



**65th SESSION OF THE UNCTAD TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT
BOARD (TDB)**

**STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA FOR THE GENERAL
DEBATE OF THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
DELIVERED BY MS KELE MAFOLE**

6 JUNE 2018

Mr President,

Secretary-General Kituyi,

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues and participants

At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate the newly elected President of the 65th Session of the TDB, Ambassador Salim Baddoura of Lebanon, and wish to assure him of our support during his tenure.

South Africa aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the G77 and China and the Africa Group.

Mr President

It is my delegation's wish that this 65th Session of the TDB, is indeed the first step in the revitalisation of the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD, and will reflect a positive change in direction as we collectively seek to tackle the global challenges we are confronted with. The first two years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have pointed to the worrisome cultivation of a systemically oppressive environment, where the developed world maintains dominance and is reluctant to provide developing countries with opportunities in areas such as agriculture, where they are competitive and could benefit from upgrading their participation in global value chains. Additionally, some in the international community are advocating that the Doha Development Agenda is dead, dismiss longstanding developmental issues, and are eager to move on to new issues, such as e-commerce, which will further entrench the economic dominance of advanced economies. The notion of the global partnership, as envisaged by the 2030 Agenda, is seemingly a distant reality, high on rhetoric and low on substance.

Mr President

We commend UNCTAD for its continued foresight, in the current development landscape, characterised by increased trade tensions, rising financial and fiscal risks, and uncertain geopolitics. In this scenario, multilateral cooperation is the only vehicle towards better solutions for all countries. The biggest losers are the poor. However, despite this bleak picture, my delegation feels spurred on with the hope that UNCTAD is moving towards strategic and innovative approaches, proposing new ways that the UN as a whole, and UNCTAD as an Organisation, could fortify multilateralism and the contribution of fair and inclusive trade to the development of countries.

Mr President

The lack of a significant outcome at the 11th Ministerial Conference of the WTO, albeit disappointing, has opened up an avenue for UNCTAD's consensus-building pillar to reassert its traditional role in providing analytical and technical support to developing countries as they engage in multilateral trade negotiations. This could be useful in allaying the fears surrounding multilateral trade negotiations that have fostered mistrust and a diminished appetite for a global partnership for development. South Africa is highly supportive of regional economic integration and regional trade, but this should be accompanied by distortions at a global level that prejudice the interests of developing countries under the WTO. The conversation, therefore, needs to happen, and UNCTAD is best placed within the international system to offer a space for discussion on less tense terms, thus building momentum on the dialogue pertaining to multilateral trade.

Mr President

The need to combat illicit financial flows, as an impediment to effective and efficient domestic resource mobilisation, has grown in prominence in recent years. Addressing IFF's is a strategic national priority for South Africa. Traction in these discussions, and cooperation on this matter, will bolster the the ability of countries to implement

development goals, solely because those funds could provide an opportunity to redirect revenue towards re-investment in the sustainable development needs of people. Plugging financial leakages will require more concrete efforts at cooperation on tax matters, including improving the ways in which digitization can make it harder to evade tax obligations in developing countries. The recent Financing For Development (FfD) Follow-up Forum of the ECOSOC continued the debate on how to create an inclusive, intergovernmental body, stationed within the United Nations, to take this matter forward. My delegation looks forward to gains in this regard and welcomes UNCTAD's contributions to those discussions.

Mr President

In conclusion, South Africa believes that the revitalization of the intergovernmental machinery should enhance the outcomes of the TDB and other intergovernmental bodies of the Conference. The outcomes of UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery should feed into the processes of ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

I thank you.