

Statement by

**His Excellency Mr. Khalil Hashmi
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan
on behalf of the Asia Pacific Group
at the Sixty-Eighth Session of the Trade and Development Board**

Agenda item 12(a)

Report by the Chair of the Advisory Body and appointment of members of the Advisory Body

Thursday, 24 June 2021 (afternoon session)

Madame President,
Acting Secretary-General,
Chairperson Advisory Body,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. The Asia Pacific Group would like to thank Ambassador Villegas for presenting the report of the Advisory Body set up in accordance with paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action and appreciates the work of Chair and members of Advisory body during the period 2020-2021.
2. The Group notes with appreciation that capacity building section of UNCTAD's Secretariat has delivered seven short courses for the Geneva-based delegates during the year 2020-21 and planning to organize the next regional course for Eastern European countries in August 2021.
3. The efforts of the UNCTAD Secretariat, in particular of capacity building section in organizing the short and regional course despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, are commendable.
4. The Group is pleased to learn that Advisory body its last meeting has established Pakistan and Argentina as new venues to host its regional course on international economic agenda for the Asia Pacific and Latin American & Caribbean countries respectively. The Group expects that future editions of P-166 courses will be even better and upgraded in terms of their contents and overall program.
5. The Group also expresses its gratitude to the Governments of Egypt, Kenya, Serbia, Colombia and Singapore for hosting UNCTAD's P-166 regional courses in their respective countries during the period 2018-2019. Their substantial support to the UNCTAD's flagship programme is commendable.

6. The Group notes with satisfaction that these courses have fetched overwhelmingly positive response in the recently conducted survey. These courses have helped young policymakers to comprehend complexities and intricacies of contemporary issues in the areas of international economics, trade, investment, technology, finance and sustainable development. The Group is pleased to note that these courses approach issues from analytical and policy point of view of developing countries. The curriculum is well-structured and delivered by the professionals. The modules presented on issues relating to macro-economic issues, trade policy and trade facilitation were found particularly useful and should be continued in such future courses.
7. The Group also suggests incorporating emerging issues of international tax reforms, Trade related intellectual property rights and access to essential medicines, vaccines and public goods, reform of International Investment Agreements vis a vis states' rights to protect the public interest, reform of investor- state dispute settlement mechanism, among other topics in curriculum of the future courses.
8. The Group is pleased to learn that an inter-regional platform of P166 courses has been recently established. This platform will provide an excellent opportunity for the alumni of previous regional courses, representing the five developing regions to share cross-regional experiences. The group understands that the pilot of this interregional platform was conducted in June 2019. However, in 2020 and 2021 it was not rolled out owing to COVID-19 pandemic. The Group looks forward to the announcement of new dates for the inter-regional platform meeting, as pandemic situation improves.
9. The Group would also like to take the opportunity to welcome the appointment of the new members of the Advisory Body for 2021-2022 who will, under the leadership of Ambassador Tarishi as Chair of the Advisory Body, ensure the oversight of Member States over the work of the P166 programme.
10. Finally, the Group acknowledges the benefits of courses for participants, and recognizes their important role in capacity building of young diplomats and policymakers, and thus reaffirms its support to UNCTAD P-166 training and capacity building program.

I thank you, Mr. President.