

**U.S. National Statement**  
**UNCTAD Trade and Development Board (TDB), General Debate**  
**Wednesday, June 5, 2018**

Thank you, Mr. President. As this is the first time the United States has taken the floor in our national capacity, please allow me to extend our gratitude to Moldovan Foreign Minister Tudor Ulianoschi for serving as TDB president. His dedication and commitment to UNCTAD are commendable. The United States also takes this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Salim Baddoura in his new capacity as TDB president.

Mr. President, [Secretary General], colleagues, I now would like to turn to the announcement yesterday by the Secretary General concerning the membership application of the Palestinians in UNCTAD. We are disappointed with the way the Secretariat handled the Palestinian membership request without any discussion of a decision, which was announced without warning. Our delegation and many others expressed interest and concern about this issue, and yesterday's surprise announcement was received with deep regret by all countries that expect transparency and accountability from this organization's leadership. In addition, UNCTAD is a trade forum and should not be used for political purposes.

It has been the longstanding position of the United States that efforts by the Palestinians to join international entities are premature and counterproductive. The Palestinians are not a state in the UN, and therefore, are not qualified to obtain full membership or participate as a state in international organizations, entities, or conferences. The United States continues to make clear, both with the parties and with international partners, that the only realistic path forward to end this conflict is through direct negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace.

Thank you.