes,
Mr. Pierre Encontre, Chief, Small Island Developing States and Status Issues Section (ALDC),
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. The Commonwealth of The Bahamas has the esteemed honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) at this session of the Trade and Development Board.
2. At the outset GRULAC would like to extend heartfelt condolences to those countries affected by the recent natural disasters that have resulted in loss of life and tremendous damage.

Mr. Chair,

3. GRULAC acknowledges four and a half decades of UNCTAD work to bring the unique problems of SIDS to the attention of the international community. GRULAC is particularly grateful to UNCTAD for its unremitting action to make the vulnerability criterion, and the related goal of resilience-building, the paramount development issue in the UN discourse on SIDS, be it through indicators to measure vulnerability or with regard to the question of graduation from Least Developed Country status, a question of direct interest to several SIDS.
4. GRULAC thanks the Secretariat for the background note TD/B/64/9. It encourages UNCTAD to pursue its multi-faceted work in support of these countries, and to continue to report to the Board in the future, at least every two years as envisaged under current arrangements.
5. GRULAC appreciates UNCTAD's paramount focus, in its work on SIDS, on "addressing the vulnerabilities of SIDS more effectively" in response to an important call by the General Assembly in 2010 and in accordance with the 2014 Samoa Pathway. The work of the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes in this regard is considered by GRULAC as a sound approach to the implementation of the Samoa Pathway. GRULAC urges UNCTAD to further support the plea for SIDS status as an avenue for bringing to fruition the possibility of international support measures for SIDS (or "SIDS treatment").

6. GRULAC acknowledges the criteria used by UNCTAD for defining SIDS. However, GRULAC would like to know how UNCTAD could be a Member of the UN System and have a different list of SIDS, which implies that one of GRULAC's Member is a SIDS in the UN and its agencies except in UNCTAD. How could UNCTAD base its SIDS list on vulnerability criterion, and the related goal of resilience-building and exclude HAITI given the experience it had over the past decade with natural disasters and the fact it fulfills most of the SIDS criteria? Against this background, the criterion of population has to be reconsidered as it had been done in one case. So that HAITI could be included in the UNCTAD SIDS list as it is in rest of the UN System.

Mr. Chair,

7. GRULAC considers UNCTAD's approach to SIDS as a pathway to systemic progress. Indeed, the rationale for supporting SIDS as a special category of countries implies the following steps, UNCTAD has rightly taken:

- (i) adopting criteria for identifying SIDS --the necessary condition for a credible and internationally acceptable list of SIDS;
- (ii) recognizing "SIDS status" in light of the resulting list;
- (iii) identifying possible measures of special treatment needed by SIDS; and
- (iv) possible modalities of accession to such treatment by virtue of SIDS status.

8. One example of SIDS treatment which GRULAC would like to see UNCTAD take the lead in is the possible establishment of an integrated framework of technical assistance to SIDS in areas of special relevance to these countries. Such an integrated framework, based on lessons from the experience of the Enhanced Integrated Framework for LDCs, could range from supporting investment and trade development to answering special issues like adaptation to climate change.

9. GRULAC encourages the organization to pursue its action to extend support, on a country-specific basis, to the resilience-building efforts of SIDS, including action to promote economic diversification. This is particularly true with regard to those SIDS that are highly vulnerable to natural disasters, some of which are situated in the Caribbean as recent natural events have reminded us of.

10. GRULAC also acknowledges with appreciation the work of other Divisions of UNCTAD in favour of some 24 SIDS, including the 10 Caribbean SIDS, in their respective areas of competence, ranging from customs automation to debt management, investment policy, e-commerce, port management and trade facilitation, inter alia. Though country-specific rather than category-wide, this multiple action by UNCTAD Divisions in support of institutional capacity-building and productive capacity-building efforts in SIDS is greatly appreciated by GRULAC. Our group looks forward to the continuation and expansion of activities of this type.

Finally, Mr. Chair

11. GRULAC is willing and ready to do its part in the advancement of SIDS issues within UNCTAD.

Thank you.