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**Economic development in Africa: Structural
transformation and sustainable development
in Africa(Item 6)**

General statements by regional groups
Speaker: Thailand on behalf of the Asian Group

Thursday, 20 September 2012

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**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Thailand
to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
on behalf of the Asian Group
at the 59th Session of the Trade and Development Board, UNCTAD
Item 6 “*Economic development in Africa: Structural transformation
and sustainable development in Africa*”
Thursday, 20 September 2012, 10.00 hrs.
Room XXVI, Palais des Nations, Geneva**

**Mr. President,
Deputy Secretary-General,
Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,**

Thailand has the pleasure of the making this statement on behalf of the Asian Group. We align ourselves with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of G77 and China.

The Asian Group congratulates the President and Vice-President on their election to effectively lead and facilitate this session.

We would like to firstly start with an upbeat and positive tone, to highlight the fact that Africa’s economic growth makes it one of the fastest growing region in the world. There are today great trade and investment opportunities for Asia to invest in Africa’s emerging markets, such as those of Nigeria, Ghana, Botswana, Mauritius, South Africa and Mozambique. These opportunities include investment in sovereign wealth funds and other financial investments. As we speak, business persons from Asia and Africa are tapping into each other’s “hot sectors”, from telecoms and financial services, oil and gas, agriculture, and mineral assets to physical and social infrastructure.

The Africa story is gaining momentum, and there is opportunity for greater collaboration with countries of Asia individually and as a region. Indeed, there is the need to address fundamental issues of poverty, labour and urbanization, as well as some of the most pertinent investment issues for new corporations looking to invest on the continent and for those African companies looking to raise funds in Asia.

At the same time, structural transformation and sustainable development of Africa are needed to ensure the most appropriate resource use and productivity, as

well as environmental sustainability and green growth. The “new development path” of Africa will ensure sustainability of natural resources and agricultural productivity, and work to mend the trend of deindustrialization, and this is with the backdrop of a young and growing population. This structural transformation is an important focus undertaken by UNCTAD. The Group thanks the UNCTAD Secretariat for the 2012 Report on economic development in Africa and its dedicated work in this area.

Economically, Asia and Africa still have much room to work closely as partners for sustainable growth and development. The two regions must learn to rely on each other and reinforce both intra- and inter-regional trade. The Asian group reiterates its full support to the efforts of African countries individually and as a region, towards stronger economic growth. The Asian group, recognizing the Asian-African nexus, is ready to work with UNCTAD to find ways and means to help Africa develop its growth strategies to achieve the objective of sustainable development.

The Asian Group also congratulates the countries of Africa for the progress made on achieving the MDGs, specifically MDG-2 on universal primary education, MDG-3 on promoting gender equality and empowering women, and MDG-6 on combating HIV/AIDS. Together, Asia and Africa can work to address the pending challenges and to achieve the remaining MDGs, as well as the challenges posed by food security, inequality and vulnerability.

By working together, we can achieve goals and address the issues that are impediments to the development of Africa to its fullest potential.

Mr. President,

I would now like to continue with a statement on behalf of my delegation.

On the part of Thailand, we would like to raise in particular the issue of “sustainability”, an issue which is high on Thailand’s development agenda. Sustainable development in Thailand is a concept which aims to teach the Thai people how to efficiently use our natural resources up to their perfections in order to satisfy our needs and wants while preserving the environment for our younger generations. Thailand’s experience in our structural transformation moreover highlights how important sustainable development is to a country’s economic stability. Like many in Asia, we are pleased to have shared this experience with African countries through our development cooperation, as one of the development partners of Africa in the past 3 decades.

Through the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency or TICA, Thailand has provided technical assistance and training programmes to Africa since 1978 in our areas of expertise such as agriculture, public health, irrigation, aquaculture and sustainable tourism. Thailand is committed to sharing experiences, lessons learned, and best practices with our African partners for higher productivity, capacity-building, human resources development and income generation. Moreover, we have embarked on trilateral cooperation with UNDP and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to provide training programmes on various skills in Thailand to our African friends.

However big or small a role we play, Thailand stands firm as a bridge builder and as a development partner to Africa.

Thank you, Mr. President.
