



**African Group Statement to be delivered by
H.E. Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail Permanent representative of Sudan
at the 64th Executive Session of the Trade and Development Board
Geneva, 6 February 2017**

Mr. Chairman,

It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. first let me thank the Deputy Secretary General for his opening remarks, and to welcome the new Director of the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries, and Special Programs, I wish him all the success in his tasks ahead and assure him that the African Group will work closely with him.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group associates itself with the statement delivered by Tanzania on behalf of G77 and China and would like also to thank you for your proposal on future work to conclude the Operationalization of the two Intergovernmental Expert Groups in the first phase and the revitalization of the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD in the second phase which shows our collective willingness and constructive embarking in the implementation of Nairbi Maafikiano.

The African Group would like to express its appreciation to the UNCTAD secretariat for preparing Least Developed Countries Report 2016, on the theme of, "The path to graduation and beyond: Making the most of the process" and would like to thank the secretariat for the deep analysis, projection conducted and the valuable recommendation which highlighted the critical situation facing LDCs in their way to graduate.

Mr. Chairman,

Cognizant that more than half of the African Countries are LDCs as such, what happens in African LDCs affects the whole continent thus the African Group notes with concerns that the assessment carried out by UNCTAD outlined that sixteen LDCs are projected to graduate during the 2017–2024 period only three LDCs are from Africa.

The African Group also notes with concern that the overall, existing International Support Mechanisms remain largely inadequate to the developmental needs of the LDCs, making a limited contribution to the development of LDC productive capacities or to the acceleration of their progress towards graduation. The shortcomings of International Support Mechanisms have become more critical in light of the ambitious targets of the 2030 Agenda and the Istanbul Plan of Action IPoA, hence the African Group calls for more strengthening and streamlining the existing mechanisms to be efficient in assisting LDCs for the graduation process.

The Group is of the view that least developed countries need to move from graduation strategies focused on qualification for graduation to "graduation-plus" strategies that take a long-term perspective and foster structural transformation. Elements of such strategies include industrial policies, agricultural upgrading, scaling up of public investment and technology transfer. The Group urges the international community to support LDCs with finance, investment and capacity building to help these countries build up competitive productive capacity and trade supporting infrastructure must be part of a wider package to support graduating LDCs.

Finally, Mr. President, the African Group reiterates that UNCTAD needs to be provided with additional resources in order to meet its expanding mandate and demands from the developing countries, especially the LDCs.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman