

STATEMENT BY UGANDA ON THE OCCASION OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE TDB, 30TH SEPTEMBER-4 OCTOBER 2019-ITEM 7 ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY UNCTAD IN SUPPORT OF AFRICA, WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER 2019

**President,
The Representative from the Division for Africa, LDCs and Special Program,
Excellences here present,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

My delegation associates itself with the statement presented by distinguished representative of Togo on behalf of Africa respectively.

We welcome UNCTAD activity report in support of Africa that provides in-depth details on their activities on the continent. These activities ranging from High Level events to empowering Africans and investing in their future have enriched the knowledge and capacity of our policy makers going forward. Our sincere gratitude also goes to all those partners that have made resources available to facilitate the work undertaken by UNCTAD and appeal for a continued meeting of minds.

President,

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to highlight on only two of the projects that my country has received support during the period under review:

1. STIP review: the impact of science, technology and innovation towards leapfrogging economic development as well as achieving the SDGs of which we are a decade shy cannot be over emphasised. In the aspiration of Uganda's vision 2040, Science, Technology, Engineering and Innovation is identified as one of the fundamentals that must be strengthened to harness opportunities for national development alongside security and defence, transport infrastructure and services, Energy etcetera. Uganda started implementing its National STI policy in 2009 but this was hampered by lack of a central coordinating institution in the country taking into consideration the crosscutting nature of STI. In June 2016, the Government established a standalone Ministry and the immediate task of the new Ministry was to review country's STI policy in the context of a special purpose vehicle for development including attainment of the SDGs. There could not have been a better timing than in 2018, for collaboration between the UNCTAD team and the new Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. The results of this joint effort is manifested in the established National science, technology and innovation policy review task force composed of all stakeholders and capacity building of the Ministry staff dealing with these issues. Going forward, we welcome further rounds of capacity building on policy design and implementation, M&E and financing/funding STI by UNCTAD and the development partners respectively as we continue on this journey to build a holistic vision of

STI process through inter-institutional, interdisciplinary approaches and actions as well as involvement of diverse stakeholders. It would be unkind of my delegation not to extend our appreciation to the partnering agencies, namely the UNDP, UNESCO, UNIDO and United Nations Technology Bank, engaged in advisory and substantive contributions as well as the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Peoples Republic of China for the capacity building opportunities extended so far.

2. Promoting of economic diversification: Uganda has been a beneficiary towards adding more value to their cotton crop through a project on the promotion of cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa. My delegation would like to underscore the impact of this project to the social economic transformation of 250,000 households who cultivate cotton under rain-fed conditions and with minimal use of inputs such as fertilisers and chemicals and the 2.5 Million people in the value chain. The heavy involvement of small scale farmers and women in the lead, means that its effect on the number one SDG (poverty) is felt more widely thus building the resilience of our society. Moving forward, I commend UNCATD for the findings and establishment of investment profiles for biomass briquettes and absorbent cotton that will provide a resourceful reference for decisions at the policy level as well as latitude for investment attraction and decisions. To dwell into this a little, absorbent cotton products notably surgical wool, pharmaceutical and baby care products as well as sanitary pads are on a very high demand back home. On average, Uganda imports 124MT of absorbent cotton. The vision therefore, is increase production of short staple cotton that goes by the name SATU variety that yields short lint fibres suitable for processing into absorbent cotton. In addition to supporting the government's policy on import substitution and its associated benefits, it opens a path towards transforming cotton and textile sector in Uganda. Secondly, the development of value chain to turn cotton stalks into briquettes not only plays into improving livelihood of the farmers but more significantly, contributes to SDG 13, the single biggest threat to development, and its widespread, unprecedented impacts (climate change) that would arise from cutting down of trees and vegetation, a major source of cooking fuel to over 80% of the population in Uganda. We look forward to building on this great work done by UNCTAD in other forums including the WTO World Cotton Day coming up next week.

Before I conclude, I recognise the other activities that my country and Africa at large has and continues to benefit from including simplified trade procedures through development of trade portals in the EAC region, empowerment of marginalised groups without information majorly women and local traders involved in informal cross border trade, technical advisory services on debt management, NTM, trade facilitation, Asycuda world and the various courses both on and offline.

I would like to end by appealing to UNCTAD to double efforts in designing programmes to support Africa as well as those that facilitate the next steps. At UNCTAD we can do more. **I thank you.**