

**Statement by H.E Ambassador Alaa Youssef  
Permanent Representative of Egypt**

**at the Trade and Development Board, sixty-seventh Session  
Geneva, 2 to 3 July 2020**

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**Statement on Item 2 – Annual Report of the Secretary-General**

**Mr. President,**

**Secretary-General of UNCTAD,**

- I align myself with the statements made by Zambia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Angola on behalf of the African Group.
- Since it is the first time for me to take the floor, I would like to join my colleagues in congratulating you Ambassador Federico Villegas of Argentina for assuming the presidency of the Trade and Development Board, and to wish you a great success in his mission. I wish also to thank Ambassador Michael Gaffey of Ireland for the tremendous efforts he exerted during the previous session that set the tone for the preparatory process of the upcoming ministerial conference. I am glad that Ambassador Gaffey will be represented in the board so that we still can benefit from his expertise.

**Mr. President,**

- Few months ago we thought that holding UNCTAD 15 amid of trade tensions and an approaching global economic crisis was a difficult job. Subsequently, COVID-19 strokes us to make the already difficult job even more complicated and challenging. Ambassador Villegas, it takes indeed a lot of courage and determination to accept such hard task, especially after a short period of arriving to Geneva and we trust in your ability and dedication to guide us through such exceptional time. In return, you can rely on our support and active contribution to navigate smoothly through such shattered water.

**Mr. President,**

- I would like to thank the Secretary General of UNCTAD Mr. Kituyi for his detailed and excellent presentation. I recall what Mr. Kituyi mentioned several times that "we shouldn't waste a crisis". Indeed, we should seize the opportunities presented by COVID-19 to address fundamental challenges in the global economy, and to come out of this pandemic even stronger by building our resilience to any other unexpected shocks.

**Mr. President,**

- 56 years ago UNCTAD was established because of the severe wave of inequality felt at the global level particularly in developing countries. Sadly, the pandemic is exposing and exploiting inequalities of all kinds. I believe the situation developing countries are facing

today is no less important or relevant to UNCTAD's reason d'être. This is a very crucial moment for UNCTAD and for us all especially developing countries to diminish inequalities. This is the moment of what I can call the re-emergence of UNCTAD.

- Observers already talk about a new global order in post COVID-19, "a new normal" with new rules different from what we have experienced in this century so far. How to deal with the uncertainty of post COVID-19, where do developing countries stand in the global economy, and how this would affect UNCTAD and multilateralism, are the key issues. UNCTAD should take part in these discussions and outline its direction. Business is not as usual and it will never be again.

**Mr. President,**

- The annual report of the Secretary General reflects the intensity of activities and the quality of work executed by UNCTAD in different areas. So when we speak about the necessity of granting UNCTAD a better place and more budget resources within the UN system, we are confident such demands are legitimate and well earned. We encourage UNCTAD to continue its valuable analytical research and technical cooperation programs which are vital to developing countries and support their efforts in achieving sustainable growth. Debt issue, financing for development, structural transformation and digitalization should remain high on the agenda especially in post COVID-19 recovery.

Thank you.