

Armenia, Belarus,  
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,  
Russia



Армения, Беларусь,  
Казахстан, Кыргызстан,  
Россия



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**Statement by Russia on behalf of the EAEU Group at the 1<sup>st</sup> segment of  
the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the Trade and Development Board (first segment)  
2-3 July 2020**

*Item 3 – Actions carried out and/or planned by UNCTAD to support member States in  
response to the pandemic*

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the EAEU Group. Within the discussion of Item 3 we would like to highlight the following points.

Overall, we assess the performance of UNCTAD during the COVID-19 pandemic as satisfactory. After some pause, the organization has entered into an "emergency" mode and embarked on a sustainable path of activities. However, there is a need for greater coordination among the divisions of the UNCTAD Secretariat in responding to COVID-19 and ensuring a more "visible" and comprehensive senior management position, which would contribute to a more holistic response across the Organization to new challenges. It is likely that new crisis situations are waiting for us, and therefore UNCTAD needs to have an adequate anti-crisis strategy in place.

We note the high quality of information and analytical work carried out by the Secretariat during the pandemic period. UNCTAD divisions provided many relevant sectoral statistics and analysis in the areas of investment, world trade, the digital economy, the situation of the most vulnerable countries etc. in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. These materials provide a good basis for informing the public, as well as making sound political and managerial decisions. As a recommendation, we would like to express a wish for a more comprehensive approach to the formulation of anti-crisis measures, strengthening monitoring functions with a focus on identifying factors that impede overcoming the crisis.

In order to adequately assess the response of UNCTAD to COVID-19 and some very significant initiatives launched at the division level of UNCTAD, it would be useful to clarify the status of these proposals. Is this the personal opinion of individual, albeit high-level, experts of the organization or a consolidated position of UNCTAD top management? In our view, a clearer positioning of the UNCTAD leadership in relation to these initiatives would help to ensure that they are adequately addressed within the intergovernmental mechanism.

With regard to technical cooperation, we would like to emphasize the following. While some of UNCTAD's undertakings in this area (for example, a joint project with WHO to build capacity for drug production in developing countries; the launch of a new post-coronavirus recovery project by supporting SMEs in developing countries and countries with economies in transition) are commendable, there isn't yet holistic understanding of the extent to which UNCTAD's technical assistance, as one of the organization's most important pillar, has been reoriented to the challenges of COVID-19. It is important that the technical assistance strategy, to be considered by member countries in autumn, adequately and swiftly responds to new risks in the global trade and economic landscape generated by the pandemic. At the same time, when implementing technical assistance, we should, in our opinion, avoid a bias towards quasi-humanitarian assistance (this is the prerogative of WHO and WFP) and focus on developing trade, economic and investment measures aimed at promoting the development of the real sector of the member countries' economies in the fight against poverty, which will help countries consistently build their own production capacity, including in response to the challenges of post-Covid recovery. We stress the importance of providing technical and expert assistance to all groups of countries, including middle-income countries.

As for the intergovernmental mechanism, in the new "virtual" conditions it initially bogged down – not least due to the fact that there were many procedural difficulties associated

with the transition to remote forms of work. In this regard, it is extremely important to finalize the procedures for remote forms of work and be ready to switch more diligently to the distant format of interaction in case of repeated emergencies without compromising the quality of work of the intergovernmental mechanism.

In the context of the challenges ahead, we believe that UNCTAD, with proper coordination with other organizations and avoiding duplication of functions and unnecessary dispersion of budgetary and extra-budgetary funds, should strive for an integrated approach that would organically combine a set of urgent "post-covid" measures to ease the economic situation of all groups of countries with long-term goals of ensuring the transition to a path of sustainable development. In this regard, in the coming period, we see the following activities of the organization as the most significant in terms of working out a comprehensive response of UNCTAD to the challenges of COVID-19:

- assistance in mobilizing domestic sources of financing for industrial development of the most vulnerable countries, especially LDCs (including on illicit financial flows, tax base erosion); identification of coordinated approaches to debt relief for developing countries;
- harnessing the potential of 4.0 industrial revolution for the benefit of economic development, taking into account the new "virtual" trends set by the coronavirus;
- active monitoring of world trade processes, including analysis of the negative impact of unilateral restrictions on trade in the context of a pandemic; development of options for "green" trade corridors for the delivery of necessary humanitarian goods to countries subject to these restrictions; preparation of recommendations and decisions on the development of trade and investment at the interface with development issues;
- analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the situation with global value chains and development of practical recommendations for their possible reconfiguration, including within the framework of regional integration associations;
- comprehensive analytical assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 on the SDGs-2030 and working out recommendations to minimize the risks of the pandemic on the dynamics of the implementation of the SDGs, including investment in sustainable development projects.

Thank you for your attention.