



GROUP OF 77 & CHINA
G E N E V A

**Statement by the Republic of Iraq
on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group**

**Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget
Seventy-ninth Session
Geneva, 20-22 January 2020**

As delivered on 20th Jan 2019

H.E Ambassador Javad Amin-Mansour of Iran, the elected chairman of this session

Madam Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group.

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the members of our group to congratulate you and the bureau on your election. We are confident that your strong and able leadership will help achieving the goals of this session, and I would like to assure you of the Asia Pacific Group full support to you and the bureau in your mission. I would also like to thank Madam Isabel Dourant, Deputy Secretary General, for her remarks that started our discussions today.

Mr. Chair

The Asia-Pacific Group will provide detailed comments in the coming sessions on each subprogram. For the time being the Group would like to make the following general observations:

- The Asia Pacific Group highly appreciates the efforts spent by the secretariat in preparing the budget and providing the relevant documents in a timely manner.
- We notice some changes in the format and the contents of part II of the budget compare to last year's document. We believe that the thinking behind those changes is to reflect suggestions made by member states to improve the document, making it clearer and more comprehensive. One positive change, in our view, is that the strategy was explained on the subprogram level in addition to the general level. One other positive development is shifting the focus from alignment of the work of UNCTAD and its subprograms with the SDGs to the contribution of those subprograms to the SDGs, which highlights more clearly the value added by UNCTAD to the achievement of the SDGs. Stating the results achieved in the past by the subprograms is a welcomed progress too, as it highlights the value of the UNCTAD's work and present more comprehensive rationale for the strategy of each subprogram.
- Through the last several years, we witnessed the continuous reductions in UNCTAD's budget while the demand for its assistance and services has steadily grown. The Asia-Pacific Group stresses the importance of balanced financing of the subprograms and providing the Secretariat with adequate post and non-post resources to fully implement the mandate entrusted to it.
- Despite the receipt of important information regarding the plan in year 2021 for the subprograms in the second part of the budget proposal, the image remains incomplete with no information presented to the Working Party about the other part of the budget, i.e. the post and non-post resource requirements for the programs and subprograms! The fact that the Secretariat have not yet received the budget instructions from New York is making the image even less clear for the member states, and raises the question that, to what extent the secretariat is confident it will receive adequate resources to carry out its planned activities for the year 2021?!
- The Asia-Pacific Group strongly believes that UNCTAD's Secretariat should be fulfilling its whole mandate, a particular attention should be given to the developing countries priorities in the program plan. Development financing gap, debt management and relief, digital economy and new technologies,

economic diversification and breaking away from commodity dependence, reforming IIAs and national investment policies and programs directed to Least developed countries can be named in that context.

- The Asia-Pacific Group commend the efforts made by all Groups representing the member states in reaching an agreed Working Party Terms of Reference, we also appreciate highly the help and support provided by the Secretariat of UNCTAD in that endeavor. The Group believes that the ToRs will help both the Secretariat and the member states in activating the Working Party's important role in UNCTAD and looks forward to the adoption of the Terms of Reference as soon as possible.
- The Asia-Pacific Group would like to associate itself with the long standing positions of the Group of 77 and China included in the statement delivered by Ecuador on behalf of that group.

Finally, the Group of 77 and China look forward to participate in the productive discussions in the coming days on all agenda items and will actively participate in them.

I thank you Mr. Chair.