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Statement

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Annual report of the Secretary-General

Questions and Answers session

FINAL

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the European Union and its Member States, I would like to **thank the acting Secretary General, Madame Durant, for the 2020 Annual Report**. And in particular for your presentation in this session, which give us a better overview of the 2020 work of UNCTAD. As highlighted on previous occasions, this report is at the centre of UNCTAD's transparency and accountability mechanism, and as such crucial for the deliberations of this Trade and Development Board.

2020 was a particular year, full of challenges, for all of us. UNCTAD is no exception. After some initial struggling, we are happy to note the adjustments that were implemented to best deliver on its mandate, given the difficult circumstances.

Given that 2020 has essentially become the last year of work under the Maafikiano outcome, we wanted to take advantage of this session to get an appreciation by the Secretariat and of the acting SG on **how some key elements of the Nairobi Maafikiano were delivered**, in particular in 2020. Fully cognizant that 2020, as said, was a particular year.

In this sense, we were hoping to get **your perspective on the following four issues**:

First, as agreed in Nairobi, **UNCTAD was to strengthen its special focus on the trade and development needs of the LDCs** across all areas of its mandate. What might have been some of the activities and resource employment, as well as results in 2020, which might confirm such strengthened focus?

Second, many past evaluations and reports give an impression that **gender**, as well as human rights, have been increasingly part of UNCTAD activities across the three pillars of its work. This is highly valued, especially as we cannot afford leaving behind half of the world's population – or resources, as it may be – if we are to truly deliver on an inclusive, green and resilient future. Nevertheless, as highlighted by the SG Report on the Evaluation of UNCTAD activities consider by the Working Party in September 2020, gender and human rights considerations still lack integrations into substantive work and analysis. What measures might have been carried out in 2020 to address this shortcoming?

Third, **coherence of UNCTAD actions** between the different pillars of its work, between the five subprogrammes, and with other organisations. As presented by a few recent publications, we note with appreciation the efforts on linking the different pillars of UNCTAD's work. Most notably on the digital economy and the investment policy work. However, we still feel there are improvements possible on the cross-Subprogramme coherence and fertilisation, and in particular with other relevant organisations. The applicability and thus value of UNCTAD's work can only be assured if done with due consideration and involvement of all key actors.

And last but not least – the synthesis of the five Subprogramme evaluation and the status of implementation of recommendations prepared in 2019, noted the continued “**weakness in the secretariat's result-based management framework**, including the results framework for each subprogramme included in the biennial programme plans”. We highlighted this shortcoming also for the latest programme plan that we considered this past January. What might have been some of the actions carried out in 2020 to address this challenge?

In conclusion, we would like to thank again the acting SG for her presentation of the annual report.

Thank you.