



**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Zambia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China
at the Opening Plenary of the 69th Executive Session of the
Trade and Development Board**

Wednesday, 5 February 2020

Excellency Ambassador Michael Gaffey, President of the Trade and Development Board,
Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to express its sincere gratitude to His Excellency Ambassador Michael Gaffey for his work as President of the Trade and Development Board, and to also express its gratitude to the UNCTAD secretariat for the organization of this Executive Session.
2. The Group of 77 and China believes in the defense of multilateralism and reiterates that institutions such as UNCTAD are fundamental to the attainment of Agenda 2030. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China would like to recall SDG target 10.6, which calls to "ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions".
3. UNCTAD has managed to effectively use its scarce resources to fulfil its mandate regarding Least Developed Countries (LDCs). In this regard, the Group of 77 and China welcomes the *Least Developed Countries Report 2019: The present and future of external development finance – old dependence, new challenges* and shares the concern expressed in the Report about the slow pace of progress on the attainment of the objectives of the Istanbul Programme of Action. Structural transformation of economies is a fundamental, still unmet condition for this, as is the guarantee of access by LDCs to financing sources in terms that are compatible with their development needs.
4. The Group of G77 and China expresses once again its concern about the stagnation of Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows and their shift towards humanitarian assistance and crises, a trend that is not consistent with a long term, sustainable approach to financing the development policies and programmes needed to achieve the goals and targets of Agenda 2030.
5. The Group of 77 and China looks forward to the discussion of the *Least Developed Countries Report 2019*. The Permanent Mission of Malawi and Coordinator of the Group of Least Developed Countries, will be delivering a statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China under agenda item 2 of this session.

Mr. President,

6. Representatives of the Group of 77 and China will also be making remarks under the various agenda items, yet the Group takes the opportunity of this opening plenary to refer to the main issues considered during this Executive Session.

7. The Group of 77 and China acknowledges the successful holding of the eleventh session of the Commission on Investment, Enterprise and Development. As requested by the Commission at its previous session, the agenda allowed for the organization of the second annual Geneva ambassadors roundtable for investing in the Sustainable Development Goals. The Group stresses the importance of this roundtable as an efficient mechanism for advancing solutions to promote investment in the diverse SDG sectors that could usefully contribute to the preparations for UNCTAD 15 and the 2020 World Investment Forum.

8. The Group would like to highlight some of the work delivered by UNCTAD in the area of investment for development, such as the “SDG investment monitor”, the “Guidance on Core Indicators for Entity Reporting on Contribution Towards Implementation of the SDGs” and “Investing in the SDGs: The role of Diplomats”. The Group also renews calls for the reform of the international investment regime and for UNCTAD to continue its work in support of Member States in this area.

9. On a related note, The Group of 77 and China welcomes the first ever United Nations General Assembly Resolution on “Promoting investment for sustainable development”, which decides the creation of a sub-item entitled “Promoting investments for sustainable development ” and requests UNCTAD, based on its ongoing research, to inform its seventy-fifth session, with a special focus on gaps and challenges faced and the progress made on promoting investments for sustainable development as well as concrete recommendations for the advancement of investment for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

10. The Group of 77 and China also acknowledges the successful holding of the eleventh session of the Commission on Trade and Development, and in this connection calls upon the UNCTAD secretariat to continue to monitor and report on trade trends and trade policy, including tensions affecting the multilateral trading system. Of particular interest to the Group are those resulting from economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, which impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries. The Group of 77 and China expresses its deep concern about the increase in measures that will not only undermine the multilateral trading system but also lead to negative impact on access of developing countries' exports to global markets. Such prospect constitutes a serious risk to the right to development, touching the most vulnerable sectors of the countries affected. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China recalls paragraph 34 of the Nairobi Maafikiano, the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 58/198 of 23 December 2003 as well as the report to the General Assembly (A/60/226) of 12 August 2005. The Group of 77 and China calls on all Member states to support multilateralism.

