



**GROUP OF 77 & CHINA
GENEVA**

**Statement by Her Excellency Ms. Maimuna Kibenga Tarishi
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of United Republic of Tanzania on
behalf of the Group of 77 and China at the 70th Regular Session of the Trade and
Development Board**

Monday, 19 June 10 a.m. -1 p.m.
General debate

President of the Trade and Development Board, Ambassador Hashmi,
Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Ms. Grynspan,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the Group, to congratulate you and the Bureau on your election. Rest assured that you have full support of the G-77 and China as you continue with this important journey this year. Allow me also, Mr. President, to express on my own behalf as a former President of the Board my personal commitment to you in accomplishing the important tasks we have before us.

2. One of those tasks, Mr. President, is the revitalization of UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery. As the President of the Board who had the honor and responsibility of the process, I know fully well the importance of the task as well as its delicacy.

3. We embarked on that process right after Bridgetown, with a clear and ambitious belief that what was required was a broad discussion on certain matters, leading to eventual clarity on some possible specific measures, including perhaps revitalizing negotiations in UNCTAD. The geopolitical realities disrupted our work, yet the efforts did not cease. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the President of the Trade and Development Board continued their work quietly, given the broader systemic realities that prevented the process we envisioned after UNCTAD 15. These efforts, we believe, bore fruit, leading your predecessor, Ambassador Bahtijors Hasans, to table an important proposal that we now realize should have been our point of departure from the beginning.

5. In retrospect, we should have realized that there was no point in starting our discussions with the nature of UNCTAD, its priorities, and its structure, given that these questions were settled long ago. Reopening these issues, especially so closely to the successful conclusion of UNCTAD 15, would simply have polarized the membership and paralyzed our discussions. And, learning from the lessons of previous reform exercises, without addressing the central issue of restoring negotiations in UNCTAD, our revitalization exercise would have ended in the frustration that we have so sadly become accustomed to. Our view is that the central issue is to restore meaningful and substantive negotiations in UNCTAD with the aim of advancing the global consensus on trade and development in UNCTAD, and negotiating the resulting details in the relevant forums.

6. We therefore applaud Ambassador Hasans for his vision and wisdom in proposing that at this session of the Board, we have negotiated outcomes on the productive capacity index and the newly restored agenda item on trade. While it seems there hasn't been consensus for negotiated outcome in the latter item, we hope that we will have a negotiated outcome at least in the productive capacities during this session. This will imply that we have begun the journey of revitalizing negotiations at UNCTAD, with expectations to achieve more in the next executive session of the Board.

7. Our priority as a group therefore, Mr. President, is to conclude the revitalization exercise by restoring negotiations in UNCTAD. That way we can focus on the substance ahead of us as we embark on the preparations for the 60th anniversary of UNCTAD and from there prepare for UNCTAD XVI.

8. We therefore thank Secretary-General Grynspar for her statement this morning covering various related agenda items. We believe that this comprehensive treatment of related agenda items helps to bring greater coherence to our deliberations, and we look forward to maintaining this in the future.

9. In the same manner, I would like to also thank the Secretary-General for organizing what I believe will be a very interesting discussion on "Decarbonization opportunities and challenges in the Blue Economy" at the high-level segment. The Group looks forward to that discussion and will make specific interventions on the discussions. But I would like to signal that we consider the high-level segment of great importance and it would have been even much better to come up with negotiated outcomes resulting from our discussions.

10. I would also like to touch briefly on some of the other agenda items, in which we will intervene at greater length and in more detail in the respective agenda items:

11. On agenda **item 5 – Technology and Innovation Report 2023: Opening green windows - Technological opportunities for a low-carbon world**, we agree with the

Secretary-General that, “to address the current technological challenge we need two key things – agency and urgency.” The report provides important insights and recommendations, which we will discuss in the coming days. What is key is the report’s observation and insight that the future requires different pathways, requiring not only innovation and adaptation but also courage and resources. The urgency is there, but the agency requires in part that developing countries are able to express themselves meaningfully, that their voice is given due weight and consideration. In the context of the Board, this requires all partners being open to discuss the agenda and priorities of the Global South. It requires the expression of their voice and not the repression of their aspiration. The reluctance of our partners to appreciate this, and to translate the voice of developing countries into intergovernmental outcomes in the Board and its subsidiary bodies is problematic and greatly restricts the utility of our discussions on matters as important as the issues raised in the technology and Innovation report 2023.

12. Turning to agenda *item 6 – Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa*, we commend the **secretariat** on its various activities in support of Africa. We look forward to continued efforts and success. We also call on all partners in a position to do so to enhance their contributions to enable us to deliver more ambitious especially given the current global reality of multiple and intersecting crises and challenges.

13. With regard to agenda *item 7 – Productive Capacities Index (PCI) for Evidence-Based Policymaking* we appreciate the work of the secretariat in developing the index and call for its further refinement. We also stress that this is the sort of work that helps to bridge the gap between the three pillars. In this case, the index helps to identify areas for improvement, the technical cooperation pillar can strengthen the capacity of beneficiary countries to close the gap, and the TDB can consider the lessons learned and policy options to advance the global consensus on the related issues. While we are prepared to work out for a negotiated outcome that will formalize and further the secretariat’s work in this area, we urge the secretariat to provide a more policy-level topic, and therefore more appropriate for negotiated outcomes in the Board, for next year.

14. Finally, on *agenda item 8 – Evolution of the international trading system and its trends from a development perspective* we welcome the return of this agenda item after many years of absence. Especially given the lack of progress on some key issues for developing countries in the WTO, this agenda item gives us the opportunity to discuss some of the difficult issues and offer possible solutions to issues under consideration. This is also an important forum for discussing cross-cutting issues that span various international organizations and negotiating forums. As the Group has repeatedly observed, the currency of diplomacy and multilateralism is negotiations. Consensus building without negotiations is just a seminar or workshop. It would have been much useful to have a negotiated outcome in this particular item. However, due the insistence of some members that time was not enough for consideration of a

meaningful outcome this time, G77 and China have decided to differ its demand for an outcome in the coming years in order to secure consensus as our customary decision-making process.

15. In closing Mr. President, allow me to underscore what should have become evident by now: that our priority in revitalizing the intergovernmental machinery is to restore meaningful and substantive negotiations to the Board, and eventually to its various subsidiary bodies for a strong UNCTAD. UNCTAD is by its nature a conference and hence an intergovernmental body. As such, the ultimate expression of success to our work is to advance trade and development dialogue through intergovernmental outcomes. Some have professed their commitment to UNCTAD as expressed in their financial contributions to the other two pillars of UNCTAD. For that we are grateful, and we encourage such continued generosity. Yet ultimately, if we are sincere in our commitment to a strong UNCTAD, this means that we are also committed to a strong and robust intergovernmental machinery.

Thank you, Mr. President.