



Closing Segment
Trade and Development Board
1 July 2022
Speech by Rebeca Grynspan
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Your excellency, Acting President of the Trade and Development Board.
Ambassador Cleopa Mailu of Kenya

Your excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Dear friends:

After two long weeks of work, today I want to be brief and highlight three things.

First, I want to thank the president and vice-president of the TDB, the regional coordinators, my team at UNCTAD and the intergovernmental support service, and all the ambassadors and delegates who made of this TDB a place of dialogue, hard-work, and dynamism.

Second, I want to say that I have taken note of what you have asked of us, and that I commit myself to following through on your requests. The membership raised issues in terms of:

Releasing UNCTAD divisions plans for the implementation of the Bridgetown Covenant.

Producing detailed annual reports for upcoming TDBs.

Advancing the membership as much as possible, with the release of documents ahead of the TDB.

Ensuring UNCTAD can follow-through in a more formal manner on the outcomes of the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization.

Developing clearer strategic UNCTAD engagement plans for our participation at other UN-wide events, such as the COP, the Oceans Conference, and the UN General Assembly.

And be aware that change is difficult and the return to 'business-as-usual' a challenge. It is true that change doesn't happen overnight. But you can be sure that I will be vigilant and perseverant. There is far too much on the line.

My third and final point – is that I want to congratulate the membership on the clear efforts made to produce very significant agreements on some crucial agenda items.

Let me highlight a few, starting with the new Technical Cooperation Strategy.

The process of adopting a UNCTAD technical cooperation strategy has been on the agenda of the TDB in one form or another since 2012. This is a decade-long effort. I would like to acknowledge the commitment, flexibility and vote of confidence that has been given to me and to the Secretary in the approval of this document. I commit to implementing this strategy in line with the revitalization mandate of the Bridgetown Covenant.

On the topics and guiding questions for the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development and Ecommerce and the Digital Economy

I know that an important effort took place to consider the topics and guiding questions for these two IGEs. These are difficult topics. If they weren't, we would not have had to create a subsidiary body specifically to deal with them. I see that consultations will continue over the next few days, and we look forward to the outcome of such consultations, while extending our full support to this process. There is a time element, in particular for the IGE on financing for development, happening later this year, most notably due to the applicable deadlines for the parliamentary documents, so we are ready to support you as necessary in coming to a conclusion at the earliest possible opportunity.

On the Draft agreed conclusions on the Economic Development of Africa Report

You have also agreed on a solid set of agreed conclusions as you considered the Economic Development in Africa Report 2021. I have taken due note of these agreed conclusions and I pledge the full support of the Secretariat to implement the relevant elements of these agreed conclusions.

On the upcoming TDB and other meetings

Thanks to your efforts, we now have a full agenda for the upcoming TDB session, including the High-Level Segment that has been postponed, as well as the Trade and Development Report 2022, the World Investment Report 2022, the report on UNCTAD's assistance to the Palestinian People, and many others. This will prove to be a very substantive TDB and we are already working to make it a success. But before you go for summer holidays, over the next three weeks, we also have our Expert Meetings on Services and on Transport, followed by the IGEs on competition

and consumer protection. I encourage you to participate and engage in these meetings.

Your excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends:

Let me finish by commenting on the new regional coordinators of the TDB. As we hit the middle of the year, I see that coordination is changing, with Haiti taking over GRULAC coordination from Mexico and Czech Republic taking over the EU Presidency from France. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mexico and France for their support and to welcome Haiti and the Czech Republic in their new capacities. I also understand that the G77 is considering under silence procedure the election of Ambassador Maimuna as Vice Chair and therefore subsequently as Chair for 2023. I would like to wholeheartedly thank the outgoing President of the Board for her continued commitment to UNCTAD and, without prejudging the outcome of the silence procedure, to wish her all the best in her new capacity.

So, thank you all again for all the hard work. We are working hard on making UNCTAD the agile institution that our membership and the times we live in demand.

I look forward to further sharing with you our progress in our next TDB. In the meantime, let me remind you that my office is always open for you. You will always find me working.

Thank you.