

**Statement by Pakistan on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group
64th Executive Session of the Trade and Development Board (TDB)
6-8 February 2017**

**Mr. President,
Mr. Deputy Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of Asia-Pacific Group. We fully associate ourselves with the statement delivered by Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We also thank the Deputy Secretary General for his remarks.

Mr. President,

We thank the Secretariat for the Least Developed Countries Report 2016. The Report's insightful analysis, and clear policy recommendations, make it a very helpful document.

We are concerned at the deteriorating economic landscape that has significantly impacted all countries, especially LDCs. The LDCs are beset by persistent challenges of poverty, the commodity trap, low productivity of the workforce, limited export diversification and vulnerability to external shocks, including the effect of climate change.

If these challenges are not addressed in a meaningful manner, then, clearly there will be a negative impact on Least Developed Countries' ability to realize graduation in the near future. It would be highly unlikely that we achieve one of the main targets set out by the Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA) – that is, to ensure that half of the LDCs satisfy graduation criteria by 2020. Indeed, the limited success of graduation strategies at national and international levels is thus an indicator of a deeper malaise in the international economic and trade system and LDCs' participation therein. It is this context which lends urgency to significantly stepping up efforts at all levels to assist LDCs.

We agree that graduation itself should be considered as a milestone rather than a winning post. The international community, should, therefore, look beyond graduation and develop strategies from the perspective of the development of productive capacities in order to achieve graduation with momentum. The Report rightly emphasizes the need to ensure a more conducive international financial system to cater for the vulnerabilities and concerns of all developing countries, especially LDCs. The proposal for establishing a finance facilitation mechanism to enhance coordination of the development finance architecture for LDCs, merits serious consideration.

Mr. President,

We appreciate your efforts to steer the work of the Trade and Development Board that has allowed better understanding among regional groups. We have important outstanding issues from the 63rd session of the Board. Significant among them is to operationalize the intergovernmental working groups that were agreed upon in Nairobi. The intergovernmental group of experts on “Financing for Development”, is especially important as it can substantially contribute to the FfD process in which UNCTAD is an institutional stakeholder.

We encourage all Member States to take decisions continuing with the constructive spirit that led us to the Nairobi Outcome. Rigid positions that prevented us from taking important decisions in the last session of the Board must be avoided.

On our part, we would assure you of our constructive engagement for a successful Board meeting this week.

I thank you.