



**African Group Statement to be delivered by
H.E. Ambassador Kamal Gubara Deputy Permanent Representative
of Sudan.**

**At the 66th Executive Session of the Trade and Development Board
Geneva, 5-7 February 2018**

Mr. President,
Secretary-General of UNCTAD,
Director of the division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special
programmes
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. The Group thanks the Secretary General of UNCTAD, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, for his opening remarks. The Group also thanks Mr. Pual Akiwumi for the excellent summary of the report and Mr. Rolf Traeger for his informative presentation. While the African Group aligns itself to the statement delivered by H.E. Permanent representative of Pakistan on behalf of G.77& China, allow me to make some additional remarks.

Mr. President,

The Africa Group commends the UNCTAD *Least Developed Countries Report 2017* for its insightful analysis and pertinent key messages and policy recommendations on transformational energy access. Transformational energy access is about going beyond addressing minimal household energy needs, focused on fostering social and environmental development. Instead, it embraces a system-wide approach that takes into account the important two-way nexus between economic transformation and energy demand and supply. Sustainable structural transformation remains a paramount development priority for African LDCs. Without the set-up of a modern, reliable, affordable energy system, structural

transformation will remain out of reach for many African countries, especially African LDCs.

The Report is a useful reminder of the indivisibility of the three pillars of sustainable development. In the case of energy, this indivisibility means integrating the economic pillar – i.e. the productive sector and structural transformation – into LDC energy programmes, policies and projects. As the Report rightly states, energy is the lifeblood of sustainable development.

Mr. President,

The Africa Group also notes the economic costs that unreliable electricity supplies inflict on enterprises in LDCs, further damaging their competitiveness in global and regional markets and their ability to compete with foreign imports in their national markets. Without reliable and affordable access to electricity, LDCs remain on the one hand mired in social and economic poverty while on the other, the means for escaping such poverty traps continue to elude them, given that economic opportunities cannot be reaped without transformational energy access.

The Africa Group endorses the major policy recommendations of the UNCTAD *Least Developed Countries Report 2017* in the areas of trade, technology and finance. The Africa Group concurs with the Report's recommendation that public revenue constraints and limited private financing in LDCs mean that LDCs will still need to rely mostly on ODA for their electricity investments. The Africa Group therefore calls on the international development community to increase their aid allocations to LDCs in the productive and infrastructure sectors.

The African Group believes that issue of energy technology transfer from more advanced countries towards LDCs is critical. The operationalization of the Technology Bank for least Developed Countries, the operationalization of Article 66.2 of TRIPS along with adequate funding of the LDC Climate Fund must remain as important cooperation priorities between LDCs and their development partners. The AU-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme is the type of initiative that should be scaled up to encompass more African LDCs.

Mr. President,

The Africa Group wishes to highlight a pertinent recommendation of the Report in the area of regional cooperation. The emergence of regional energy markets in Africa can contribute towards advancing the achievement of SDG 7 and transformational energy access. The creation of regional power pools, involving collaboration between African LDCs and non-LDCs could be an effective tool not only in achieving transformational and universal energy access but also in boosting opportunities from intra-African trade and investment. Hence, it would be a lever of broader regional integration and fostering the early achieving of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA). In this connection The Group is looking forward to the Launch of the United Nation Economic Commission for Africa UNECA report Assessing Regional Integration in Africa today at 1:15 p.m.

Finally, **Mr. President** the African Group wishes all the success for this meeting, fruitful discussion and outcomes.

I thank you **Mr. President**