



**Statement delivered by H.E. Mr. Husain Mahmoud Al-Khateeb (Iraq)**  
**on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group**  
**Trade and Development Board, Sixty-Ninth Executive Session**  
**Opening Statement**  
**5 February 2020**

Mr. President, H.E. Ambassador Michael Gafey (Ireland),  
Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD  
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 H.E. Ambassador of Zambia on behalf of the Group of 77 & China,

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary General, Dr Mukhisa Kituyi, for his opening remarks. We look forward to his report as an important part of preparation for the next conference of UNCTAD that will convene at this autumn.

UNCTAD 15, Mr. President, comes at a crucial point. The growing threats to multilateralism, the rise of protectionism, and trade wars between major global economic powers put global long-term stability and prosperity in jeopardy, and undermine the developing countries efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. This issue needs our utmost attention in the upcoming conference and worthy of our collective efforts to reach consensus that help promote sustainable development for all.

UNCTAD 15 is also expected to deal with other major challenges, such as the growing inequalities within and among countries, Climate Change and its implications on development, how to harness digitalization and new technologies to serve development and provide the developing countries with an equitable chance to benefit from the forth

industrial revolution, the issue of financing for development, and debt, those are some of the issues that we believe the conference should give priority to.

In the same context, we also look forward to the establishment of the Preparation Committee for the UNCTAD 15 and stand ready to actively participate in its work.

Mr. President,

This session of Trade and Development Board is considering various reports of work of intergovernmental machinery on its agenda. We believe that the consensus building role of UNCTAD is of special importance. The intergovernmental machinery is the forum where member states can debate all pertinent issues to trade and development, narrow the gaps between different opinions and positions, give direction to research and analysis, and technical assistance functions of the Secretariat, and provide the opportunity to member states to interact with the Secretariat and give feedback on its performance in executing its mandate. It is vital to further strengthen the intergovernmental machinery in order to be able to perform its key role, in that regard, we believe that decision number 540 (LXV) adopted at the Sixty Fifth session of the TDB on revitalizing the intergovernmental machinery can be built upon to achieve that goal.

Mr. President,

The Asia-Pacific Group welcomes the Least Developed Countries Report 2019, and commends the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes for their efforts in drafting it. The report raised many important issues and provided sound analysis on external development finance.

As we all know, there are many members of our Group which are categorized as least developed countries. Hence this report is of special importance for Asia-Pacific Group and we look forward to the discussions about its findings and recommendations this afternoon.

Finally, I wish you all the success Mr. President in chairing this session and would like to assure you of our group's full support and active participation.

I thank you Mr. President.