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Opening Plenary

Speaker: Jordan on behalf of the Asian Group

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**Statement delivered
by H.E. Ambassador Rajab M. Sukayri,
Permanent Representative of Jordan,
on behalf of the Asian Group**

**at the 28th Special session of the Trade and Development Board
Geneva, 17 June 2014**

**Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General of the United Nations,
Mr. Secretary General of UNCTAD,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. At the outset I would like to align ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished ambassador of Chad of behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. President.

2. Commemorating an anniversary as momentous as a golden jubilee inspires many thoughts. It inspires celebration of the establishment of something new. It also inspires reflection on how have we fared in the last few years, and what this implies for the future. And it inspires action to realize the as yet unfulfilled dreams and aspirations.
3. For the Asian Group, this anniversary also inspires pride in the role that our region has played in the creation of UNCTAD, for it was in Asia at the Asia-Africa Summit in 1955 that the consciousness of the South asserted itself, giving birth eventually to the twin pillars of the developing world: the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77.
4. Today, UNCTAD remains as important for our region as the day of its founding. We value greatly UNCTAD's analytical work, which helps to make sense of the dynamics and trends of an ever more complicated world, and presents policy options for dealing with them. We highly value the technical cooperation extended by UNCTAD to strengthen our capacities and fortify our institutions. And we greatly value UNCTAD's role in helping to foster a more just and equitable world, including by helping to bring the fruits of the global economy to the most vulnerable and marginalized.
5. In this regard, due to one of the longest occupations in modern history, the Occupied Palestinian Territory continues to pay a heavy socioeconomic price in terms of exclusion from participation in international trade, erosion of the productive base and loss of natural resources to occupation, including land and water.

As part of its longstanding support for developing countries to overcome the economic legacy of colonialism, UNCTAD has been providing continuous support to the Palestinian people and was the first international organization to systematically study the Palestinian

economy under occupation, its development prospects and constraints. Member states call on UNCTAD to intensify solidarity with the Palestinian people, to enable them to cope with the mounting loss of natural and economic resources to occupation, by securing the resources necessary to adequately respond to the evolving, complex needs of the Palestinian economy.

6. But above all, we value the political importance of UNCTAD as a place for building consensus on the great economic and development issues of the day. UNCTAD may focus on the trade dimension, but its essence as a developmental rather than trade organization elevates it above the other institutions that populate this important intellectual country.
7. In recent years, the pendulum has shifted somewhat away from the consensus building pillar. We may continue to speak of UNCTAD as a member-state driven institution and as an important forum for consensus building, yet there has been insufficient focus and attention on discussing the difficult issues including those made more pressing by the global economic crisis and its aftermath. It is time to restore the balance and move the discussions into a more substantive direction.
8. We are therefore strongly supportive of the initiative of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to bring back substance to the floor through the Geneva Dialogues. Those freewheeling and informal discussions on the great developmental topics of our day open an important intellectual space for the frank and open discussion of the big issues including the future of multilateral trade, global economic governance, and the developmental state. In so doing, ideas can be liberated and subsequently formally discussed in the intergovernmental machinery, thus enriching its deliberations and its outputs.
9. This strengthening of the consensus building pillar could not come at a more important time, given the convergence of global processes as well as the preparatory process for UNCTAD XIV. As our region hands over to Latin America as the host region of the quadrennial conference, we look forward to building on the important accomplishments at Doha and towards realizing another historic outcome.
10. In Doha we made history by reaching consensus on difficult issues at the most trying of times. At Lima we look to an outcome that is truly transformative for the world. Indeed at Lima we may wish to consider recognizing the reality that UNCTAD is more than just the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; it is in many ways the conference of the United Nations for the integrated and holistic treatment of development itself. That is an exciting prospect indeed.
11. It is exciting prospects - and ideas - that we need most in these coming days as we seek to fully seize the opportunities in the post-2015 process, the preparations for the third international conference on financing for development, and of course the substantive preparatory process for UNCTAD XIV. Much work remains to be done. But more than this, we have to find new and innovative ways of overcoming problems and challenges that have persisted despite our best efforts, and the best of intentions.

12. The time, therefore, is to strike a balance between the UNCTAD of old, which focused on the generation and dissemination of ideas - to the new UNCTAD of the future which translates ideas into concrete and action.

13. Indeed, as we look to the next 50 years of UNCTAD, many things will have to change. But what needs to remain a comforting constant is the courage for UNCTAD to do what is right, and what is just, because that is what humanity expects. If we are to deserve another 50 years of this great institution, we must be worthy and act with the courage and conviction that has made UNCTAD great.

Thank you Mr. President.