

**Trade and Development Board,
Fifty-fourth executive session
Geneva, 3–4 July 2012**

**General statements by regional groups
Speaker: Mauritius on behalf of the African Group**

Tuesday, 3 July 2012

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**Statement by Mauritius on behalf of the African Group at the 55rd Executive
Session of the Trade and Development Board
Geneva, 3 July 2012**

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for Mauritius to make this statement on behalf of the African Group.

1. The African Group associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the G77 and China.
2. May I, at the very outset, express our appreciation to the Secretary General and UNCTAD Secretariat for the comprehensive report of UNCTAD 's activities between May 2011 and April 2012, in support of the sustainable development of Africa in the strategic areas of research, consensus-building and technical cooperation and for the documents prepared for this session of the Trade and Development Board.
3. We have taken note, with great satisfaction, that some of the issues raised by delegates at last year's session have received the active consideration of UNCTAD.
4. The African Group attaches great importance to this Executive session of the TDB which is the first after the UNCTAD XIII Conference. Just like the Accra Accord, we look forward to working towards the implementation of the Doha mandate which now guides our future work.

Mr President,

5. The world is still going through unprecedented challenges to the global economy. Africa has great resilience, but the sustainable development of Africa will continue to depend in a large measure to the FDI that both as a region and as individual entities African countries, especially the LDCs receive. FDI is essential if Africa wishes to reach targets set by the MDG's especially as regards to extreme poverty reduction.

6. In that connection, we feel that more encouragement in terms of incentives and guarantees by institutions like UNCTAD could attract FDI in the non-natural-resource-related industries. Africa could become self-sufficient in several basic items of consumption, not the least of them being food. Many African countries can produce not only to meet the needs of their own people but also those of the population of the neighboring countries. The intra-regional FDI potential in food production to make of Africa the 'grenier' of Africa, could be enhanced through UNCTAD's coordinated effort with the Africa Platform for Development Effectiveness set up by the AU and NEPAD last year.

Mr President,

7. We welcome the *Economic Development in Africa reports* prepared by UNCTAD specially the 2011 report which provides a strategic framework for industrial development, and offers recommendations on how to promote industrialization in Africa in the new global environment characterized by changing international trade rules, the growing influence of industrial powers from the South, the internationalization of production, and increasing concerns about climate change. We call on UNCTAD to assist African countries in implementing industrial policies which would promote development of the manufacturing sector.

8. The active and developmental State should play an important role in designing and implementing national development strategies. The private sector as an engine of growth should be supported by the creation, inter-alia, of an enabling business environment; private sector development can be effective through the systematic use of ICT. UNCTAD's Information

Economy Report of 2011 reveals that the ICT-PSD interface is not being fully exploited. In this area too, UNCTAD could play a crucial role of support to the Africa Platform for Development Effectiveness.

Mr President,

9. There is a need for African governments to develop a strategic vision of what they want to accomplish in the medium to long term. Support for capacity development is needed. We wish to call for UNCTAD to continue to provide support to this process through targeted technical assistance, research and policy advice and by serving as a forum to address the challenges facing African countries.

10. There is still need for individual African countries to engage more forcefully in the area of capacity building in several fields of activities related to food production and distribution. We look up to UNCTAD for assisting in finding ways of reaching the optimum use of African human resources.

11. Accession to WTO is an integral part of the development strategies of the eight African countries aiming to benefit fully from the international trading system. We call on UNCTAD to continue providing technical assistance in accordance with the Accra Accord and paragraphs 43 and 56a of the Doha mandate with a view to facilitating their accession process, in order to achieve an early conclusion.

12. The ability for Africa to take advantage of globalization will determine how successful we are in building an integrated regional economy. Regional economic integration is essential for promoting development, fight poverty and better integrate the global economy. We need to refocus our energies to reform our economies as a basis for successful regional integration. Higher economic growth is indeed one of the imperatives to lifting millions of people still suffering from abject poverty and hunger in our part of the world. Above all, our economies need to be adequately equipped to face the challenges of the global economy where change is happening at a staggering speed. We wish to request the secretariat for more analytical work on

regional integration in Africa, especially in the context of NEPAD and also to experiences and lessons learned from other regions and sub-regions.

13. The African Group wishes to support the suggestion made by the Chair of G77 and China that discussions should be initiated on how inter-regional mechanisms such as the New Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership can be made to work to bring Africa closer to other regions, and for these to serve also consensus-building vehicles on key development issues for Africa.

Mr President,

14. During the 18th session of the African Union Summit, African leaders adopted an action plan for boosting Intra-African trade. We appreciate the efforts made by the UNCTAD secretariat for organizing an African Trade Ministers meeting, in Collaboration with the African Union during UNCTAD XIII in Doha. In that regard we encourage UNCTAD to continue collaborating with the African Union and other regional institutions in the implementation of the plan of action.

15. We also wish to reiterate the point made by the G 77 and China that it may be useful for the secretariat working more closely with the regional commissions. The secretariat could give us further information on the scope and extent of cooperation with the ECA secretariat, as well as for ideas on how to stimulate closer cooperation between UNCTAD's consensus building pillar and ECA's governing body.

16. Thank you, Mr President.