

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

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Group D Statement – General Debate

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**Statement delivered by
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Mr President,
Secretary General,
Excellences,
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Group D and its Member States.

First of all, please allow me to congratulate the Secretariat for their newest publication – for the UNCTAD Annual Report 2017, presented to us on Monday. We commend UNCTAD’s work to address the trade and development related issues, and we are looking forward to study this report in depth and to elaborate on it at our upcoming meetings.

As the General Debate does not give us a clear guidance what the discussion should be about, please allow me to elaborate on some issues we currently regard as of highest importance for this forum. I will also try to look a little bit towards the upcoming months of our work.

Firstly, we think that UNCTAD is delivering well with regard to the policy analysis and advising the national action on trade and development related topics. This should well meet the technical co-operation pillar. Here, we look very much forward to see the technical cooperation database being timely updated – knowing that this work is ongoing, we commend these efforts by the Secretariat – but we would like to go more into the details here and also to discuss of how to better match the technical cooperation requests with the offers from the donors’ side. We think that there is some room for improvement in order to make the technical cooperation pillar to comport with the policy advice pillar.

Secondly, Group D is committed to support and advance UNCTAD’s work, and in particular in the field of investment, trade policies, eCommerce and eTrade for All, micro-, small and medium enterprises, and in the cross-cutting areas of youth and gender empowerment and entrepreneurship. These topics should be in our focus, as they have the potential of being trigger areas for broader action to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in time. UNCTAD needs a good balancing of the broad inter-agency cooperation to achieve these goals, but without unnecessary duplication of what the other stakeholders already do in these areas.

Thirdly, we would like to highlight the ways and means of how does the Organization conduct in order to achieve these goals. Efficiency, effectiveness, inclusiveness, transparency and

accountability must be in our focus in order to further improve the results-based management in this house. Unfortunately, while preparing for and during this TDB session, we have repeatedly witnessed late documentation, that, above all, resulted in postponing the discussions on Investment report. It is a pity, if the Membership is hindered from its deliberations. We very much hope that the Intergovernmental Machinery revitalization process brings us some good deliverables in order to improve our conduct of work. Therefore, we regard it as of utmost important that reporting on the management issues and the IGM revitalization remain as standing items for our deliberations at the TDB level. Against this end, the Group D welcomes the ongoing assessment of the intergovernmental support service by OIOS.

Fourth, the upcoming Mid-Term Review. For Group D this is the major landmark in order to revise our conduct in implementing the Nairobi Maafikiano. We look forward to hear more about the modalities and ideas the Secretariat has on this. The MTR is our chance to keep UNCTAD relevant in the changing global context and to deliver at the expected level and manner. We think that this could also serve as an effort to increase UNCTAD's relevance across the UN system. Beyond that, the MTR will serve as a major guidance for us in starting the preparations for the next quadrennial conference.

To conclude, we would like to reiterate that enhancing the organization's efficiency is crucial, as well as a key element to keep the focus on UNCTAD's core mandate, with balanced cooperation on international, regional and country levels. The organization shall be able to deliver, and Group D remains committed to continue its cooperation addressing inclusive and sustainable growth.

Group D looks forward to the fruitful discussions throughout the rest of the TDB session, and we will raise further questions and specific comments where necessary.

I thank you.