

**Working Group of the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget**  
**67th session - 12-14 March 2014**  
**Opening statement of H.E. