

**Statement by the Delegation of Guatemala on behalf of the  
Group of Latin America and the Caribbean  
at the 70<sup>th</sup> Executive Session of the Trade and Development Board**

*Geneva, 3-5 February 2021*

**Agenda item 2 - The Least Developed Countries Report 2020: Productive Capacities  
for the New Decade**

*Wednesday, 3 February 2021 (afternoon session)*

President of the Trade and Development Board, H.E. Ambassador Federico Villegas,  
Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Mrs. Durant,  
Director of the Division on Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes Paul  
Akiwumi,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. Chairman, it is an honour for Guatemala to deliver this statement on behalf of the Latin America and the Caribbean Group.

1. The Group would like to thank the Secretariat and in particular to Director Paul Akiwumi and his team for the preparation and presentation of the Least Developed Countries Report 2020.
2. The Group is alarmed by the serious world-wide health and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and notes with concern its economic effects in Least Developed Countries that resulted in a 2.6% reduction in per capita income in LDCs in 2020, the worst economic outcome in 30 years for this group of countries.
3. The Group notes with concern the impact of the economic recession on the external demand for LDC goods and services, and in particular would like to highlight the difficulties experienced by Haiti, the sole LDC of the region, in the area of garments exports and the major reduction of remittances flows.
4. The Group agrees with the report on the central role that productive capacities need to have in national and international development strategies in order to promote sustained economic growth; and in this sense congratulates the Division for their excellent work on developing the productive capacities index which will allow LDCs to assess their current capacities and assist them to develop those that will enhance the social development returns of economic growth and accelerate their structural transformation.
5. The Group takes note of the trend of a widening digital divide between and within countries, where LDCs are falling behind in the global digital transformation race, and encourages UNCTAD to continue its work and policy recommendations to LDCs in order to address the challenges of the digital era.