European Union

Statement

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Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa

Statement by the European Union Delegation to the UN and other international organisations in Geneva

Geneva, 8 September 2020

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –
Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the European Union and its Member States, I would like to thank you the Secretariat for the prepared report on the broad range of activities carried out by UNCTAD in support of Africa between May 2019 and March 2020. We note with appreciation UNCTAD's work in support of development goals in Africa.

Without trying to be exhaustive, we would like to specifically commend the work done in support of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement and related regional integration efforts, the progress on the International Investment Agreements framework, extensive data collection work and activities to empower people, especially those most vulnerable. We believe that these are the sort of activities that represent a concrete value added for Africa. Therefore, we would encourage the Secretariat to ensure the required focus on such activities.

In this respect, and as already noted in our statement to the last year’s report, this year’s report appears to avoid incorporating any lessons learnt or efforts of result based management. While the paragraphs that follow the subtitles A through E (or the subtitles themselves) define well the objective of UNCTAD action, the subsequent paragraphs leave the link between the objectives and the actions to the conclusion of the reader. For instance:

- What were the results of the advocacy work on non-tariff barriers in terms of concrete elimination of barriers as compared to before UNCTAD’s action?
- Has there been an increased integration of the services market in consequence to the mentioned UNCTAD services policy reviews in West Africa?
- To what extent have the various UNCTAD seminars, trainings and research contributed to tackling vulnerabilities and building resilience, and what are the lessons learnt that UNCTAD is using in ongoing and future activities? This latter being particularly relevant in the post COVID-19 building back better and greener efforts.
As the COVID-19 pandemic confirmed, all crisis tend to hurt disproportionately the most vulnerable. At the same time, as UNCTAD’s recent briefing papers noted, the **most vulnerable are also the key to a sustainable and robust recovery**. This is why we believe that the specific actions carried out by UNCTAD for empowering people, in particular those most vulnerable, continue to be instrumental for achieving the SDGs. We, therefore, encourage UNCTAD to continue with such empowering activities, for instance supporting entrepreneurs, with a specific focus on women entrepreneurs, and training officials that are instrumental for facilitating trade and investments.

**The EU and its Member States, as the largest donor to sustainable development in the world, will continue to be a key partner for attaining the SDGs in Africa.** And we count on UNCTAD, as one of the potential avenues for implementing our considerable development aid resources, to help us build back better and greener through an effective and efficient allocation of resources.

Thank you.