

Trade and Development Board, fifty-ninth session
Geneva, 17–28 September 2012

Plenary on Item 6:
**Economic development in Africa: Fostering industrial
development in Africa in the new global environment**

General statements by regional groups
Speaker: Brazil on behalf of GRULAC

Thursday, 20 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 BRAZIL ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN AND
CARIBBEAN STATES AT THE 59th SESSION OF THE
TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**Item 6 - Economic Development in Africa: Structural Transformation and
Sustainable Development in Africa**

Thursday, 20 September 2012

Mr. President, H.E. Mr. Umunna Humphrey ORJIAKO (Nigeria),
Mr. Petko DRAGANOV, Deputy Secretary- General of UNCTAD,
Mr. Taffere Tesfachew, Director, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special
Programmes,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,

It is for me an honour to take the floor on behalf of GRULAC on this Session of the Trade and
Development Board. At the outset, Mr. President, allow me to express our satisfaction with your
election as well as that of the other members of the Board.

Mr. President,

1. In June this year, at the Rio + 20 Conference, the concept of sustainable development was
once again reaffirmed. It is worth recalling that the concept of sustainable development was
created by a report published in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission and entitled “Our Common
Future”. By placing environmental issues firmly on the political agenda and by discussing
environment and development as one single issue, the idea of sustainable development provided
an innovative analytical framework and a new agenda which has since then produced many
outcomes internationally, including the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework
Convention on Climate Change. That analytical framework of sustainable development has also
been gradually incorporated in individual countries, in their national public policies.

2. The Latina American Group congratulates UNCTAD’s Secretariat for the analysis
contained in the 2012 Report on Economic Development in Africa, the focus of which lies in the
interconnectedness between sustainable development and sustainable structural transformation.

Mr. President,

3. As stated in the Report, (quote) “recent evidence shows that Africa has experienced a
process of structural change over the last 30 years, but that it has not been productivity-enhancing
structural change. This is because it has been associated with the increasing importance of the
commodity economy and also the rising importance of low productivity informal economic
activities in the service sector.” (end of quote)

4. The recommendation of the report by UNCTAD is that Africa should pursue a new development path, different from the one that has brought development to other countries. This new development pathway for Africa should, firstly, generate growth not at the cost of employment, especially in a region with a young population that is being growingly concentrated in urban centers. Against this background, lack of employment opportunities has always the potential to ignite social and political unrest. Secondly, to be successful, according to the report, any new development strategies should avoid promoting economic growth at the expense of the environment. The general conclusion is that any structural transformation that does not fit within the sustainable development framework will not bring the desired results in the long run. This is all the more important in economies that continue to rely on commodities exports for growth.

5. Promoting change on that scale is no easy task for countries which are poor.

6. Let us remember that we reaffirmed the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities this year, in Rio. We also agreed that any green economy policy be considered within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, taking into account the needs of developing countries, particularly those in special situations. We also agreed in the Rio + 20 Conference on strengthening international cooperation, including the provision of financial resources, capacity-building and technology transfer, in addition to avoiding unwarranted conditionalities on the granting of official development assistance (ODA).

Mr. President,

7. Even though all countries are faced with the uncertainties and consequences of the current economic and financial crisis, this should not be used as a reason for diminishing or otherwise curtailing assistance and transfer of technology to developing countries, particularly to African countries. If we expect African countries to promote change and reform in their economic strategies, then we must act accordingly and responsibly. National efforts by African countries must be supported by international cooperation. Developing countries, by South-South cooperation, are providing Africa with training and technology. South-South cooperation is, however, a complement and not a substitute for North-South cooperation. The contribution of developed donors cannot be replaced, especially under difficult times as today's. We therefore urge all development partners to keep sustaining Africa's efforts to promote development and to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals and the future Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you