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General Debate

Statement by Swaziland

Wednesday, 20 July 2016

Speaker: H.E Ambassador Njabuliso Gwebu

*Not checked against delivery**

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**STATEMENT BY H.E AMBASSADOR NJABULISO GWEBU DURING THE
GENERAL DEBATE AT UNCTAD XIV, 17-23 JULY 2016, NAIROBI, KENYA**

**Chairperson
Honourable Ministers
Distinguished Delegates**

My delegation would like, at the outset, to express its appreciation to the Government and people of Kenya for the warm reception and hospitality we have been accorded since our arrival here in the heart of East Africa, Nairobi. We are also appreciative of the excellent facilities put at our disposal and pledge my delegation's full support towards the success of this conference. Asante!

Chairperson, Swaziland aligns itself with the statements delivered by Namibia on behalf of the African Group, Tanzania, on behalf of the G.77 & China, and Paraguay on behalf of the group of Landlocked Developing Countries. My delegation is grateful to UNCTAD under the leadership of the Secretary-General, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, for her work and contribution to promote the sustainable development of our countries, including, and in particular, towards reaching the objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. We particularly welcome the efforts by UNCTAD in its three pillars; **research, technical assistance and consensus building**; in addressing systemic issues related to trade and development as well as the cross cutting issues of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development to adequately assess the vulnerabilities and impact of landlockedness that significantly affect my country.

UNCTAD expertise have supported efforts for structural transformation, diversification and value addition, promoting a more equitable participation of landlocked developing countries in international trade, including in regional and global commodity value chains.

Furthermore, chairperson, my delegation acknowledges UNCTAD'S long standing role in the production of well researched, and instructive literature like The Trade and Development Report, The World Investment Report and The African Economic Report which deal with, among other issues, how best countries can achieve inclusive and sustainable development. These publications give a nuanced assessment of global trade trends and their implications for the most vulnerable nations. The various literature has been useful in the drafting of trade and industrialization policies for developing countries over the years.

It is therefore of great concern to my delegation that throughout the negotiations for this Conference, there have been attempts from some Member States not only to renegotiate and water down important principles that have been settled, such as national policy space, common but differentiated responsibilities and special and differential treatment; but also attempts to weaken the scope of UNCTAD's mandate and therefore its effective contribution as the focal point within the UN for the integrated treatment of trade and development: and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology transfer, transit and transport issues, investment and sustainable development.

In this regard, Swaziland re-affirms this central role of UNCTAD and underlines the importance of strengthening the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, in particular the landlocked developing countries section. We call on UNCTAD 14 to strengthen, not diminish UNCTAD's mandate, including through provision of adequate and additional budgetary and human resources from the United Nations' regular budget in order for the organization to effectively and fully carry out its responsibilities, in all the three pillars.

Swaziland, as a Landlocked Developing Customs Union member, relies disproportionately on the time it takes to get products to markets and the relationships we foster with our neighbouring transit countries, for our development and economic competitiveness. In this regard, Government through

the reformed Swaziland Revenue Authority, has embarked on several modernization and automation activities at all its border posts ; as well as an overhaul of our customs legislation to be in line with that of other SADC Countries and make it useful and user friendly to traders.

My delegation takes this opportunity to thank our cooperating partners, who have funded the urgent projects that we have prioritized under our Aid for Trade Strategy in order to overcome the challenges presented by our geographical location as well as the size and vulnerability of our economy. However, challenges of resource mobilization and shortfalls in implementation persist. Development finance is needed to address supply-side constraints, including the challenges related to infrastructure and trade facilitation facing landlocked developing countries. In addition, greater support should be made available for the building of productive capacities, addressing trade-related adjustment costs, and the formulation of effective export diversification strategies. We look forward to working with the UNCTAD Secretariat in policy development and analysis in this regard, especially to support our efforts for structural transformation, diversification and value addition.

In conclusion Chair, my delegation hopes that the outcomes of this important conference will be translated into tangible action to execute the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the inclusion and dignity of all mankind.

I thank you!