



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 3 - Actions carried out and/or planned by UNCTAD to
support States in the recovery of their trade and industries after
overcoming the pandemic.
Geneva, 2 to 3 July 2020**

As of 30th 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 beginning, I would like to thank panelists for their elaborate and informative presentations and thank the Secretariat of UNCTAD for very useful analysis of implications of the current crisis of COVID-19 presented through many publications since the early days of the spread of the pandemic.

Mr. President

It has become obvious in the course of the last 4 months that the latest Corona health crisis has scored global implications reaching far beyond safety and health of humans. What has started as a global health crisis has soon become a global economic crises too. The suspension of production process and services operations in many economic sectors; the distribution of international trade in goods and services and many other aspects of cross-border exchanges; reductions in levels of finance and investment; and social distancing measures that were adopted by almost every country in the world, have caused devastating results on national economies. Including, major reductions in national GDPs, goods and services outputs, and governments' revenues.

Furthermore, the pandemic caused mass loss of jobs and therefore household incomes especially in the informal sectors of economies that are common in most of the developing countries and not covered by economic rescue measures adopted by many governments.

The implications of the pandemic on many economic fronts are alarming. They have exacerbated the burden of debt not only in the LDCs and most vulnerable economies but also in the middle-income countries. All developing economies are grappling with urgent need to free up already scarce resources to counter the health and economic challenges caused by the pandemic on top of old challenges to service debts that was already on the rise.

In that regards, the Asia-Pacific Group welcomes the two reports issued by the Secretariat of UNCTAD in March and April of this year. The Group agrees with their findings and the UNCTAD's initiative calling for a global debt new deal for the developing world. That initiative stresses the vital need to take decisive action to reduce the large debt burden on developing countries in order to release much-needed resources to tackle the escalating pandemic.

Mr. President

One other alarming effect of the pandemic is the decline of the flows of foreign direct investments and re-shoring of FDI in many developing economies. That effect compromises the efforts of those countries to achieve economic growth and the SDGs, and has the potential of compromising developing countries' efforts to achieve economic recovery. We believe that global efforts are needed to re-evaluate International Investment Agreements in order to assist the developing countries in readjusting the national investment policies to keep their economies competitive in attracting foreign investments for financing development.

In the new setting of post COVID-19, which requires more dependence on digital solutions to achieve economic recovery, the developing economies are further disadvantaged. The developing countries have limited capacity to harness digital solutions, due to many reasons including the already increasing digital gap between developed and developing countries in; the level of connectivity; the development of digital infrastructure; and the availability of skilled human resources.

We believe that UNCTAD needs to put more emphasis in their response to COVID-19 on addressing the digital gap and issues related to the use of data, the economic value of data, data privacy, and cyber security to respond to the challenges faced by developing countries in this area.

One inevitable consequence of the pandemic is re-evaluation of national economic priorities and policies in many developing countries; UNCTAD is well positioned to assist in that endeavour so that UNCTAD's expertise in advising on policies and measures be utilized to remove tangles from new complexities caused by the implications of the pandemic in order to assist national policymaking processes.

Mr. President

Although the challenges that COVID-19 is posing are unprecedented, they are emphasizing old developmental problems especially inequality within and among nations, and the ever-increasing gaps in wealth and knowledge. We believe that carrying on with business

as usual will not be sustainable for the global economy,. There is a growing convection that this global health and economic challenge needs a global action based on the principals of human solidarity and multilateralism aiming at promoting swift economic recovery, equitable economic growth, reducing inequalities, and promotion of the achievement of the SDGs by all nations.

We believe therefore, Mr. President, that International cooperation will be crucial, especially for the recovery of developing countries, including the least developed countries. UNCTAD provides an important platform for the international community to discuss all issues related to the current economic crises and can foster reaching consensus on internationally coordinated response that facilitate economic recovery for the developing countries. We call upon the member states and the Secretariat to make a good use of that platform to achieve that goal.

Finally, Mr. President we look forward to seeing the inclusive report of the UNCTAD on the state of global economy following the pandemic, which is due for publication this autumn, and hope that appropriate policies on national and international levels can be derived from its analysis and recommendations.

I thank you Mr. President