

Lebanon
Trade and Development Board 70th Executive Session
General statement

President of the TDB Ambassador Federico Villegas,
Secretary General of UNCTAD Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi,
Deputy Secretary General of UNCTAD Isabelle Durand,
Excellencies,

At the outset allow me to commend you Mr. President for your able stewardship during this difficult and uncertain year, it is with your guidance, and the help of the Secretariat, that the TDB was able to carry on with its work, albeit mostly remotely, despite all challenges.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the departing Secretary General of UNCTAD, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, for his able leadership for over seven years. I was fortunate to work with you closely during my presidency of the TDB and I have benefited from your support expertise and wide-ranging experience, and although we regret losing you at UNCTAD, we wish you success in your future endeavors.

We also take this opportunity to thank Barbados and Ambassador Blackman for the commitment it has shown in the preparations for the XV Conference, and we commend their flexibility and their capacity to adjust to all the unexpected turn of events that caused us to postpone the 15th conference yet again, and we also acknowledge its initiative of host country-led dialogue, as a vehicle for new insights and useful proposals.

On the other hand, we recognize the great value of the 2020 Report on the Least Developed Countries - Productive capacities for a new decade and we would like to echo the call made in the Report to build resilience through the development and strengthening of productive capacities, which is much needed to enable countries to better withstand exogenous shocks and boost their capacity to recover from them.

We also consider important both the results of the multiple groups, as well as the organization's flagship reports that are reviewed in the Commissions. In that sense, we find it is essential to establish linkages and coherence between the results of each event as a way to increase the efficiency of the organization.

Mr. President,

As Lebanon we are well placed to sadly measure how much this pandemic has struck already fragile economic conditions and exposed the vulnerability of already disadvantaged economies and populations. There is a serious risk of the pandemics transforming into an enduring venom, widening inequality, increasing poverty, squashing SDG hopes, dissolving solidarity, and intensifying geopolitical conflicts. Recovering better demands that we treat the COVID-19 as a wakeup call to less polarization, more solidarity and cooperation at the global level to leverage current and emerging economic transformations and address policy-based and institutional barriers in the way of more equitable and sustainable growth.

The fifteenth session of the Conference in our opinion provides the opportunity to draw the right lessons from the pandemic, and it should help us find our way back to the course of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and I sincerely hope that we all take advantage of this historic opportunity. The pandemic has forced us into physical confinement, let us counterbalance it by setting free our will and our intellect in order to devise a better future for us all.

Thank you.