



**Statement of H.E. Mr. Marcelo Cima
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of the
Argentine Republic to the UN Office on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in Geneva
at the Eighth Session of the Trade and Development Commission**

Geneva, 4 November 2016

Mr. President, Mr. Faïçal Souissi (Morocco)

Mr. Guillermo Valles, Director, Division on International Trade in Goods and Services, and
Commodities

Ambassadors,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. Chairman.

1. Allow me at the outset to congratulate you and the members of the bureau on your election. The Group of 77 and China look forward to contributing its part to the success of this session of the Commission on Trade and Development.

Mr. Chairman.

2. This session of the Commission may be abbreviated but it is nevertheless an important opportunity for the member states to exchange views especially given that this is our first major opportunity since Nairobi to directly address the nexus between trade and development. This is especially crucial given the disturbing slowdown in global trade and the vigorous debate on what this portends for development.

3. The recent Trade and Development Report, for example, points out that we are beginning to see the face of the new normal, especially as the era of big bang globalization and liberalization may be over. The TDR's focus on the need to redouble efforts to address structural transformation therefore merits greater discussion.

4. We therefore suggest convening a Special Session of the Trade and Development Board to discuss the developmental and structural implications of the slowdown in world trade. Should member states decide that a more focused and technical discussion is needed, we could consider innovating and convene a special session of the Trade and Development Commission. The outcome of that session could be a useful intellectual contribution to the global effort to address this important challenge.

Mr. Chairman.

5. This proposal is in the spirit of the agreement we reached in the Nairobi Maafikiano to reinvigorate the intergovernmental machinery (IGM) of UNCTAD. For our group, reinvigorating the IGM is perhaps the single most significant agreement we reached in Nairobi as it has profound implications for UNCTAD and the totality of its work, especially in terms of its impact on the broader work of the international community on development.

6. This reinvigoration is for us not a question of optics or numbers. It is about expecting more from UNCTAD. This means that we expect more from the IGM, including the commissions, in terms of quality of discussion and outcomes.

7. In practical terms, and as the member states have unanimously expressed in the past, we expect richer panels in terms of diversity of views with more time allotted for interactions among member states and the panelists. We also expect that the background documentation for meetings, including the commissions, will include policy recommendations that panelists will address, and the member states consider.

8. We also expect more in the quality of the negotiated outcomes. The Group of 77 has never favored negotiations for their own sake. Yet meaningful negotiations on important issues are the lifeblood of any intergovernmental process and machinery. Consensus building itself requires negotiations at the right time in the process in order to be relevant. This is perhaps where the expert group meetings have fallen short, and why the G77 pushed for the creation of the IGEs: expert group meetings without agreed outcomes that feed into the IGM are not much more than symposia or seminars.

9. The resulting gap is perhaps one reason why many question the relevance of the commissions. The lack of useful inputs from the expert group meetings and the resulting limitation on meaningful negotiated outcomes, and the reluctance of some to discuss difficult or controversial issues, have served as systemic constraints to the commissions living up to their intended potential.

10. We therefore also expect more from each other. Meaningful negotiated outcomes are only possible if we all commit to make the effort to address the crucial development issues of the day and if we make the effort to negotiate outcomes that will move development forward. We therefore hope that this commission marks the turning of the page to a new chapter of a reinvigorated UNCTAD.

Mr. Chairman.

11. In concrete terms, for the future work and to be discussed at the appropriate fora, the Group of 77 and China suggests the following.

12. First, that in our ongoing discussions on the follow-up and implementation of the Nairobi outcomes including the IGM, we discuss ways and means of strengthening the outcomes of the expert group meetings so that they will make a stronger and more satisfying contribution to the consensus-building work of the Commissions.

13. Second, that as we consider ways and means of further strengthening the commissions we explore how to further improve their negotiated outcomes so that in turn, the outcomes of the TDB will be stronger and more relevant to the broader work of the UN on development, as well as other relevant fora.

14. Third, that we consider the convening of either a special session of the TDB or the Trade and Development Commission on the developmental and structural implications of the slowdown in world trade.

15. We are confident that these, among other ideas, will help us to fully realize our collective vision of a reinvigorated intergovernmental machinery for a stronger UNCTAD.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.