

**Trade and Development Board, fifty-ninth session**  
Geneva, 12–28 September 2012

**Item 7: Evolution of the international trading  
system and its trends from a  
development perspective**

**General statements by member States**  
**Speaker: Philippines**

**Friday, 21 September 2012**

*Not checked against delivery \**

\* This statement is made available in the language and form in which it was received. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.

**STATEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES<sup>1</sup>**  
**Agenda item 7: Evolution of the International Trading System**  
**and its Trends from a Development Perspective**  
**59<sup>th</sup> Session of the Trade and Development Board**  
**25 September 2012**

Mr. President, Secretary-General Supachai, Director-General Lamy, Mr. Valles, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen:

I wish to align our statement with that made by the distinguished representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation would like to thank the Secretariat for the preparation of the document on this Agenda Item.

Mr. President,

The multilateral trading system exists at an interesting but difficult time. Decelerating expansion of global exports and imports, fragile economic growth, and the impasse in the negotiations to conclude the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) are challenges that impact on all economies, particularly developing countries. The challenges we face require us to be creative and constructive – as evidenced by the excellent insights and courses of action proposed at this Trade and Development Board meeting – as well as to firmly believe and to translate into concrete action ideas that are worth pursuing and realizing.

The Philippines remains deeply committed to ensuring the functioning and sustained enhancement of the multilateral trading system. We continue to support the primacy of the multilateral trading system and recognize the importance of exploring fresh negotiating approaches to bring the Doha negotiations to a successful conclusion and to strengthen the system, while respecting the principles of full participation, inclusiveness and transparency. Development remains at the core of the DDA and should likewise be respected and delivered in any outcome.

A development gap exposes the glaring need for capacity building and long-lasting solutions to pressing problems. This development gap has also led to, and is mutually impacted by, differences in capabilities of Members. In our international agreements in climate change, for instance, this is embodied in the ideal of common but differentiated responsibilities; in the UN, WTO, and other international treaties, it is made operational through the principle of special and differential treatment.

The multilateral trading system is a vehicle that can propel us towards our avowed development objectives. Given the interdependence of our economies, there is so much potential for developing countries, through improved market access, the strengthening of the rules-based trading system, and technical assistance and capacity building. However, beyond the principle of special and differential treatment and the elements of development that I had identified, we need the establishment of the overarching framework – the Doha Mandate in the case of UNCTAD, and the Doha Development Agenda in the WTO – to drive us towards inclusive growth and sustainable development.

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<sup>1</sup>Statement delivered by Mr. Joseph Gerard B. Angeles, Executive Director, Office of the Undersecretary for International Economic Relations, Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines.

The current global economic condition has led to some restrictive trade measures in certain parts of the world. The accumulation of such measures put the middle sized and small economies at a disadvantage. The Philippines will continue to remain open and to continue working together to stem and halt the rise in protectionist measures.

Having said that, the Philippines believes that small steps forward are needed to gain momentum and build confidence to enable us to take steps further in the right direction.

At UNCTAD, this means utilizing the international trading system aggressively to pursue the attainment of inclusive growth and sustainable development. This also means strengthening its role as the focal point of the United Nations for the integrated treatment of trade and development, and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development.

UNCTAD has been an effective platform for which new opportunities are identified. In line with its mandate, UNCTAD could undertake a deeper probe on the good practices and lessons to be learned from international trade organizations and free trade agreements from a development perspective.

In the WTO context, the Aid-for-Trade work program, the work program to enhance the participation of LDCs, and commitment to strengthen the role of the Committee on Trade and Development contribute significantly to development. Furthermore, built into the various WTO agreements and FTAs are flexibilities for developing countries, including transition periods, as well as technical assistance and capacity building opportunities.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), on the other hand, established as its third pillar its agenda on Economic and Technical Cooperation. APEC had also set differing timeframes for the achievement of Bogor Goals 2010/2020 of free and open trade and investment for industrialized and developing countries.

Similarly, ASEAN has provided flexibilities to less developed member-countries, and has a vibrant technical cooperation and capacity building program in all areas to bridge development gaps in preparation for the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015.

The Philippines believes that trade is an essential tool for development. While we must explore new approaches to the multilateral trading system and to conclude the DDA, the ultimate goal of seeking solutions to break the impasse is the same – to come up with long-term solutions to help people rise out of poverty, and relief for the most vulnerable as we recover from the global economic crisis.

The Doha Mandate and the Doha Development Agenda have been the outcomes of the yearnings of billions of people in the developing world. We continue to hope and believe in the ability of open trade to create opportunities for us to rise out of poverty, stand on our own feet, and bring about inclusive growth and prosperity for all. After a decade of attention, we must not give up on Doha and years of hard work. We waited for generations to have the primacy of development in the multilateral trading system see the light of day, and we hope to see it through to its conclusion.

Thank you, Mr. President.