

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

**Trade and Development Board, Twenty-eighth
Special session**

Geneva, 17 June 2014

Opening Plenary

**Speaker: Trinidad and Tobago
on behalf of the GRULAC**

Tuesday, 17 June 2014

*Not checked against delivery **

* This statement is made available in the language and form in which it was received. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.

GRULAC UNCTAD
G E N E V A

**Statement of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC)
On the occasion of the 28th Special Session of the Trade and Development
to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**

Tuesday, 17 June 2014

Mr. President
Secretary-General of the United Nations
Secretary-General of UNCTAD
Honourable Ministers
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. It is my pleasure and distinct honour on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) to extend warm congratulations to you Secretary-General Kituyi, and the UNCTAD team on this milestone, the Organisation's 50th anniversary.

2. Through the Final Act of the First Session of UNCTAD held here in Geneva from 23rd March – 16th June 1964, participating States, in keeping with the spirit of the ideals embodied in the United Nations Charter, underscored that the “international community must combine its efforts to ensure that all countries – regardless of size, of wealth, of economic and social system, - enjoy the benefits of international trade for their economic development and social progress.”

3. UNCTAD I was indeed of crucial importance particularly in light of the fact that the 1960s was designated as the United Nations Development Decade. The Conference provided a much needed forum for countries of the North and South to discuss the trade problems of developing countries and their participation in the global economy, as well as how to make trade work to overcome the development challenge these countries faced.

4. Today, 50 years later, UNCTAD is celebrating its Golden Jubilee as the international community, led by the United Nations, is engaged in formulating the post-2015 development framework.

5. For Members of GRULAC, this is no mere coincidence to be taken lightly. This is an opportunity to reflect on how the Organisation has built on the foundation laid in 1964, by its first Secretary-General, Mr. Raul Prebisch and more importantly, to reflect on the Organisation's future engagement within the multilateral system, particularly as it relates to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which are at the heart of the Post-2015 development framework.

6. This reflection is indeed necessary when one considers that although the world has changed immensely since UNCTAD's creation and although a number of developing countries have made significant strides in terms of economic growth and development over the last 50 years, developing countries in general continue to grapple with some of the major trade and development related challenges which plagued them in the 1960s and which stirred up their call for the Geneva Conference also known as UNCTAD I.

7. GRULAC engaged and supported UNCTAD's work since its inception. Over the years the Group has succeeded in maintaining this active engagement as we seek viable ways to address the old and the new trade and development related issues.

8. GRULAC applauds the UNCTAD Secretariat for the half-century of insightful research and analysis and technical assistance, dedicated to a wide range of economic topics of importance to developing and least developing countries including; commodity trade, transfer of technology, monetary reform, south-south cooperation, sustainable Foreign Direct Investment, policies to address the special concerns of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states, entrepreneurship and science and technology, to name a few. UNCTAD's track record and analytical work on global trends and problems such as the dangers of the unregulated finance-driven globalization behind the 2008 crisis shall be commended.

9. UNCTAD's technical assistance has allowed GRULAC Member States to make strides in achieving sustainable economic growth through efforts to build their productive capacity and transform their economies.

10. Mr. President, as the Organization celebrates its 50th anniversary, we the Members of GRULAC wish to pledge our commitment to support and strengthen UNCTAD as a forum that brings together countries and organizations with different views and experiences regarding the interplay of international trade with the world economy, financial stability and development concerns and that, by doing so, fosters independent thinking and debate on how globalization can be made fully sustainable, independent and equitable.

11. Mr. President, I started this statement with a quote from the United Nations Charter, and I wish to conclude with another. In his Preface to the report for UNCTAD I by Raul Prebisch, Secretary-General, then United Nations Secretary-General, U Thant wrote: "only through co-operation can sufficient impetus be given to the struggle of mankind for a better and fuller life".

12. As we commemorate this Organisation's Golden Jubilee let us take time to reflect on how we can work as a unified membership in a positive spirit to implement the Sustainable Development Goals to realize our common objective of prosperity for all. Given the critical role of UNCTAD and its contribution over the past 50 years to developing and least developing countries, let us seek to identify concrete ways in which we can strengthen UNCTAD so that it remains in the vanguard for trade and development issues.

Happy 50th birthday UNCTAD!