



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

Item 3a (ii) – Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development
17 February 2021

Chair of the twelfth Session of the Trade and Development Commission, Ambassador Chad Blackman of Barbados,
Director Shamika Sirimanne of the Division on Technology and Logistics,
Officer-in-Charge of the Division on International Trade and Commodities,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Chair and Vice-Chair of the most recent edition of the Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development, for having conducted a successful meeting, as well as to thank the Secretariat for the substantive and logistical support for this meeting.
2. During the last year we have seen how critical social and economic sectors for developing countries, in particular services sectors, such as tourism and hospitality, have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the recovery of the services sector is an urgent area of attention in the mitigation of the negative impacts of the ongoing pandemic.
3. Services are however not a sector to be considered in isolation, as there are important links with industrialization, which is the basis for the development of high value services. The interlinkage of the two is an important source of growth, job creation and value addition, as well as a significant source of inputs for the rural economy.
4. We therefore commend the results of the most recent session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development, which highlighted the substantial linkages of services in the economy and trade of all sectors, in order to provide opportunities for structural transformation, diversification and upgrading, including those related to digitalization.
5. Nevertheless, important challenges remain for many developing countries that need to improve capacity to benefit from such potential. We call for the consideration in the preparatory work for UNCTAD 15 of the suggestions on the role that UNCTAD can play in supporting developing countries' pursuance of services-enabled productivity and resilience.
6. The research and analysis and technical assistance of UNCTAD, in particular the Services Policy Reviews, are key in supporting the efforts of developing countries, as are the experience-sharing opportunities provided by this Expert Meeting and by the Global Services Forum. We therefore call on UNCTAD to mainstream and continue these programmes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.