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## PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA TO UNOG

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**Statement by H.E. Sabine Böhlke-Möller Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of the Republic of Namibia, on behalf of the African Group, on Agenda Item 2, Activities Undertaken by UNCTAD in Support of Africa, at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Executive Session of the TDB, 27-29 September, 2016.**

**Amb. Alfred Suescom, President the TDB,**

**Mr. Joakim Reiter, Deputy Secretary General of UNCTAD,**

**Your Excellencies Ambassadors/Permanent Representatives**

**Distinguished Delegates**

**Mr. President,**

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group, on Agenda Item 2, Report of the Secretary General on **Activities Undertaken by UNCTAD in Support of Africa**, undertaken during the period May 2015 to April 2016. The Group aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Argentina, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

**Mr. President,**

Allow me at the outset, to thank you for convening this meeting and also to thank the Secretary General of UNCTAD and his team, for the report before us. I would also like to thank the Secretariat for introducing the report.

**Mr. President,**

The African Group takes note of the contribution made by UNCTAD to the major international events in 2015, and their outcomes, notably the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, both of which recognise the special needs of Africa, the Paris Declaration on Climate Change, the WTO MC10, to mention but a few. We further take note of the support UNCTAD provided to Africa, in preparation of and participation in these events.

We welcome and appreciate the work of UNCTAD in Africa across all its three pillars of work. This work has helped in assisting a number of our economies tackle issues of economic vulnerability, building resilience, improving competitiveness and promoting structural transformation. We also welcome the initiative for Cabinet Briefing Programme which benefited African countries as well as the various training workshops aimed at capacity building in various areas of trade, finance, investment and development. The assistance provided to various African countries, including through the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA), Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS), establishment of African Empretec centres, preparations of national trade policy frameworks, assistance with accession to WTO, as well as contribution to regional integration process a noted with appreciation.

**Mr. President,**

While noting the positive impact of UNCTAD's work on Africa's development, a lot more work needs to be done in order to transform the economic status of many African countries, the majority of which are LDCs. There still remain a lot of bottlenecks that impede on the growth of our economies. We therefore look forward to the implementation of commitments made in the context of the Nairobi Maafikiaano, which was adopted at the 14<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting of UNCTAD in Nairobi. We especially encourage UNCTAD to strengthen its activities aimed at assisting African countries in finding means of implementation for their economic development agendas and achievement of their development goals. At the minimum, priority must be placed on supporting programmes focussed on promoting value addition and diversification as these are vital from increasing competitiveness and ensuring that our countries attain sustained economic development.

**Mr. President,**

Regarding the Projects and Missions, we take note with appreciation that during the year 2015, USD 12.5 million, representing 31.5% of UNCTAD's total expenditure on regional and country projects, was spent on African projects. We would have been pleased to be informed of the success and challenges involved in the implementation of such projects, especially considering that 377 mission and 423 visits were taken by UNCTAD staff to African countries.

We would also appreciate, henceforth, that the report could contain recommendations for future activities, in support of Africa, for the consideration of the Members States.

**Mr. President,**

Our Group attaches great importance to the work of UNCTAD, especially its support to Africa. This is evidenced by the role we played and efforts we made, before and during the UNCTAD 14 negotiations to ensure that UNCTAD's mandate is strengthened and that adequate resources are provided in order for it to effectively carry out its activities, in support of developing countries, including Africa.

In conclusion, **Mr. President**, we reiterate that the Executive Session on Africa should not be grouped with other issues and discussion of the report under consideration should not be reduced to a single day which may compromise the quality of our discussions on UNCTAD's activities in support of Africa. While noting the events that lead to this situation of this year's arrangements are an exception that does not set precedence for the future.

We look forward to fruitful deliberation on the report.

I thank you.