

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Mustafa Osman Ismail Elamin  
Permanent Representative of Sudan,  
On behalf of the African Group**

**General Debate**

**Sixty-Fifth Session of Trade and Development Board, Geneva, 4–12 June 2018.**

**Mr. President,  
Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates.**

Mr. President, I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the Presidency of the Trade and Development Board. The African Group has confidence in your able leadership to steer our work during this Session. The Group fully associates itself to the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan on behalf of G.77 and China.

The African Group considers the Trade and Development Board session as an important opportunity for all member states to engage in constructive deliberations on crucial issues of global trade and development. In this connection the Group notes with concern that some of the documents are made available for delegates very late, with understanding that this TDB meeting has been shifted from September to June the Group requests the secretariat to avoid such circumstances in the future.

**Mr. President,**

African Countries should be supported in addressing their special concerns and needs as articulated in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) while reaffirming the importance of supporting Agenda 2063 of the African Union and implementation of the recently signed CFTA by African Heads of States at the AU Extraordinary Summit in Kigali.

The African Group appreciates UNCTAD's crucial contributions in addressing some of the continent's ongoing development challenges through the activities undertaken in the region. The Group requests UNCTAD to continue conducting researches and policy analysis to support African countries in transforming their economies to accelerate sustainable development and facilitate the region's integration into the world economy. Trade policy can help African countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goals although much more needed to be done especially in addressing the supply bottlenecks. Linking trade policy and

productive capacity and structural transformation is very crucial for the achievement of SDGs.

**Mr. President,**

The African Group take notes that according to recent data from UNCTAD, WTO and others, international trade in 2017 increased substantially. In the pre-crisis period world exports of merchandise was growing at about 13% annually from 2000 to 2007. During the crisis world exports slumped, and afterwards started a sluggish recovery that remains fragile. From 2009 to 2017 world exports of merchandise was growing on average at about 2.3% per annum. In 2017 for the first time it experienced a major expansion by about 10%. Predictions for 2018 are also positive.

The African Group expresses its concerns that the recent intentions to pursue protectionist measures which may provoke trade disputes, retaliations or trade wars. Unilateral actions to raise tariffs can go against established WTO rules. If major trading economies engage in trade-related disputes, such friction can impede the trade recovery process. It may also undermine the multilateral trading system.

**Mr. President,**

The African Group welcomes the 2018 Economic Development in Africa Report: Migration and Structural Transformation which timely come in a year that offers the international community a historic opportunity to contribute to the first Global Compact for Migration.

The Group believes that Migration benefits both origin and destination countries across Africa and that African migration can play a key role in the structural transformation of the continent's economies. Well-managed migration also provides an important means for helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, both in Africa and beyond.

**Mr. President,**

The African Group appreciates the recently concluded UNCTAD E-commerce Week, which featured the launch of Egypt's new e-commerce strategy as well as Liberia's eTrade Readiness Assessment (eT Ready). The event involved strong attendance from Africa including Ministerial presence from Egypt, Liberia, Senegal and Uganda, the AU Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy, ICT and

Tourism, as well as several business and civil society leaders involved in digital economy issues.

The African group request UNCTAD to develop regional digital strategy for Africa which will support national digitalization efforts of the African countries. The Group also welcomes the suggestion by the UNCTAD SG to convene an Africa E-commerce Week and looks forward to receiving further information in this respect.

**Mr. President,**

The African Group is looking forward to the conclusion of phase II on Revitalization of UNCTAD's Intergovernmental Machinery during this TDB. The outcomes should lead to the effective use of the current existing UNCTAD intergovernmental structure. The process also should strengthen the link between UNCTAD and the General Assembly as well as the ECOSOC by ensuring that UNCTAD outcomes properly feed in to the deliberation and decisions of United Nations especially on trade and development, finance, investment and technology.

**Mr President,**

What happens to the decisions that we make as the TDB should be of central interest and importance to the process of revitalizing the UNCTAD's IGM. In this regard, we support the call by the Chair of the G77 and China for the establishment of an institutional mechanism to assess and follow up the implementation of the Conference's outcomes, as well as decisions of the TDB. In this regard the African Group wishes to be advised on when the Board decision to have a Single Year Expert Meeting on Promoting Value Addition will be implemented.

The African Group welcomes Palestine to the membership of UNCTAD and would like reiterates its concerns with the lack of implementation of paragraph 55(dd) of the Nairobi Maafikiano which states that UNCTAD "... should strengthen its programme of assistance to the Palestinian people with adequate resources ...", and recalls the UN General Assembly resolutions 69/20, 70/12, and 71/20 which request UNCTAD to assess and report to the GA on the economic cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people.

**I thank Mr. President.**