



**GROUP OF 77 & CHINA**

**G E N E V A**

**Statement by His Excellency Mr. Nasir Ahmad Andisha  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Afghanistan  
on behalf of the Group of 77 and China  
at the 70<sup>th</sup> Executive Session of the Trade and Development Board**

**Opening statement**

*3 February 2021*

President of the Trade and Development Board Ambassador Federico Villegas,  
Secretary-General of UNCTAD Mukhisa Kituyi,  
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, Good morning Mr. President,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to express its profound appreciation for Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi and his commitment and support to the cause of development and the work of our Group.
2. UNCTAD embodies the aspiration of the developing world for a fairer, more inclusive and more equal world. Having started with a steadfast champion of development, social justice and the causes of the Global South, Dr. Raul Prebisch, the position of Secretary-General of UNCTAD therefore personifies that aspiration.
3. In fact, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD is the only senior international position that tradition has earmarked for the Global South. As such, our Group is proud to stand behind the institution that this position represents and to lend our support to the work of UNCTAD, and to uphold the historic linkages of this organization and our Group.

Secretary-General Kituyi,

4. As we look at the past 8 years, we can appreciate the fruit of your work, in many of the foundations that you leave behind for furthering the agendas of development and posterity. We see how the permanent presence of UNCTAD has been expanded from Geneva and New York through the creation of the UNCTAD Office for Africa in Addis Ababa, which under your leadership has contributed to many development initiatives in the African continent. We hope that your successors follow your steps and expand UNCTAD's presence to the Asia Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean regions.

5. The success of UNCTAD 14 was also, to a significant degree, attributable to your good offices and personal engagement in securing the generous commitment of the Republic of Kenya to host the Conference, even with only a few months' notice, but also due to your support in building momentum for many of the issues and outcomes that were eventually agreed at the Conference. More recently, your engagement with Prime Minister Mottley was fundamental in securing the generous offer and steadfast commitment of Barbados to host UNCTAD 15, for which we are profoundly grateful and very much looking forward to.

6. Among the main achievements of UNCTAD 15, we have the creation of the two new Intergovernmental Groups of Experts, which have been instrumental to the better feeding of issues relevant to Financing for Development and Digital Economy into the intergovernmental machinery. You have been a champion of the embracing of the opportunities of the digital economy and to have developing countries own the agenda and discussion--- as well leading the digital transformation of the Secretariat as we were hit by the Covid-19 pandemic.

7. During your tenure, we also saw the recognition of the cross-cutting nature of development in the operationalization of the Cabinet briefings, which you personally led in several countries. Through these briefings, beneficiary countries were able to better understand the trade-offs and interdependence of various areas of development policy, thereby improving policy-making itself and its capacity to contribute to improving people's lives. We hope that this initiative will continue in time and be mainstreamed as a model for UNCTAD's support for developing countries.

7. Finally, SG Kituyi, our Group is also highly appreciative of your engagement with our capitals, through your active presence in events throughout the world, carrying the voice of UNCTAD and as such the voice of the South. Your approach is in line with our Group's conviction that development thinking is a diverse and complex political issue that needs to be owned locally and not a technocratic, one-size-fits-all matter dictated upon us.

8. We could continue citing here many of your accomplishments that we are grateful for. Yet, it suffices to say that we wholeheartedly wish you all the best in the path ahead of you. We trust that you will continue to be a champion of development, a fighter against inequality and poverty and a staunch supporter of the aspirations of the Global South.

Thank you.