



**United Nations Conference  
on Trade and Development**

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**Trade and Development Board**

Fifty-ninth session

Geneva, 17–28 September 2012

**Draft report of the Trade and Development Board  
on its fifty-ninth session**

**Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 17 to 28 September 2011**

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## President's summary

### Opening statements<sup>1</sup>

1. The following speakers made opening statements: Mr. Mothae Maruping (Lesotho), President of the Trade and Development Board at its fifty-eighth session; Mr Hamad bin Abdulaziz Al-Kawari, Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage of Qatar; Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD; the representative of Indonesia, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, speaking on behalf of the Asian Group; the representative of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the African Group; the representative of Paraguay, speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States; the representative of the European Union; the representative of Hungary, speaking on behalf of Group D; the representative of Nepal, speaking on behalf of the least developed countries; the representative of China; the representative of Paraguay, speaking on behalf of the landlocked developing countries; the representative of Sri Lanka, speaking on behalf of the Group of 15, the representative of Mexico; the representative of Switzerland; the representative of Thailand; the representative of Egypt; the representative of Malaysia; the representative of Barbados; the representative of Japan; the representative of Turkey; the representative of Côte d'Ivoire; the representative of the non-governmental organization International Trade Union Confederation; the representative of Argentina; the representative of Morocco; the representative of Zimbabwe; the representative of the United States of America; the representative of the Russian Federation; the representative of Tunisia; the representative of South Africa; the representative of South Sudan; the representative of Ecuador; the representative of the Sudan and the representative of the non-governmental organization LDC Watch.

2. The Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage of Qatar said that he was proud of being a part of the consensus-building process of UNCTAD XIII. UNCTAD could and should serve as a unique venue where consensus could be built and captured, and where ideas could be exchanged and presented to relevant negotiating bodies, thus contributing greater coherence to the global discourse on development. The Qatari Presidency of the Conference held several expectations for UNCTAD: to contribute proactively to the substantive preparations and review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by defining new global goals on inclusiveness of the multilateral trading system and by building economic capacities essential for national development and meaningful participation in the global economy, to continue to offer ideas on overcoming the global financial crisis and to contribute to the implementation of the Rio+20 outcomes .

3. The outgoing President of the Trade and Development Board said that 2011 had been a very challenging, yet fulfilling year. Intense preparations for UNCTAD-XIII had led to a successful consensus outcome to the Conference. He said that UNCTAD should be guided by the principles of "otherness" and "doing the right thing" to meet the vast challenges facing the Organization. Those included having a say in the global discourse on finding a solution to the financial and economic crisis, dealing with migration and its

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<sup>1</sup> Electronic versions of statements by delegates are available in PDF format on the UNCTAD website in the form and language in which they were received (<http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.asp?intItemID=6066&lang=1>). Audio files (floor/English) of general statements are available at <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/WebFlyer.asp?intItemID=6067&lang=1>.

impact on trade and development, and focusing on core economic fundamentals to achieve the MDGs without losing sight of the human factor. It was to be hoped that for the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, to be celebrated in 2014, it could make a contribution to the global development discourse that would have a positive effect on the course of development.

4. The President of the Trade and Development Board at its fifty-ninth session said that much work lay ahead in the follow-up to UNCTAD XIII and the Doha Mandate. He urged all members to do their part in ensuring that the work was carried out efficiently and effectively with a view to delivering sound results on the mandates of the Organization. The goal in the immediate term, however, would be to have a successful and meaningful outcome of the present session of the Board.

5. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD reviewed current economic, trade and trading system trends, which justified strengthening UNCTAD's consensus-building role. He said that globalization would increase because its support would come from the world over, not only from more advanced economies. Factors contributing to globalization included a drive for technological change, information and communications technology, the Internet and growing interconnectedness. The months ahead would be crucial, as another global financial and economic crisis might be looming. He took very seriously the follow-up to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the administration and management of UNCTAD and the agreed conclusions from the last special session of the Board. He had taken a number of steps aimed at improving the functioning of UNCTAD and stood ready to oversee the implementation of additional measures that could be taken within available resources. He pledged his full support for the Doha Mandate and results-based management.

6. Many delegations underlined the importance of UNCTAD's role as the United Nations focal point for the integrated treatment of trade, development and related issues. Some delegations called for a strengthening of UNCTAD's role in intergovernmental dialogues.

7. Several delegates highlighted the links between trade and issues such as the global economic slowdown, employment, exchange rate volatility, climate change, the green economy, competition policy and good governance.

8. Many delegates expressed concern about protectionist practices that had increased since the beginning of the financial and economic crises. They said that UNCTAD should analyse the impact of these practices and lend their support to progress in the Doha Round negotiations, particularly the Doha Development Agenda. Topics discussed covered the importance of addressing non-tariff measures and their negative impacts on exports from Africa and LCDs in general. Action in this context should be complemented by trade-related cooperation programmes, including the Enhanced Integrated Framework and of Aid for Trade. UNCTAD assistance should be aimed at the elimination of non-tariff barriers, the simplification of standards and technical regulations and rules of origin, and the implementation of all commitments and decisions pertaining to special and differential treatment for LDCs' products. UNCTAD should continue providing technical assistance to LDCs to facilitate the accession process to the World Trade Organization.

