

**Statement by the EAEU Group**  
**at the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD**

*Geneva, 21 June – 2 July 2021*

Agenda item 3 – General debate

Dear Mr. President,

Dear Acting Secretary-General Ms. Durant,

Dear colleagues!

The current session of the Trade and Development Board is the last significant event leading up to the 15<sup>th</sup> session of UNCTAD. With this in mind, in my statement on behalf of the EAEU Group, I would like to emphasize our assessments of the current situation, including in the context of preparations for UNCTAD-15.

The COVID-19 pandemic has become a major challenge for everyone, without exception. It significantly slowed down progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, seriously exacerbated inequality between and within states, and provoked a surge of poverty and hunger.

The negative impact of the pandemic on the global socio-economic situation is aggravated by political factors - the growth of confrontation, the fragmentation of the multilateral trading system, the abuse of protectionist measures, the use of illegitimate unilateral restrictions. There is an escalation of various contradictions between states, which threatens the most serious consequences for the global economy. Many of these consequences have a "delayed" effect, which is still difficult to evaluate.

In the context of growing turbulence and disengagement of the world community, the risks for the UN-centered model of the international architecture of global governance are increasing.

We believe that effective overcoming of the crisis is possible only through collective efforts based on the principles of solidarity and multilateralism, on the basis of collective approaches to solving global economic problems with the central

coordinating role of the United Nations. At the current difficult stage of the formation of a multipolar system of international relations, it is necessary to unconditionally follow the goals and principles of the UN Charter, ensuring respect for the sovereign equality of states, non-interference in their internal affairs, settlement of disputes by political and diplomatic means, and refusal from the threat or use of force.

The new economic reality generated by the COVID-19 pandemic dictates the need for a fairer and more inclusive global economic system. An important role in these efforts belongs to UNCTAD as a universal UN forum for a comprehensive consideration of international trade and development issues and related issues of investment, finance, debt, technology transfer.

We believe that the upcoming conference should help strengthen the mandate of UNCTAD, shape a broad unifying global agenda on trade and development for the near future, and make a significant contribution to strengthening truly multilateral approaches in international economic relations.

Our group's position is based on the awareness of the indisputable fact that developing countries should play a key role in shaping the future agenda of UNCTAD.

We stand ready to carefully consider the needs and priorities of developing countries in preparation for UNCTAD-15. We do not share the position of some other participants in the preparatory process, striving in various ways to promote their approaches to gender, human rights, climate and other topics in the draft outcome document of UNCTAD-15, presenting them as supposedly universal and consensual.

At the same time, we presume that the renewed mandate of UNCTAD should take into account the specific interests of countries with economies in transition and middle income countries, which are united by our regional group. In this regard, we would like to once again focus on some of the sectoral priorities of our group in the context of UNCTAD-15.

Taking into account the growing number of regional integration associations and their increasing weight in world politics, it seems important to establish a mechanism for coordination and exchange of experience between them. Integration structures have a powerful potential for the implementation of the SDGs, overcoming the negative

consequences of the pandemic, and a post-COVID recovery of the world economy. Successfully held on May 20, 2021 on the initiative of Belarus and Barbados in cooperation with UNCTAD, within preparation for UNCTAD-15, the high-level virtual meeting demonstrated the demand for establishing a dialogue mechanism between various integration associations in order to exchange experience and best practices in the implementation of the SDGs, countering the COVID-19 pandemic, and integration building in general. We believe that UNCTAD, taking into account its notable expert and analytical potential, can become a relevant platform for constructive dialogue between various integration formats.

UNCTAD also has a proven track record in promoting international cooperation among competition authorities. At present, the task of suppressing cross-border anti-competitive practices is becoming more and more urgent, primarily in terms of combating cross-border cartels. In our opinion, UNCTAD is the optimal universal platform for the development of a framework document, which would enshrine the regulatory, legal and procedural aspects of interaction between various antimonopoly agencies in the fight against cartels. This could become one of the main directions of UNCTAD activities in the field of competition for the near future.

In conclusion I would like to stress that the outcome document of UNCTAD-15 would have turned out to be one-sided in terms of assessing the current international situation if it did not reflect the recognition by the international community of the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures introduced in circumvention of the UN Charter. Such illegal actions of individual states and associations deprive entire countries and their peoples of the opportunity to exercise the inalienable rights to a dignified life and choose their own model of socio-economic development, undermine the fundamental principle of the 2030 Agenda “leave no one behind” as the basis for achieving sustainable development.

Finally, there are a few words about the current situation with the preparatory process. In our opinion, after a long “surplace” and finding themselves under the pressure of the time, the participants in the preparatory process began to display greater flexibility and propensity to compromise. This inspires some hope. Our group is ready

for the broadest and most flexible interaction with all regional groups and countries which share a global goal - with all the nuances in tactical approaches - to see UNCTAD as a strong reputable organization capable of adequately responding to the challenges of our time, to assist developing countries in embarking on the trajectory of sustainable economic development and equitable integration into the global trade and economic system.

Thank you for attention.