

**Statement by H.E Ambassador Alaa Youssef
Permanent Representative of Egypt**

**at the Trade and Development Board, sixty-seventh Session
Geneva, 2 to 3 July 2020**

**Statement on Item 3 - Actions carried out and/or planned by UNCTAD to support
States in the recovery of their trade and industries after overcoming the pandemic**

Mr. President,

Madame Deputy Secretary General of UNCTAD

- I align myself with the statements made by Zambia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Angola on behalf of the African Group, and Palestine on behalf of the Arab Group.
- I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the excellent presentation by Madame Isabel Durant Deputy Secretary General of UNCTAD.
- Indeed the pandemic has affected every country in the world, but the adverse effects and the scale of damage in developing countries is catastrophic. Many of developing countries are highly vulnerable to global economic shocks, from sharp falls in commodity prices, a huge decline in world trade and investment, to large decline in remittances and tourism revenues. Unfortunately, the impact on their economies seems unlikely to be brief as it puts a lot of pressure on their limited resources and increases their debt burden.
- The middle-income countries are no exception, they represent more than one third of global GDP, home to 75 per cent of the world's population and 62 per cent of the world's poor. In fact, COVID-19 causes more serious ramifications in these countries, they are facing unprecedented debt levels and the pandemic bears the risk of reversing their accomplishments.
- Egypt for example, is the largest recipient of FDI in Africa in 2018 and 2019 according to the World Investment report. Yet, we have concerns that the current decline of global FDI and the disruptions caused by the pandemic might swipe this away. How to maintain current investments and attract more in a competitive environment is an area where we seek UNCTAD's advice. We also encourage the Secretary General of UNCTAD to continue his endeavours with the International Financial Institutions to ease the burden of debts owed by developing countries.

Mr. President,

- There has never been a greater need for an ambitious and cooperative response to overcome the economic fallout of the pandemic. Recovery efforts should focus on reducing inequality, preventing further financial distress in developing economies, and finding sustainable solutions to the most persistent challenges such as digital divide, debt crisis, as well as

building productive capacities in developing countries so that they can integrate more into the global value chains.

- In post COVID-19, we certainly don't want to find ourselves in a situation where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. We count on UNCTAD's competent expertise to assist the developing countries in addressing longstanding as well as new issues, making sure that their struggle to achieve recovery is not in vain.
- To conclude, there are few points I would like to stress on to enrich our discussion, and hopefully they will be underscored in the outcome document of the upcoming ministerial conference:
 - 1) Renewing our commitment to multilateralism, and making UNCTAD stronger is much needed as I explained yesterday. This has to be done through an inclusive, unite and conciliatory approach. We must bring everyone on board. We should also find a way to mitigate current trade tensions, and reduce protectionist and restrictive measures to the minimum. Maintaining the status quo does not only affect major trading powers but also endangers our developing economies and the global economy.
 - 2) The pandemic presents an opportunity to enhance partnerships and regional cooperation especially in Africa. AfCFTA can be an accelerator for diversifying economies and advancing trade in the continent. UNCTAD can add value in this regard especially through benchmarking potential sectors and industries.
 - 3) There's a need to translate solidarity into actions by narrowing the existing financing and digital gap, and mobilizing more resources to deal with the impacts of COVID-19. The world economy won't recover unless there is a quick recovery for us all. The solidarity we need should aim at fostering partnership and cooperation between developing and developed countries. A solidarity that is built on respect and dialogue not on conditionality. A solidarity that is built on sustainability not on achieving short gains.

Thank you.