9. One delegate said that UNCTAD should help define the role of African States as facilitators of intra-African trade. There was little interconnectivity within Africa; infrastructure and transport shortages had to be resolved to ensure the integration of Africa in world trade.

10. Some delegates said that it was important for UNCTAD to help landlocked developing countries to advocate for the improvement of transit policies and the facilitation of trade in their regions.

11. The representative of the European Union said that it was the largest contributor to UNCTAD operational activities and that, in 2011, it had doubled its voluntary contributions over 2010, mainly to implement the Automated System for Customs Data and Debt Management and Financial Analysis System.

12. Several speakers argued that improving technological and innovation capacity in developing countries was important to enable development and to help them to meet the MDGs. A few speakers said that LDCs in particular needed to be able to harness technology transfer to build their technological base for successful development, although technology transfer to LDCs was advancing slowly. Those countries also needed assistance to enjoy the benefits of existing flexibilities of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and other intellectual property rights regimes. Some speakers said that promoting foreign investment should be a means to achieving, among other things, technology transfer, rather than representing an end in itself.

13. The financial crisis had impacted all countries – in particular, vulnerable economies – to varying degrees, and the recovery from the global economic and financial crisis remained fragile. Capital-flow reversals, falling trade, declining commodity prices, youth unemployment and rising poverty were cited as among the major challenges faced by LDCs, African countries and landlocked developing countries. Many speakers requested UNCTAD to strengthen its work on these economies. The secretariat should contribute to their structural transformation and to maximizing their trade and investment opportunities, including through regional and South–South cooperation as a complement to North–South cooperation

14. One delegate said that mismanagement of the international financial system had interrupted the growth path of many countries between the 1970 and 1980. Some delegations expressed concern about the high current account deficits and increasing domestic debt, due to a high reliance on domestic borrowing and others suggested that UNCTAD should continue to conduct studies on the effect of the crisis on developing economies and the impacts of some economic policies.

15. Several speakers stressed the importance of the role of the developmental State. Some speakers called on UNCTAD to explore ways of achieving sustainable development, inclusive growth and new financing mechanisms targeting African countries and LDCs, paying due attention to gender and private-sector development.

16. Some delegates commended UNCTAD for addressing the ways in which income inequality affected economic growth as well as for the ideas for achieving more inclusive development in its Trade and Development Report. Experience of the past 30 years had shown that the structural reform policies in the developing world had reinforced the trend towards greater inequality, which had become a feature of finance-driven globalization. However, some delegates did not share the scepticism expressed with regard to structural reforms and their impact on growth. One delegate said that job creation was not only a problem for African countries but for all countries.

17. Some delegates called on UNCTAD to discuss reforms to the current international economic system and to create supportive institutional arrangements for the post-2015 era. Further, UNCTAD should continue to assist developing countries in designing policies for dealing with persistent and emerging challenges for development. There was a need for new development models to create an enabling environment for developing countries to take advantage of the benefits that international trade could bring in fostering sustainable, socially inclusive development.

18. Some delegations emphasized the need to fully implement the Doha mandate and for UNCTAD to play a more prominent role in implementing the outcomes of the major socio-economic conferences and summits of the United Nations. Several speakers stressed

UNCTAD's contribution to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, in the context of monitoring its objectives and actions as well as preparing for eventual graduation. Some speakers requested the secretariat to continue monitoring of the Almaty Programme of Action for landlocked developing countries and contribute actively to its successor.

19. Several delegates said that the Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development developed by UNCTAD was a step in the right direction to implementing the Doha Mandate. Many delegates of country groups stressed that the new generation of investment policies should be instrumental in meeting such goals as increased employment, effective transfer of technology and the fulfilment of sustainable development objectives.

20. Some country group representatives commended UNCTAD for its technical cooperation activities that focused on investment policies. Delegates of some country groups emphasized that sustainable development goals should also be promoted by attracting private investment and improving public infrastructure. Several representatives, including those of some non-governmental organizations, emphasized the role of investment in building the national productive capacities required for inclusive growth through industrial development strategies and entrepreneurship, in particular the UNCTAD programme Empretec. Several delegates requested UNCTAD to assist African countries in the area of investment to achieve inclusive growth and to increase market access for African companies. As far as international policies were concerned, they encouraged UNCTAD to continue its work on international investment agreements that also reflected the needs of developing countries. Some delegates said that UNCTAD should continue working on regional integration because of its link with investment policies.

21. Some delegates, especially from LDCs, highlighted the importance of integration into global supply and global value chains as a means of development. One delegate encouraged UNCTAD to continue working with the World Trade Organization and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to monitor protectionism. In addition, education was necessary to improve employment policies and economic diversification.

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