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**STATEMENT BY MR. ROBERT K.V. KAHENDAGUZA, DEPUTY  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF  
TANZANIA, ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP AT THE OPENING  
PLENARY OF THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
14TH SEPTEMBER, 2015**

**Mr. President,  
Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary General of UNCTAD,  
Excellencies and  
Distinguished Delegates.**

**Mr. President,**

I feel greatly honoured to speak on behalf of the African Group on the occasion of such an important forum as the Trade and Development Board (TDB). However, before I go any further allow me to associate the Group's statement with that of the distinguished Ambassador of the Philippines who spoke on behalf of G.77 and China.

Let me also congratulate you, **Mr. President**, on your election as the President of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD. The African Group has confidence in your undoubted ability and



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believes that under your stewardship, this Session will be a resounding success.

By the same token, I would like to express the Group's profound appreciation to Her Excellency Ambassador Ms. Ana María Menéndez Pérez of Spain for the sterling job that she did during her tenure as the President of the Trade and Development Board for 2014/15. We thank her for her leadership, particularly through the tough negotiations on the Themes and Sub-themes of the UNCTAD XIV .

**Mr. President**

We repeat what we said at the opening of the Working Party last week in paying tribute to UNCTAD for the opening of the African Regional Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July this year. This initiative is a shot in the arm for the Continent. We can only hope that the Office lives up to its promise of leveraging UNCTAD's extensive technical and analytical resources to directly deliver on the spot authoritative advice on trade and development issues to policy makers and all stakeholders in Africa.

**Mr. President,**

The Trade and Development Board session is an important opportunity for all of us to engage in constructive deliberations on crucial issues of global trade and development.



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In this connection, we note with appreciation and gratitude the various documents the Secretariat has prepared for this Session including the Secretary General's Report, the Development Strategies in a Globalised World Multilateral Processes for Managing Sovereign Debt Crisis, World Investment Report, Africa Economic Development Report and the Contribution of UNCTAD to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 2011 – 2020 decade. We are certain that these inputs will stand us in good stead in our deliberations in the next two weeks with the objective of understanding and finding solutions to the global development challenges we all face.

**Mr. President,**

Africa finds itself at an important crossroads in terms of defining and shaping its transformational agenda. Indeed this fact has been acknowledged by the African Union and in their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Declaration in 2013, the African Heads of State and Government declared that the transformation of the African economies to create shared growth, decent jobs and economic opportunities for all is part of the priorities of the new vision of the continent proclaimed as the Agenda 2063 which is a global strategy to optimize the use of Africa's resources for the benefits of all Africans.

The vision defines “The Africa We Want” as an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.



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To this effect, industrialization and trade have been identified as some of the key pillars that will drive social and economic structural transformation in the next 50 years.

Furthermore, the Common African Position (CAP) on Post-2015 Agenda, which was adopted by the Heads of State in January 2014, reiterates that “the post-2015 process should galvanize political will and international commitment for a universal development agenda focused on the eradication of poverty and exclusion as well as the pursuit of sustainable and inclusive development.”

Needless to say that in order to achieve these visions and aspirations, African countries will need assistance from global institutions not least UNCTAD in defining new pathways towards economic development. Africa has identified critical components of this road map, including: the development of adequate policy space and productive capacities, notably through infrastructure development; science and technology development and innovation transfer; value addition to primary commodities; and youth development and women’s empowerment.

In recent years, African economies have demonstrated their potential for achieving exceptional growth. In 2013, more than 10 of African countries had growth rates averaging 5-6% higher than the global average. According to the African Development Bank, Africa is now the fastest growing continent in the world.



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However, a significant portion of this growth is commodity-driven and does not create the much needed jobs for the growing youth population.

**Mr President,**

Thus, while we commend UNCTAD for its research and careful analysis of recent policy changes and the focus on relevant challenges for African governments we call on UNCTAD, working in concert with respective

African countries, to further explore ways, for example, through technical cooperation and other capacity building activities to assist African countries in addressing the above mentioned and many other developments challenges afflicting the Continent.

One area in which UNCTAD's assistance will continue to be needed is trade. African countries' share in global trade is still at only around 3%, and African exports have relatively limited product and market diversification. It will be difficult for Africa to fully realize its growth and development potentials if this trend continues. New approaches and new areas for trade should be identified, without neglecting products of continuing vital importance to African countries such as agricultural products. African exports should be boosted, including by addressing non-tariff measures and the negative impacts that they have on African exports, as well as through better integration into global supply chains and promotion of exports of services.



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Such action should be supported and complemented by trade-related cooperation programmes of a North–South, South–South or triangular character.

**Mr. President,**

In conclusion, let me say that the African Group and individual countries will be making further comments on specific topics in the discussions. We look forward to the constructive and fruitful discussions to ensure a successful conclusion of this session.

**Thank you for your kind attention**