

JZ statement under Agenda Item 8(a) and item 4
71st Executive Session of the Trade and Development Board
10 February 2022

Madam Chair, Madam Secretary General, Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,

JZ wishes to start by expressing its appreciation to Secretary General Grynspan for her remarks. These past few days have been very useful in understanding how the Secretary General intends to turn her vision of a reformed and revitalized UNCTAD into reality. As we have reiterated during the Working Party on Programme Plan and Programme Performance, JZ welcomes the Secretary General's initiative and we stand ready to support her in delivering her ambition.

We also wish to thank Mr. Martin Zbinden of Switzerland - a JZ member - for chairing this week's Working Party meeting and look forward to Mr. Zbinden's report during this TDB. The meeting offered a much-needed opportunity to underscore the importance of aligning the work of the organization with the Bridgetown mandate.

As one of the three pillars of UNCTAD, timely research and policy analysis that address the pressing trade and development challenges of our time are critical to UNCTAD's ability to serve its member states. We acknowledge the work that has gone into preparing last year's flagship publications - most of which have been published in the weeks and months leading up to UNCTAD 15. This year's publications should go further in strengthening the alignment of UNCTAD's research and analysis with the Bridgetown Covenant. There should be ample opportunity to discuss recommendations for implementing the new mandate.

In addition, we reiterate the importance of making sure UNCTAD's publications are objective and consistent, and based on clear and accountable evidence. We duly note the Secretary General's commitment to enhancing the delivery and consistency of UNCTAD's Publications Programme as well as her emphasis on supporting standardization and coherence of statistics throughout UNCTAD. We also wish to stress the importance of all publications staying alive to the changing contexts and countries' economic and political situation.

We welcome the Secretary General's determination to invest in a new and ambitious communications strategy, to which flagship publications will no doubt be integral. We cannot overstate the importance of placing top-level analysis at the center of such a strategy - as rightly identified by the SG. This means making sure that individual views that aim to stir the debate are not mistaken for UNCTAD's analysis or formal recommendations. It also means making sure systematic and regular peer review is applied to UNCTAD's flagship publications in particular. We believe this is critical not just for the credibility of the reports but for the credibility of this organization itself.

Paragraph 114 of the Bridgetown Covenant states that in its endeavor to continuously

improve the quality of its analytical work, the UNCTAD secretariat should enhance its peer reviews within UNCTAD and with relevant other United Nations entities and international organizations; it also calls for a biennial review of the publications policy based on the efficiency and effectiveness of publications, to be reviewed by the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance and endorsed by the Trade and Development Board.¹ JZ looks forward to the Secretariat following up on this recommendation and making concrete progress.

We share the concern viewed by many delegations regarding the potential reversal of many hard-won development gains of previous decades as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and a two-speed global recovery. Without necessarily signing onto what the report refers to as “an industrial policy mindset,” we do believe that sustainable growth, decent jobs, and digital and structural transformation are steps in the right direction. In particular, accelerating digitalization and addressing the growing digital divide has proven essential during the COVID-19 pandemic. Post-pandemic recovery in LDCs should also put greater focus on improving women’s economic participation.

Lastly, JZ looks forward to constructively engaging in the TDB discussions both this week and next with a view to contributing to more coordinated and coherent UNCTAD responses to the trade and development challenges of our time. Our ability to engage actively depends in large measure on the timely sharing of the agenda for the intergovernmental machinery. We therefore ask that meeting agendas be circulated in a manner that would allow more sufficient time for members to prepare.

Thank you.

¹ Para. 114(a),(e).