

**STATEMENT BY THE COORDINATOR OF THE AFRICAN  
GROUP H.E. AMBASSADOR ATHALIAH LESIBA  
MOLOKOMME  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF UNCTAD PARTING INTERACTION  
WITH MEMBER STATES: 3 FEBRUARY 2021**

**President of the Trade and Development Board HE Ambassador  
Federico Villegas of Argentina;**

**Secretary-General of UNCTAD, H.E. Mukhisa Kituyi;**

**Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Madam Isabelle Durant;**

**Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen;**

It is my honour to speak on behalf of the African Group, and to deliver a brief farewell message to the distinguished Outgoing Secretary General of UNCTAD, our brother H.E. Dr Mukhisa Kituyi.

The African Group wishes to thank you SG for your opening remarks, recognise and applaud your leadership in spearheading the enormous work of UNCTAD since you first assumed office on 1st September 2013.

Under your stewardship, UNCTAD has remained true to the execution of its mandate, and continues to assist developing countries to better access and benefit from global trade and investment. This has been done by way of providing analysis and technical assistance, facilitating consensus-building to leverage on trade, investment, finance, and technology as instruments for attaining inclusive and sustainable development.

I will not go through the long list of impressive UNCTAD reports and publications that are evidence of this, and how their

intellectual content has guided member states in designing and implementing trade and development policies.

Consequently, the efforts of UNCTAD to help developing countries to overcome numerous challenges and harness the benefits of globalization are widely recognized. The tailor-made technical assistance the organization has offered to countries has indeed been critical to address our different needs.

Added to this, Excellency Dr Kituyi brought a passion for trade and development issues, as well as a creativity and positive energy that will be his lasting legacy. Many milestones that reflect your numerous achievements as Secretary General have been cited by previous speakers and I will not repeat them.

For me personally, one example among many is the unique initiative of offering yourself and your team as a resource to conduct cabinet and other leadership retreats at which you shared your expertise at country level, something we were privileged to benefit from in Botswana in March 2019.

In the midst of the Pandemic, you ensured business continuity despite the unprecedented challenges to global health and trade. The 2020 Trade and Development Report update carried a poignant message on “*COVID-19 Shock to Developing Countries*” that I quote as follows:

“The economic fallout from the Covid-19 shock is ongoing and increasingly difficult to predict, but there are clear indications that things will get much worse for developing economies before they get better.” (END OF QUOTE)

The COVID - induced distress situation that economies of the South continue to bear, especially those on the African Continent, underlines the importance of partnership with UNCTAD. This is to ensure that resilience and fairness become an integral part of

solutions to global challenges and striving towards an interdependent world.

So do allow me on behalf of the African Group reiterate our commitment to UNCTAD and to deepen our cooperation under the leadership of Ms Isabelle Durrant as Acting Secretary General.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate our gratitude to you Dr Kituyi for the stellar service and exemplary leadership you have provided to UNCTAD and wish you well in your future endeavors.

ASANTE SANA!!