11. More generally, the UNCTAD secretariat should continue to collate and analyse data on the various areas in trade of interest to developing countries, including fair prices and value addition for commodities, strengthening of South-South trade, and on future trade prospects in light of, inter alia, global value chains, innovation, gender, access to and use of technology.

12. The Group of 77 and China, considers technology transfer a basic tool to attain Agenda 2030 and face daunting global challenges such as climate change. UNCTAD has a relevant role to play in this connection by providing advice and tools, as well as serving as a forum to sustain multilateral inclusive discussion in line with SDG target 10.6. The Group calls on UNCTAD to continue to address and deepen its work on the trade and environment nexus as a cross-cutting issue of Agenda 2030, including through sustainable natural resource management systems and appropriate responses to the impacts of climate change.

13. The Digital Industrial Revolution demands appropriate supporting policies and developing countries require analytical support in order to better address their needs and legitimate development aspirations. Trade can contribute to economic growth, but it only has a long-lasting impact when it is accompanied by adequate public policies. There is no one-size-fits-all. The Group of 77 and China would like to emphasize the notion that trade policies should be encompassed within the framework of industrialization and structural transformation strategies, so as to tackle pervasive challenges to developing countries, such as commodity dependence, which increases economic vulnerability and has an overall balance for developing countries.

14. The Group of 77 and China would also like to acknowledge the successful holding of the Third Session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development, as well as to recognize the work done by the UNCTAD secretariat in this field. The Group would particularly wish to highlight the importance of the discussions on financing for development as a means to assess the commitments made by all Member States through the SDGs and Agenda 2030. For instance, discussion and outcomes on illicit financial flows and the activities that underlie their occurrence, on new financing mechanisms and the possibilities to improve them, among others, are fundamental to inform the pursuit of development objectives.

15. The Group of 77 and China has always stressed that South-South cooperation is a voluntary manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South, which contributes to their national well-being, national and collective self-reliance and to the attainment of Agenda 2030. South-South cooperation should never be considered as a substitute for North-South cooperation, which remains the main channel for international development cooperation, but rather as a complement. The spread of South-South Cooperation must not serve as an excuse to reduce the commitment of developed countries to contribute 0.7% of their gross national income for official developing assistance.

16. The Group would like to take the opportunity to welcome the discussion of new and emerging issues at UNCTAD, allowing us to gain fresh perspectives and learn more about these. The Group would nevertheless wish to put on record the expectation that discussions in the form of informal forums be the exception rather than the norm, and that as much as possible new issues be incorporated into the formal intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD, in so doing enabling the possibility of multilateral consensus in the form of agreed outcomes, which can contribute more effectively to our policy-making and to intergovernmental processes elsewhere.

17. The Group of 77 and China recalls the role of the International Trade Centre (ITC) as a joint technical cooperation agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations, the latter acting through UNCTAD. Technical cooperation activities tend to be sustainable over time if they are delivered in accordance with national policies and long-term objectives. It is thus paramount that technical cooperation projects of ITC be delivered in accordance with national development priorities and in line with overarching objectives of structural transformation of economies.

Mr. President,

18. We wish to thank all our partners for their efforts and constructive engagement that led to the smooth agreement on the theme for UNCTAD 15. This success bodes well for a historic UNCTAD 15. This optimism inspires us to observe that the establishment of the PrepCom will accelerate the substantive preparatory process. The Group will strive to table its position paper as soon as possible to enable the preparation of a draft negotiating text by the President of the Trade and Development Board within the shortest possible timeframe thereafter. We therefore look forward to hearing the views of all, including Secretary-General Kituyi, on the nature of the conference, the key issues to be addressed, and the concrete outcomes we could aspire to.

19. As many have observed, we live in tumultuous times and can expect further and faster change in the immediate future. As a transformational institution, UNCTAD must play a role in shaping the future of our world including through strengthening multilateralism and forging a new approach to the persistent challenges we have yet to overcome and to the new tests we will face in the future. We therefore see that this world in transition requires a transformative UNCTAD. Anything less would be a betrayal to our peoples who expect more from us.

Thank you, Mr. President.