

STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE, H. E. AMBASSADOR TAONGA MUSHAYAVANHU: UNCTAD TDB 66TH SESSION GENERAL DEBATE; (1000Hrs – 1300Hrs) 26 JUNE 2019

Mr President,

As we add our national perspective in this debate, we wish to align ourselves with the statements made by Ecuador and Togo, on behalf of the G77 and China, and the African Group, respectively.

Mr President,

Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as the President of the 66th Session of the Trade and Development Board. My delegation is confident that under your leadership, the TDB will be able to focus its energies on successfully preparing for UNCTAD XV. In this regard, I fully pledge my delegation's support towards the execution of your mandate. In the same vein, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Salim Baddoura of Lebanon for the exemplary and professional manner in which he presided over the TDB during his tenure.

Let me also express my appreciation to the UNCTAD Secretary General, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, and the UNCTAD Secretariat for the energies expended in organising this meeting.

Mr. President,

Over the course of the past year, we have witnessed a rise in protectionism at the back of the strengthening of nationalistic sentiment. This has, regrettably, piled pressure on a multilateral trading system already tittering on the brink of implosion. My delegation fully subscribes to the notion that in this interdependent world, the only plausible way forward is directing our efforts at finding ways to make multilateralism work. Ensuring a functioning multilateral trading system is essential as we endeavour to guarantee market access especially for developing countries.

Mr. President,

With reports painting a gloomy picture on progress towards the achievement of the SDGs, it is high time that we take decisive actions and embrace the call by the UN Secretary General, Antonio Gutierrez, "to inject a sense of urgency" if ever our dreams of making good the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are to become a reality. As the United

Nations focal point for the integrated treatment of trade and development, and interrelated issues, UNCTAD, through its three pillars can play a key role in providing the much-needed impetus for progress in developing countries.

Mr. President,

The entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) holds heightened hopes for increased opportunities for trade between African Countries. We value UNCTAD's assistance in the provision of guidance to African countries on how to harness trade as a tool for economic transformation and improve upon their trade policy regimes, in order to boost competitiveness in regional and global markets and facilitate their integration into regional and global value chains. We appreciate the ongoing provision of support to African countries on non-tariff measures, including through training aimed at building policymakers' skills in this area. However, while all these measures are important, it is critical to compliment these with other supportive policy measures to boost supply capacities. As my delegation has highlighted on a number of occasions, there is little value in talking about the development potential of trade when there is little to trade in the first place.

This is why we have welcomed those UNCTAD activities designed at advancing the structural transformation of the economies of developing countries. My delegation believes that this is the area where UNCTAD should focus more of its resources and attention as we enter into the UNCTAD XV Ministerial Conference. With the recently launched UNCTAD Report, ***Commodity Dependence: A Twenty-Year Perspective***, pointing to a situation of entrapment in a vicious cycle of underdevelopment due to commodity price-volatility and vulnerability to negative terms-of-trade shocks, ongoing UNCTAD efforts to address the challenges of commodity dependence need to be expanded. Value addition and beneficiation, while increasing earnings for developing countries, will also create the much-needed employment, boost incomes and thus bring us closer to realising the goals of Agenda 2030.

Mr. President, these measures will be profitable if complimented by sustained efforts at combating illicit financial flows and bridging the digital divide between developed and developing countries, as well as within the borders of developing countries themselves.

I thank You