

Opening statement by the EAEU Group
at the 71st execution session of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD
Geneva, 10-11 and 16-18 February 2022

Dear Ms. President,

Dear Ms. Secretary General of UNCTAD,

Dear colleagues!

Our Group of the member-states of the Eurasian Economic Union attaches great importance to the work of the current session of the Trade and Development Board. We will discuss a number of flagship reports, approve the contributions of the subsidiary bodies, but most importantly, exchange fundamental views on our common movement forward in the framework of the implementation of the outcome documents of the 15th UNCTAD conference.

In that context, we welcome the participation of Ms. Rebeca Greenspan, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, at the session and her keynote address containing a strategic vision of the priorities for future work.

As I mentioned in my remarks at the 83rd Session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance, our group embraces the pathos and key messages contained in the UNCTAD Secretary General's statement. We share Ms. Greenspan's assessment of the current global situation. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a serious crisis in the economy and public healthcare services, significantly deepened the existing gaps and fractures in the economic development of various groups of countries, exacerbated the problem of inequality within and between countries, complicated the access of the most vulnerable groups of the population to basic public goods, gave rise to new negative phenomena in the form of vaccine protectionism.

The multilateral system of modern diplomacy based on unconditional respect for international law and the goals and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter has been seriously tested. There is an increase in protectionism in world trade. The use of unilateral restrictive measures is growing, which are becoming almost a daily practice of international coexistence.

We agree with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD that economic development requires a new paradigm and a new consensus. The new context predetermines the need for new strategies for responding to emerging challenges.

We are convinced that UNCTAD is able to play its significant role in the implementation of large-scale tasks on the global economic agenda in accordance with the renewed mandate set out in the Bridgetown Covenant.

In this regard, we all have an ambitious task ahead of us - how to maximize the potential of the organization, embodied in the outcome documents of UNCTAD-15. It is from this angle that we evaluate the 10 initiatives for the internal transformation of the UNCTAD secretariat, outlined in the speech of Ms. R. Greenspan. We regard them as one of the key elements of the revitalization of the organization.

Another important element should be the strengthening of the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD. In this regard, we welcome the ongoing consultations on this subject under the auspices of the Secretary-General. During these consultations, our group has already had the opportunity to present its approaches to this problem. Now I will only note that it is extremely important for us to ensure the conciliatory, cooperative nature of this process and not turn it into another negotiation format with the risk of getting only the minimum common denominator in the end.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that in order to ensure the success of these undertakings, at least two conditions shall be met: the realization by the Secretary General of the role of political, not technical leadership, which we lacked so much in the previous period, and which, as we note with satisfaction, is starting to show up now. And secondly: the establishment of an atmosphere of greater trust

and a desire for compromises between member countries and for joint cooperative activities within the framework of a unifying agenda. Only in this way can we avert the risks of a lost decade and advance progress towards a more equitable world and prosperity for all.

Our group is ready for such work.

Thank you.