



**GROUP OF 77 & CHINA**  
**G E N E V A**

**Statement by the Republic of Iraq on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group  
at the Trade and Development Board, sixty-seventh Session**

**Statement on Item 2**

**The Annual Report of the Secretary General of UNCTAD.  
Geneva, 2 to 3 July 2020**

*As of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020*

Excellency ambassador Federico Villegas, President of the Trade and Development Board,

Secretary-General of UNCTAD Mukhisa Kituyi,

Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD Isabelle Durant,

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group. The Group would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by Ambassador Martha Mwitumwa of Zambia on behalf of the Group of 77 & China.

At the outset, the Asia Pacific Group would like to extend its thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General for his Annual Report to the TDB. The report is of particular importance as it scores the achievements of UNCTAD in implementing its mandate over the last year and serves as a base for interaction and discussion between the Secretariat and member states on strategic issues and the priorities of the institution. With that in mind the Asia-Pacific Group would like to highlight a number of points, as follows:

- We share the assessment in the report that the trade tensions between the various protagonists are economically hurtful for them and for the rest of the world, especially the developing countries. This has resulted in not only reduced flow of trade between the countries party to those tensions, but also disrupted global value chains that often involve many developing countries. Those countries find themselves caught in the middle of a trade war that they are not a side of, yet have to bear its consequences.
- Furthermore, the recent wave of populist nationalism and protectionism is weakening multilateralism and eroding the atmosphere of trust between members of international

community. That will bring inevitable adverse consequences to international relations including trade and international cooperation for development.

- We commend the research and analysis work by all UNCTAD's divisions, especially, in the flagship reports published during 2019. It is worth noting that those reports succeeded to provide detailed and accurate assessments of global trends in many areas related to trade and development. They also provided an invaluable guidance to all stakeholders particularly those in charge of drafting national policies that seek to promote economic growth and sustainable development. In this context, we emphasize that when it comes to provision of advice and policy recommendations, one size does not always fit all. It is imperative that specific national context and needs of developing countries be considered. We also emphasize that the Secretariat must continue providing development-oriented policy recommendations in line with the SDGs.
- We also commend the work of UNCTAD in providing most needed technical assistance programs to many developing countries, including members of Asia-Pacific Group. As we all know, the funding for those programs comes almost entirely from extra-budgetary sources that often fluctuate from one year to another, and therefore, reduces the ability of long-term planning of resources. We believe that provision of adequate resources to UNCTAD to carry out its activities is of great importance to deliver its mandate. One crucial enabler to achieve long-term planning, efficient allocation of resources, and stability of delivery on planned targets in UNCTAD's activities in technical assistance is to draft a strategic plan to attract stable resources of funding. We look forward to the discussions on that matter in the coming session of the Working Party and hope that members and the Secretariat reach a workable plan for that purpose.
- The Asia-Pacific Group welcomes the agreement with Barbados to host UNCTAD XV and thanks that country for hosting this major event. We also welcome the hosting of the World Investment Forum and the first ecommerce Week for Asia in Abu Dhabi in December by a member of our Group, and thank the United Arab Emirates for organising these two events. Although the UNCTAD XV had to be postponed due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are still hopeful that we can come together as early as possible to discuss all pertinent issues including social and economic implications of the pandemic on developing countries, and reach a global consensus on ways to help those countries to mitigate those implications.
- We recognise the efforts by UNCTAD in the issue of South-South Cooperation and regional integration. We believe that the South-South Cooperation has so far achieved a great deal of benefits to the countries of the South; however, we also believe that the SSC has a significant space to improve. UNCTAD, with its accumulated experience and expertise in this area, can help foster South-South Cooperation as a complement to the North-South Cooperation, help strengthen the bond between the South, reduce inequalities between nations, and support their efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Mr. President,

UNCTAD has a long record of accomplishments in setting the agenda for development, serving trade and development issues through evidence- based research and analysis, and providing support and guidance to developing countries. The role of UNCTAD is even more crucial in the times of crises, and UNCTAD has repeatedly proven in the past, that it was up to the challenge. The current crisis of COVID-19 is not an exception as the need to change course and revisit policies and priorities in the developing countries has become more evident. Hence, we all anticipate that UNCTAD fulfills expectations of developing countries through these unpresented times by providing thorough analysis, technical assistance and facilitate consensus building on the ways that the world should adopt to the ramifications of the current crisis.

I thank you Mr. President