United Kingdom Intervention for UNCTAD Trade and Development Board 67th Annual Session

Thank you, Chair.

The United Kingdom would like to thank the President of the Trade and Development Board and the UNCTAD Secretariat for their ongoing work.

COVID-19 is undoubtedly the most serious global challenge in a generation. The United Kingdom remains concerned about the impact on many low and lower middle income countries and fully appreciates the difficult circumstances in which member states are operating.

Given this context, the UK would like to thank Barbados for its commitment to hosting UNCTAD XV in April 2021. We note with support when Ambassador Chad Blackman assured members that Barbados intended to be responsive to the uncertainty created by Covid during the first segment of the 67th session of this board. The UK thanks the Barbadian government for leading members in deliberations of the various shapes the conference could take.

The United Kingdom hopes and would encourage the UNCTAD secretariat to work with Barbados to ensure that the necessary resource is made available to ensure that the conference is able to take place in a virtual manner, in the unfortunate event that a physical meeting is not possible.

The UK also notes the Secretariat’s recent administrative delays, namely in the deliverance of documentation. The UK understands the challenges and the rocky start that all international agencies have experienced in implementing hybrid meeting infrastructure. Delays preclude substantive engagement with UNCTAD’s technical work and all must be done to limit this where possible.

However, with ample lead time for the conference, the UK looks forward to a plan delivered by the secretariat outlining its response to various scenarios to ensure that a conference can take place next year.

The UK will continue to engage with Barbados, the secretariat, and this forum to ensure that there is a successful conference in 2021.

Thank you, Chair.