



**GROUP OF 77 & CHINA
G E N E V A**

**Statement by Afghanistan on behalf of the
Group of 77 and China at the 12th Session of the
Trade and Development Commission**

**Item 5 – Progress report on promoting and
strengthening synergies among the three pillars –
Presentation by the Division on International Trade and Commodities**

17 February 2021

Chair of the twelfth Session of the Trade and Development Commission, Ambassador Chad Blackman of Barbados,
Officer-in-Charge of the Division on International Trade and Commodities, Ms. Teresa Moreira,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank Ms. Moreira for her presentation in the capacity of Officer-in-Charge of the Division on International Trade and Commodities. Indeed, as Ms. Moreira has pointed out, the Division had a very nimble and effective response to the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, even while dealing with the constraints imposed by the liquidity crisis in the United Nations Secretariat.
2. Our Group would like to recognize such efforts to react quickly with solid analytical documents to current and relevant issues: from trade tensions, to Brexit, to the effects of Covid-19 on trade on food security on consumer protection and on the environment. The Division has also been leading the efforts to assess the differentiated gender effects of trade and the pandemic. This research has been an important contribution to the efforts of developing countries to react in the best possible way to the ongoing crisis.
3. We have recently witnessed important communication and dissemination efforts through the website and social media from UNCTAD as a whole. In this connection, we noticed that an important share of contributions to such efforts are from the Division on International Trade and Commodities. Indeed, research and analysis outputs need to be accompanied by adequate dissemination strategies that ensure that ultimate beneficiaries and policymakers are reached in a timely manner. We therefore commend the efforts of this Division in this area and call for their continuation.
4. Our Group notes with satisfaction the relentless and innovative efforts to continue delivering concrete assistance on the ground: from improving the conditions of informal women traders in Africa, to the blue economy projects in central America and the Caribbean, the strengthening of value chains in Asia, the support to competition and consumer policies in economies in transition, and the world wide effort to train policy makers to reduce and better use non-tariff measures to foster trade. Ms. Moreira has updated us of progress in these and other areas of work, for which we are grateful.

5. On the intergovernmental work of this Division, we noticed once again a successful organization of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Policy and Consumer Protection, though this time with the added complexity of doing so in a remote manner and thus with an audience spread through different time zones and with varying levels of connectivity.

6. Indeed, the inability to meet in person has not kept the work of the Division from moving ahead, as shown by the creation of the Trade Policy Dialogues, which we welcome. This new forum has become a nimbler space for delegates and experts to discuss on relevant issues in the trade agenda. *The multilateral trading system in the post-pandemic “new normal”*; *Towards model RTA provisions for trade in essential supplies in times of crisis*; *Elements of a policy mix for trade-led recovery: Services, creative economy, and making the best of trade agreements*, are some of the topics we have recently seen and are very appreciative of. We hope to have further opportunities for topical discussions that can feed into our preparations for UNCTAD 15, through upcoming Trade Policy Dialogue sessions.

7. To conclude, Mr. Chair, the Group of 77 and China is grateful for the work of the Division on International Trade and Commodities, and particularly for the work of Ms. Teresa Moreira and Ms. Miho Shirotori in keeping the Division active, engaged and properly functioning pending the filling of the post of the Director of the Division.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.