



**Statement of His Excellency Mr. Marcelo Cima
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Argentina,
Chairman of the Group of 77 and China in Geneva
At the opening of the 63rd Session of the Trade and Development Board**

Monday, 5 December 2016

Mr. President, H.E. Mr. Christopher Onyanga Aparr (Uganda)
Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Mr. President,

1. At the outset allow me to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election. Rest assured of our full support, cooperation and commitment in the year ahead. Allow me also to express our appreciation and admiration to His Excellency Ambassador Alfredo Suescum for his courage and dedication. As President of the Board he successfully led us to a historic agreement in Nairobi, and put us on very solid footing to continue the work of implementing the UNCTAD 14 outcomes. We look to his continued engagement in implementing the Nairobi outcomes.

2. Allow me to thank Secretary-General Kituyi for his presentation and ideas, particularly on what you intended to do on statistics. I am sure you will have feedback from members' countries. We look forward to further strengthening the symbiotic relationship between UNCTAD and the Group of 77 and China, and he can count on our continued support in strengthening and revitalizing UNCTAD.

Mr. President,

3. Over the past few years, member states have called for an improvement in the conduct of intergovernmental meetings. For our part, the Group of 77 and China has consistently called for more meaningful outcomes from intergovernmental meetings as well as for an improvement in the way certain agenda items are organized. For example, for the past several years we have called for improving the recurring agenda item on follow-up and implementation of major UN conferences and summits on development, and we hope that these calls be heeded.

4. This suggestion is intended to help catalyze the participation of member states in UNCTAD meetings. For many years, we have proposed that meaningful participation could be improved by making meetings' agenda items more conceptually relevant to the permanent missions, including by structuring meetings so that there is a concrete and meaningful outcome beyond a summary of the proceedings.

5. It is therefore encouraging that in Nairobi we agreed that expert meetings should have specific policy recommendations for the consideration of the TDB. The result is that this would bring greater substance to the deliberations of the TDB, and that the scope of agreed outcomes from the TDB should consequently also include all of the substantive items. This does not necessarily mean that we have to expand the scope of negotiations during the regular session. What it does mean is that we would have to engage in deeper consideration of the recommendations from the subsidiary bodies of the Board, such as the commissions.

6. These recommendations should be oriented towards UNCTAD's ultimate function as the forum and platform to enable developing countries to fully participate in, and benefit from, the global economic system. There is much that UNCTAD can still do in this regard. We have demonstrated that notwithstanding the challenges around us we have been able to agree on a good outcome for all.

7. In this regard, we view the creation of the two new Intergovernmental Groups of Experts as one of the most significant advances in UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery in recent years. These two groups will allow us to look in depth at the development dimension of e-commerce and the spectrum of issues in the Financing for Development Agenda, and reach agreed recommendations that can help inform the relevant processes outside of UNCTAD. This is especially important in strengthening the FfD follow-up process where UNCTAD is one of the major institutional stakeholders, but where the UNCTAD intergovernmental contribution has been less than optimal.

8. We therefore look forward to the next cycle of meetings and the quadrennium leading to UNCTAD XV. We recall that the intergovernmental machinery was designed to be cyclical in nature, with the outcomes of intergovernmental meetings serving as inputs for the conference outcome. Fully adopting this approach will help give greater purpose and direction to our work, and will help us to better exploit the subsequent cumulative effect of our efforts.

Mr. President,

9. I wish to take the opportunity of the presence of the Secretary General to close with a few comments under agenda item 7. First, we emphasize the importance of enabling the secretariat to prepare the next cycle of meetings. We are fully cognizant that if we do not reach agreement at this TDB on the range of decisions we need to take with regard to the expert group meetings we run the real risk of paralyzing the intergovernmental machinery and prejudicing the very important gains we made in Nairobi.

10. We therefore appeal to our partners to focus on the task at hand, which is to ensure the full and faithful implementation of the Nairobi Maafikiano. Other matters and initiatives can be addressed in the spirit of Nairobi and in the fullness of time when the core tasks have been accomplished. We therefore look forward to a constructive exercise at the end of the week to conclude our important work under agenda item 7.

11. Second, in implementing the Nairobi outcomes we must match ambition with commitment. We greatly appreciate that the Nairobi outcomes represent nothing less than increased ambition in terms of what we expect from the secretariat. At the same time, and as we stated at the recently-concluded Working party, it is also unfair that we have not matched this ambition with the corresponding commitment of resources. We have asked more out of the secretariat - including at FfD in Addis - while ignoring the reality that doing more with less invariably really means doing less with less.

12. Finally, the Group takes the opportunity of this, the highest body in UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery, to send a message to our colleagues in New York that it is imperative to provide adequate resources for UNCTAD. It is our fervent hope that our partners, who joined the consensus in strengthening UNCTAD, will also join the call to truly turn those decisions into actions.

Thank you Mr. President.