



**Statement by
Her Excellency Mrs. Martha Lungu Mwitumwa
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zambia
Chairperson of the Group of 77 and China
at the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Trade and Development Board**

**Item 11: Report of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework
and the Programme Budget**

President of the Trade and Development Board Ambassador Federico Villegas,
Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD Isabelle Durant,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group wishes to thank the other Groups for the spirit of flexibility and understanding in reaching agreement to this common goal of stirring the discussions and conclusions of the Working Party. The Group appreciates such efforts and hopes to have similar engagements in the near future.

Mr. President,

2. The Group of 77 and China assigns great importance to the work undertaken by the Working Party, which was established as a subsidiary body of the Trade and Development Board in support of ensuring that mandates agreed by the Membership are faithfully translated in the programme of work of UNCTAD, and as a result duly reflected in the priorities and resource-allocation of the organization. The Group sees the Working Party as a forum to improve communication between the Secretariat and Member States and to ensure guidance and strategic thinking for all activities performed by UNCTAD under its three pillars. At the same time, the Group reiterates its view that the UNCTAD Conference and the Trade and Development Board should remain of a substantive nature, in which the development questions that we face can be tackled. Thus, the pressing discussion and consensus building on development in these for a should not be hindered by house-keeping issues that belong in the Working Party.

Mr. President,

3. Until now, the Working Party had been functioning without specific Terms of Reference -ToRs- since its creation several decades ago. As a result, confusion as to the actual role of Members, and their impact on programme planning and budget documents under review, were a permanent feature of meetings of the Working Party dealing with programme planning matters. Often, the result would be endless discussions, leading to changes in the documents that were then reverted when the document was finalized in New York for consideration by the General Assembly. Moreover, at least two previous attempts to adopt Terms of Reference for the Working Party, in the mid-1990s and in the 2000s, had been abandoned in the impossibility of reaching a consensus in Geneva that would be accepted by New York as compatible with the prerogatives of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies.

4. For these reasons, the Group welcomes and celebrates the cooperation among all regional groups that worked on the draft decision for more than two years, and coordinated with the Secretariat, both within UNCTAD in Geneva and with relevant officials in New York, to finally arrive at a consensus of a text that is agreeable to be proposed for adoption by the Board. The Group of 77 and China would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people involved in the process and all Members for their engagement and support, which was clearly demonstrated during the negotiations. This kind of cooperation amongst the entirety of the Membership is testament enough of our willingness to achieve a successful UNCTAD 15 Ministerial Conference.

Mr. President,

5. Finally, the Group believes that the current Terms of Reference as recommended by the Working Party for approval by the Board will give the opportunity for Members to provide strategic guidance and orientation to the Secretariat for the preparation of the Programme Plan and Programme Performance document.

I thank you, Mr. President