Statement by the Russian Federation on behalf of the EAEU Group at the 67th session of the Trade and Development Board (second segment)  
7-9 September 2020

– General Debate –

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

The global COVID-19 pandemic provoked economic and financial shocks, exacerbating the existing vulnerabilities of the global economic system. The available disappointing forecasts of international organizations regarding the dynamics of economic growth, investments and world trade indicate that the crisis has thrown world economy at least years ago, into a state of deep recession.

We note with concern that trends towards increasing inequality and a decrease in interest in multilateral cooperation are even more acute against the backdrop of the spread of COVID-19. More and more national egoism and protectionism prevail on the international agenda.

In these circumstances, it is more important than ever to pay close attention to internationally agreed measures aimed at recovery and prevention of new crises. More resilient global economy will require stronger global institutions and more advanced anti-crisis technologies.
The new reality generated by COVID-19 witnesses the relevance of UNCTAD as a unique international platform for developing coordinated approaches to countering the negative impact of COVID-19 on the global economy and trade. It is obvious that in the short and medium terms, a shift in emphasis in the current activities of UNCTAD will be required to counter the negative trade and economic consequences of the pandemic and the accompanying reallocation of limited budgetary funds. It is important to ensure transparency and accountability of the budgetary process and the establishment of effective channels of communication between the UNCTAD leadership and member states on these issues.

At the same time, we believe it important that the long-term strategic objectives of ensuring sustainable economic growth and development, which are the essence of the original mandate of UNCTAD, will not be relegated to the second plan on the organization's agenda against the backdrop of urgent anti-crisis measures to counter COVID-19. We also consider as unacceptable any attempts, under the pretext of the persisting coronavirus situation, to weaken the organization's mandate as a universal global forum for the United Nations for comprehensively addressing international trade and development and related issues of investment, finance, debt and technology transfer.

In addition to the organization's priorities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, outlined by our regional group during the first segment of the 67th session of the Trade and Development Board, I would like to highlight a number of other important topics.

In the context of a significant deterioration in the global trade and economic situation, the demand for analytical work of UNCTAD in the macroeconomic area with an emphasis on the situation in countries with economies in transition, middle-income countries, developing and least developed countries is ever more pronounced. This also applies to a comprehensive analysis of the "anatomy" of the crisis generated by COVID-19 and to the investigation of the role of a government in enhancing the resistance of the national economy, ensuring a balance between market efficiency and social responsibility. In a broader sense, we reaffirm the need for the anti-crisis strategies
developed by UNCTAD and their alignment with national plans for the socio-economic development of the most vulnerable countries.

The current crisis situation due to the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated the last negative trends in international trade. The revealed vulnerability of global value chains has forced many global companies to reconsider their approaches to the implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies and envisage the possibility of relocation of a part of their production facilities closer to the largest consumer markets. The effects of such strategies have yet to be assessed.

In this regard, we consider it important that UNCTAD's work is aimed at working out recommendations for maintaining established trade ties, adapting them to new realities, including through the creation of sustainable value chains, taking into account the already established cooperation ties between countries and regions. The work on building up intra- and interregional cooperation which would contribute to overcome and prevent conflicts and escalation of tensions in the world is seen as particularly relevant.

We also see the potential in expanding UNCTAD's assistance to the early accession of all countries with economies in transition, middle-income countries and developing countries to the WTO with the view to promote and strengthen the multilateral trading system.

We call on UNCTAD to pay more attention to the task of integrating small and medium-sized enterprises in countries with economies in transition, middle-income countries and developing countries into global value chains, to working out practical recommendations aimed at overcoming the consequences of COVID-19, including within regional integration associations.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate the importance of a coordinated, inclusive, comprehensive and global international response to the coronavirus pandemic with the coordinating role of the UN. We will endeavour to ensure that UNCTAD takes its rightful place in this process.

Thank you for your attention.