



**GROUP OF 77 & CHINA
G E N E V A**

**Statement by Afghanistan on behalf of the
Group of 77 and China at the 12th Session of the
Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission**

**Item 3a – Report of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and
Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development**

15 February 2021

Chair of the twelfth Session of the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission Ambassador Omar Zniber of Morocco,
Director James Zhan of the Division on Investment and Enterprise,
Director Shamika Sirimanne of the Division on Technology and Logistics,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. Chair,

1. At the outset, the Group of 77 and China would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, as well as the Rapporteur Mr. Rodríguez of Venezuela and the Vice-Presidents, Deputy Permanent Representative Mr. Hussain Andrabi of Pakistan, Mr. Vattai of Hungary and Mr. Bruno of Uruguay, on your election.
2. The Group of 77 and China would also like to express its gratitude to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the most recent editions of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development for the successful conclusion of the meeting and for the report provided today. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Secretariat for their contribution to this meeting, through timely and quality substantive support, as well as for the procedural, logistical and organizational arrangements.
3. The Group of 77 and China would like to welcome UNCTAD's analytical work on the role of international investment agreements in the context of this Multi-year Expert Meeting, and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is indeed a real risk that the measures taken by governments to mitigate the negative effect of the pandemic clash or contradict the obligations found in existing investment treaties, most of which were concluded in the 80s and 90s.
4. There is now a growing trend towards the reform of these treaties to allow governments to implement measures, including those for the protection of public health, without facing the risk of investor-State disputes. In this context, UNCTAD's Annual International Investment Agreements conference, held virtually in November 2020, and UNCTAD's new investment treaty reform accelerator, are very relevant inputs to the ongoing efforts in this area.
5. The Group of 77 and China would also like to acknowledge UNCTAD's work to promote entrepreneurship for the SDGs, as recognized in General Assembly Resolution 75/211. The follow up on its Entrepreneurship Policy Framework, both in assisting specific countries in designing and implementing national entrepreneurship strategies, and targeted groups such as youth, women, the rural poor, migrants and refugees is commendable.

6. With more than 80% of refugees in the world hosted in developing countries, these countries continue to face important constraints in the pursuit of their development objectives. Yet this issue seems to have taken a back seat during the pandemic. For this reason, the elaboration of the Policy Guide on Entrepreneurship for Migrants and Refugees and its associated e-learning course, prepared in collaboration with IOM, UNHCR and UNITAR is a very timely contribution. Our Group encourages its concrete implementation through both policy advice and technical assistance activities.

7. Further on Entrepreneurship and to conclude, our Group appreciates UNCTAD's approach and involvement in promoting awareness about women and inclusive entrepreneurship, including through its Empretec Women in Business Awards, which saw the recognition of exceptional women entrepreneurs from Argentina, Ecuador, Jordan and Uganda.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.