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### General Debate

Statement by Brazil

Thursday, 21 July 2016

Speaker: Mr. Alexandre Parola

*Not checked against delivery\**

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**UNCTAD XIV**  
**Speech to be delivered by Mr. Alexandre Parola**  
**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil**  
**Nairobi, Kenya, 21 July 2016**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to convey Brazil's deep appreciation for the Government of Kenya for hosting this important UN Conference, as well as to express my delegation's gratitude for the hospitality of this generous and thriving country. I was here only last December for MC-10. It is a joy to come back to this beautiful country today.

Forty years ago we met, also here in Nairobi, at UNCTAD-IV, to discuss the pressing challenges our countries were facing in their push for development.

UNCTAD was ahead of the curve in anticipating the problems that developing countries would be facing by the end of that decade. The combination of high debt levels and a severe tightening of international financial conditions led to an abrupt reversal of growth trends, stagnation and deterioration of socioeconomic indicators in many developing countries. In Latin America, this period would later be called the "lost decade".

There has been much advancement across the developing world. In my region of the world, we were proud to achieve a significant reduction in inequality as we pursued economic policies based on the notions of shared prosperity and growing inclusiveness. In Brazil today, inclusiveness is another word for sustainable socio-economic development.

Mr. Chairman,

Eight years after the outbreak of the financial crisis we still fail to achieve a robust recovery, and a new growth cycle is yet only a promise. Concerns about a "secular stagnation" are echoed in debates on future growth trends. There is a lot of talk about a so-called "new normal." Well, let us collectively make sure that the new normal is not just more of the same old patterns of inequality and asymmetrical trends of development.

The factors that are often identified as causes for this low growth trend, such as a diminishing impact of new technologies in overall productivity, aging populations and increasing inequality are complex and the answers to the challenges they pose are not straightforward. We can't accept dogmatic and "ex ante" objections to enriching the international debate on the tools to promote stability, growth and prosperity in the global economy. And UNCTAD has proven instrumental to this end throughout its five decades of existence.

An example of the policy dilemmas in the global economy can be found by comparing the responses adopted in light of the 2008 crisis by developed countries vis-a-vis developing countries. The most noticeable measure adopted by advanced economies was the resort to unorthodox monetary policies. These led to the depreciation of their currencies and a surge in global liquidity levels and are keeping interest rates at low levels prolongedly. Such policy options are simply not available for developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

These asymmetries highlight the importance of safeguarding policy space for developing countries and the need to recognize the different levels of development and capacities. In a world of disparities among countries, translating the principle of equity into such concepts and operationalizing it in our shared commitments is crucial.

This is particularly important in light of the major outcomes reached by the international community in 2015. The 2030 Agenda is the first universal development agenda and it addresses a wide set of sectors and topics with fundamental bear on the prosperity of the peoples of the world and on the future of our planet. This universal approach is only possible once we factor in that while all countries bear a stake and a fair share of the burden in its implementation, each country has differentiated responsibilities, in accordance with their level of development, historical responsibility, and respective capacities. It also requires moving away from a donor-recipient mindset in development debates, one which often incur into patronizing, to accepting and creating spaces for full and effective participation of developing countries in finding common solutions for common problems. The 2030 Agenda is not only about developing countries. It is about all countries.

Mr. Chairman,

UNCTAD has a responsibility in the implementation of the new development agenda and we have an obligation to create the enabling conditions for the Organization to fulfill this task. In Addis Ababa, our Leaders made a strong call and committed themselves to “strengthen the important role of UNCTAD as the focal point within the United Nations system for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development”. UNCTAD is also one of the key players in both the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the Financing for Development follow-up, as member of the inter-agency task force of both processes. In many aspects, this is recognition of the relevance and importance of UNCTAD’s holistic approach to the achievement of sustainable development.

It is also important to reaffirm that UNCTAD’s contributions go beyond the implementation of recent UN outcomes and correspond to its accumulated mandate in the areas of trade, development, finance, technology and investment. Above all, given the complexity of the current global context, marked by an increase in interdependence and in the fluidity of, among others, flows of people, capital and information, it is essential to foster the greatest variety of views possible.

We should make a greater use of Geneva’s development hub, in which UNCTAD plays a unique role through its analytical capacity. We should ensure its capability to keep providing inputs and views on emerging trade and development trends and on topics inextricably related to development challenges, such as taxation. It should be indeed recognized that bodies dealing with aspects of international taxation, particularly the OECD/BEPS and the UN Committee on Tax Matters have sought UNCTAD’s expertise in measuring and analyzing flows associated with tax avoidance. In a context where domestic resource mobilization and tackling tax evasion and avoidance in support of revenue is critical to finance development, it is difficult to understand why this is not a debate to be fostered in every multilateral instance. In addition, UNCTAD’s increasing engagement with international economic cooperation fora, such as the G20, is a reflection of the quality of its work and should be stimulated by us.

Mr. Chairman,

This is one of the first UN Conferences after the international community approved a transformational development agenda and marks our initial steps towards achieving sustainable development and poverty

eradication. In doing so, Brazil believes that UNCTAD is an important venue for promoting a truly democratic, fair, legitimate, equitable and development-oriented international trade, financial and economic architecture.

In 2004, Sao Paulo hosted UNCTAD XI. Under the leadership of Ambassador Rubens Ricupero, then Secretary-General of the Organization, the Conference emphasized the relevance of multilateralism as a way to ensure international convergence of policies and to promote the interests of developing countries, highlighting important concepts such as the need of policy space. His words of wisdom still guide us. Allow me, then, Mr. Chairman, to conclude with a quote of Ambassador Ricupero's speech at the closing ceremony of UNCTAD XI, as he said, and I quote:

"Above all else, the central concern of UNCTAD must be with the ethical and human dimensions of development. Perhaps precisely because I am not an economist, for me the very essence of development is to be found beyond the economic realm. I have often quoted the best definition of development, the one proposed by Jacques Maritain, as "the promotion of all man and of man as a whole". In a few words, this contains a universe: all men, "tous les hommes", women and men without exception, with equal opportunities. Man as a whole, "tout l'homme", man in his integrality, with his economic but equally symbolic cultural needs. Promotion is a concept close to education; to promote is to elevate. This is why I strongly believe that development is a continuous learning process that will never stop. If there is indeed a pattern to history, it is the certainty that we evolve in the direction of growing complexity. And in the final analysis, to develop is to learn how to manage increasingly complex societies, not exclusively in economic terms, but in terms of equity, human rights, environmental protection, gender equality; in sum, the legacy of the Enlightenment, the best hope from a purely human perspective for transforming in depth the quality of relations among human beings. The only guarantee, as well, that we will have peace at last because, as Teilhard de Chardin used to say, "tout ce qui s'élève, converge" -- that is, everything that rises converges."

Thank you.