

**Trade and Development Board, sixtieth session**  
Geneva, 16–27 September 2013

**Opening Plenary**  
**General statements by regional groups**  
**Speaker: Ethiopia on behalf of the African Group**

**Monday, 16 September 2013**

*Not checked against delivery \**

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**AFRICAN GROUP  
GENEVA**

**Statement by the Coordinator of the African Group,**  
H. E. Mr. Minelik Alemu GETAHUN  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative  
of the Federal Democratic Republic of **Ethiopia** to the UN Office at Geneva,  
and other international organizations in Switzerland

at the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Trade and Development Board, UNCTAD  
from 16 to 27 September 2013

**Opening Plenary, 16 September 2013**

Ambassador Triyono Wibowo, President of the Trade and Development Board.  
Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD.  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to make this statement on behalf of the African Group.

I would like to associate myself with the statement made by the Distinguished Ambassador of Ecuador on behalf of the the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, allow me Mr. President, to congratulate you upon your election as the president of the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD. The Group is confident that under your able leadership, we will be successful in achieving all the objectives of this important annual session. The Group is also convinced that throughout your chairmanship of the TDB, you will guide all of us towards constructive engagement and fruitful results.

I would like to express our profound appreciation for Ambassador Juri Seilenthal of Estonia and Ambassador Mukhtar Tileuberdi of Kazakhstan, who demonstrated an excellent leadership in their terms as Presidents of the Trade and Development Board.

I thank Dr. Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi for his comprehensive statement. The African Group expresses its wishes of success to Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi in discharging his responsibilities as the new Secretary-General of UNCTAD. The Group is ready to closely work with you in all your endeavors to further enhance the management effectiveness and the intellectual credibility of UNCTAD.

The African Group is very grateful for Dr. Supachai Panchapakdi, former Secretary-General of UNCTAD for his dedicated service to promote inclusive and sustainable development.

Mr. President,

The global community is engaged in a process of evaluating the performance of the MDGs and in crafting new objectives and goals for the post-2015 period. UNCTAD, as a UN think-tank with its mandate of treating trade, investment, finance, science and technology and development in an integrated manner, could play an important role in the post -2015 development agenda. We are confident, Mr. President, that under your able guidance UNCTAD would significantly enhance its contribution towards creating ambitious and achievable goals and targets.

Established in 1964, 2014 is the year that we all should come together to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of UNCTAD. This is indeed a landmark occasion. It provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon the achievements, challenges and prospects of the Organization. The African Group believes that this anniversary is a good period for the global community to assess where we are in terms of achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

Mr. President,

This annual TDB session is an important opportunity for all of us to engage in constructive deliberations on crucial issues of development. The UNCTAD Secretariat has prepared, among others, the Trade and Development Report, the World Investment Report, the African Economic Report and other useful documents on global trade and the implementation of the Istanbul Program of Action. We appreciate the members of Secretariat for their efforts in producing these useful documents. The Group believes that these inputs could help members to have an informed discussion and debate with the objective of understanding and finding solutions for the global development challenges we all face.

Mr. President,

The world economy is still struggling to recover from the worst recession since the Great Depression. Global economic growth in 2013 is likely to be even lower than the mere 2.2. The global unemployment rate is still high. As it is noted in the Trade and Development Report 2013 the current global economic and financial crisis reflects a structural shift of the world economy, and that adjusting to this structural change requires fundamental changes to the dominant growth strategies. The World Investment Report shows that the global FDI declined in 2012 and it indicates that the road to FDI recovery after the financial and economic crisis remains bumpy and uncertain. These are critical development challenges that all countries continue to face. There is no any country that could be able to address them alone. In a highly interdependent world, all countries should come together and seek a sustainable way out of this difficult post-economic and financial uncertainty.

UNCTAD and particularly the Trade and Development Board with its universal membership and as a UN-development think tank, is uniquely positioned to be a vital forum for all governments including the civil society and the academia to discuss and reach at a common understanding to the development challenges. UNCTAD`s independent research and policy analysis work could be a catalyst for consensus building among member states. The topics for this year TDB session could contribute for better understanding of the global development challenges. Our deliberations and their outcomes could shape the global development dialogue. The African Group is ready to constructively and actively engage in the sessions of the TDB with the objective of achieving common positions.