

**UNCTAD Asia-Pacific Group  
G E N E V A**

**DRAFT Statement by H.E. Mrs. Suphatra SRIMAITREEPHITHAK  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand on behalf of the  
Asia-Pacific Group at the 70<sup>th</sup> regular session of the Trade and Development Board**

*General debate and item 4: Annual report of the Secretary-General*

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

First and foremost, the Asia-Pacific Group aligns itself with the Statement made by Tanzania as Chair of G77 and China.

We also wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the TDB from 19 – 30 June 2023 and H.E. Mr. Febrian A. Ruddyard, Ambassador and PR of Indonesia, as Vice-Chair. As the host of the next UNCTAD Ministerial Meeting in 2025 is expected to be from the APG, we are confident that your leadership will support UNCTAD's revitalization efforts and its determination to remain a relevant multilateral force in international trade and development.

Mr. President,

The APG now wishes to turn to the various issues raised by Madam Secretary General Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, in particular those in UNCTAD's Annual Report 2022. In 2022, UNCTAD had a team of only 698 people. That staff held 112 events with almost 13,000 participants, produced 239 publications and ran 225 projects in 73 countries.

Clearly, UNCTAD has done a lot, but we must strive to do more to remain relevant and visible.

First, we should address the issue of how to improve our visibility. UNCTAD has done well this year, with articles in over 120,000 articles across the world. Even so, we should aspire to improve the quality of our voice, not only the frequency.

To improve our visibility and the quality of our voice, UNCTAD must strive to be relevant to all. Developing countries have already benefited from UNCTAD's research and analysis as a basis for further equity in trade and development at various regional and global fora, WTO and others. We may further consider how UNCTAD's research could be optimised so that it is useful to both developed and developing countries. This would include recommendations and conclusions that support active cooperation among all countries, regardless of levels of development. Development is to give and take, and as the pandemic has clearly shown, it is best to work together so that we do not risk leaving anyone behind.

On this matter, UNCTAD has shown effectiveness this year. It has been a key player in the Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG) on Food, Energy and Finance to help tackle the global development effects of the war in Ukraine. UNCTAD became one of the main

negotiators of the two Istanbul Agreements signed in July 2022, the Memorandum of Understanding between the UN and the Russian Federation to facilitate unimpeded access for their food and fertilizers exports to global markets, and the Black Sea Initiative. These agreements have helped to bring down the cost of food, while stabilizing global markets and keeping them open.

The APG hopes to see more of this from UNCTAD in the coming years, particularly in the pivotal areas for development, including financing for development, debt sustainability, climate financing promotion of a circular economy, and digital transformation.

This brings us to our second point on how UNCTAD might consider delivering clear and practical policy recommendations which Member States can use in their own national policies. UNCTAD may give extra attention to provision of policy recommendations which take note of various national contexts, making them easier for developing countries to adapt and implement.

In this context, UNCTAD's initiative to create an Overarching Results Framework to assess the organization's performance is highly welcome. It will not only lead to increased transparency and accountability, but also better-informed monitoring, reporting and evaluations. This could lead to more effective support to Member States and enhanced trust with all stakeholders. We also hope that this would lead to more effective policy recommendations as well as evaluation on how those recommendations have been implemented.

Our third and final point is on maintaining UNCTAD's cohesion of policies, coordination of works, and complementarities of practices – the 3Cs. At the latest executive board of the TDB, Madam Secretary-General explained how UNCTAD would endeavour to improve inter-divisional coordination and prove UNCTAD usefulness at a time of crisis. This is a very promising start to support the 3Cs within UNCTAD and in multilateral cooperation.

UNCTAD could further enhance the 3Cs at the national, regional and international levels. At the national level, UNCTAD may convey their messages on how to facilitate trade and economic development to United Nations Country Teams. At the regional level, we also look forward to seeing more of UNCTAD's presence in regional fora such as ASEAN and APEC. At the international level, UNCTAD could also closely coordinate with the Bretton Woods Institutions and the UNGA in New York on this matter, with roles in the SDG Summit this year and the Summit of the Future next year.

Mr. President,

Clearly, UNCTAD has performed admirably over the past year, given the cascading crises which have threatened livelihoods and drawn us farther away from the SDG Goals. But as Jonas Salk, the inventor of the polio vaccine said, "**The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more.**" Indeed there exists the opportunity to do more as UNCTAD continues its excellent work in the organization's revitalization efforts and in working towards Our Common Future. in accordance with the four major transformations declared in the Bridgetown Covenant: transforming economies through diversification; fostering a more sustainable and more resilient economy; improving the way development is financed; and revitalizing multilateralism.

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*(Regional group statements should be no more than 10 minutes)*