Statement by Zambia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China
at the Eightieth Session of the Working Party
Geneva, 14 September 2020

General statement

Chair of the Eightieth Session of the Working Party, Ambassador Sadiqov of Azerbaijan,
Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Ms. Isabelle Durant,
Vice-Chair of the Eightieth Session of the Working Party, Ms. Neema Manongi,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to start by congratulating the Chair and Vice-Chair cum-Rapporteur for their election. The Group is confident that under your able leadership we will reach a successful conclusion to this meeting.

2. The Group of 77 and China has taken careful note of the remarks delivered by the Deputy Secretary-General Madame Isabelle Durant on the technical cooperation pillar and evaluation function of UNCTAD. At the outset, the Group would like to express its appreciation on the increase in voluntary funding to a new high of USD 46 million in 2019, particularly after two years of decline. This increase is evidence of the value added and relevance of the technical cooperation work of UNCTAD. It is important to note the continued upward trend of funding from the developing countries and countries with economies in transition which increased to USD 22.8 million for 2019, the highest amount since 1995 in the voluntary funding provided to UNCTAD. The increase is a clear commitment of developing countries to ensure that UNCTAD fulfils its mandate as outlined in the Nairobi Maafikiano and the SDGs to achieve, by 2030, the world we want, one that ensures dignity for all, prosperity for all and a sustainable planet for all. While developed countries increased their overall voluntary funding to UNCTAD, such increase did not match the overall growth in voluntary funding. As developing countries we have a wider array of needs and limited resources, the Group of 77 and China calls on development partners to upscale their voluntary funding to UNCTAD, so that we may appropriately tackle the development challenges we face, more so in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and thus contribute to the implementation of Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals.

3. The Group of 77 and China also notes that the ASYCUDA and DMFAS programme remain the two main attractors of voluntary funding, amounting together to 60% of all voluntary funding received in 2019. These two programmes are indeed crucial for developing countries, having benefitted, and continuing to assist a majority of the members of our Group for many years. While we welcome the continued funding of these programmes, we also call on development partners to increase their funding for new and emerging areas of demand of technical cooperation assistance for which there continues to be a backlog of unfulfilled requests, for instance on commodities, trade and development, climate change, science and technology, digital economy, competition, investment, among others.
4. On the issue of a technical cooperation strategy, the Group of 77 and China welcomes the initiative for the adoption of a new strategy. Indeed, we believe the overarching principle of such a strategy would be to ensure a stable, predictable, and sufficient stream of voluntary funding to fulfill the technical cooperation needs of developing countries. We look forward to the further engagement on this issue and to the discussion with our partners.

5. On the issue of evaluation, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the summary of evaluations conducted in 2019 and the meta-analysis of evaluations conducted between 2015 and 2019. The Group would like to encourage the Secretariat to continue with a robust evaluation function and to continue adapting its work based on the lessons learned from such evaluations. At the same time, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the planned start of work for the in-depth evaluation of subprogramme 1 in 2021 with a view to present this for the Working Party consideration in 2022. In line with the decisions to start a new cycle of subprogramme-by-subprogramme evaluations and to not have any evaluations considered by the membership during the year of the UNCTAD Conference.

6. The Group of 77 and China looks forward to the presentations to be delivered by UNCTAD officials on the various elements contained under the relevant agenda items and will engage in the Q&A sessions accordingly.

I thank you, Mr. President