



**GROUP OF 77 & CHINA  
G E N E V A**

**Statement by Afghanistan on behalf of the  
Group of 77 and China at the 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
Trade and Development Commission**

**Item 5 – Progress report on promoting and  
strengthening synergies among the three pillars  
Presentation by the Division on Technology and Logistics**

*17 February 2021*

Chair of the twelfth Session of the Trade and Development Commission, Ambassador Chad Blackman of Barbados,  
Director Shamika Sirimanne of the Division on Technology and Logistics,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank Director Sirimanne for her presentation. As we expressed at the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission earlier this week, our Group assigns great importance to the synergies among the three pillars of work of UNCTAD, in order to ensure the provision of integrated support and advice to help member States in the pursuit of their development objectives.
2. Earlier this week during the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission we discussed the work of this Division in the area of science, technology, innovation, as well as information and communication technologies, for development. During this session, we have therefore heard from Director Sirimanne on the work of her Division in the areas of trade logistics and trade facilitation.
3. During the discussion of the report of the Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Transport and Trade Facilitation, we referred to the vital importance of maritime transport for trade. In this connection, our Group takes positive note of the wide array of research products and capacity building activities offered by UNCTAD to assist developing countries in tracking their performance in the maritime sector and improving the managements of ports.
4. The maritime sector is not only vital to trade and the economy as a whole, but also an important generator of employment in itself. The Group is therefore appreciative of UNCTAD's support to Member States in their efforts to designate seafarers and other maritime personnel as key workers. This has led to General Assembly resolution 75/17 request to UNCTAD "to inform the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session (...) on the crew changes situation during the COVID-19 pandemic (...) through a dedicated section of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Review of Maritime Transport", which is a clear recognition of the value of this work.
5. Our Group has also previously expressed concerns about the effects of cooperative arrangements and mergers in the area of international maritime transport, not only on the freight rates but also on the frequency, efficiency, reliability and quality of services. We therefore call UNCTAD to continue to monitor and analyse such trends and their effects.

6. On the issue of climate change, UNCTAD's work on adaption to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels and more frequent extreme weather events that affect ports, continues to be very relevant. Our Group also acknowledges the cooperation of UNCTAD with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on the assessment of the impacts of the decarbonization measures on developing countries, including SIDS and LDCs.
7. As we have previously mentioned, all these challenges need to be tackled without losing the pace of further implementation of trade facilitation reforms measures. Our Group therefore appreciates UNCTAD's Trade Facilitation work, notably the creation and effective support to National and Regional Trade Facilitation Committees that pilot trade facilitation reforms, including the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.
8. We have seen how the demand for support on trade facilitation has seen a further increase during the COVID-19 pandemic. International trade and transport constituted one of the causes of virus transmission across borders. For this reason, UNCTAD led multiple efforts to help governments and the business community to keep transport networks and borders operational. In so doing, UNCTAD contributed to facilitate the flow of goods and services, while containing the further spread of the COVID-19 virus, for which our Group is very grateful.
9. In speaking about trade facilitation, the Group of 77 and China is fully supportive of the plight of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and therefore appreciates the support UNCTAD provides for the set-up of transit systems and legislation.
10. The tradition of UNCTAD in trade facilitation cannot be complete without referring to the ASYCUDA programme, with its support to the automation of customs and to trade facilitation reforms. To date, the programme is implemented in over 100 countries and territories and is used by 83% of LDCs and 79% of African countries.
11. Our Group therefore calls for the continuation of the support of UNCTAD in all these areas, and for the relevant issues and mandates to be duly captured in our preparations for UNCTAD 15.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.