

**Statement of His Excellency Diego Aulestia, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the World Trade Organization and in his capacity as Coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) before the sixty-ninth meeting of the Trade and Development Board**

**GENERAL DEBATE**

*February 5 to 7, 2020*

Mr. President, Ambassador Michael Gaffey,  
Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD,  
Mrs. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary General of UNCTAD.  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished colleagues,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC). Mr. President, we wish you success in your work at the head of this meeting of the Trade and Development Board and congratulate the Secretariat for its organization.
2. The member countries of GRULAC, which are part of G.77 and China, are associated with the statement given by the representative of Zambia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
3. We take this opportunity to thank Barbados for the commitment it has shown in the preparations for the XV Conference and we also acknowledge its initiative to have presented a proposal with a sufficiently broad theme and that has also ensured the participation of all Members which allowed consensus on the subject.
4. GRULAC is sure that the next Conference will provide the right space to have a productive exchange on the issues that are of interest to Members and take the opportunity to emphasize that the agenda proposed for the next Conference should be built on the basis of the consensus of all Members and focus on strengthening the role of UNCTAD in the face of the challenges of achieving sustainable development goals in the new international context.
5. We reiterate that all Members that make up GRULAC are more willing to work constructively and reiterates their commitment to collaborate objectively and collectively in the work that must be carried out with a view to the next Conference.
6. On the other hand, we recognize the great value of the 2019 Report on the Least Developed Countries; and its efforts to propose economic policy options, among which the need for structural transformation of the economy and diversification of production is highlighted.
7. GRULAC would like to express its concern about over-indebtedness or the risk of being overwhelmed by excessive indebtedness, in which case Haiti is among other LDCs. The work that UNCTAD does, in coordination with other institutions, in this area is very valuable.

8. GRULAC considers it a priority to discuss the need for financing to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, we believe that both the conclusions of the 2019 Report on the Least Developed Countries, the results of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development, as well as work on the contribution of private investments to the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs must be taken into account.

9. GRULAC recognizes the participation of UNCTAD in the ITC Advisory Board. Regarding the projects of this organization, we want to highlight the value of the creation of Centers for Sustainable Development.

10. We consider important both the results of the multiple groups, as well as the organization's flagship reports that are reviewed in the Commissions. In that sense it is essential to establish links between the results of each event, granting more strength to the organization in its entirety.

I thank you.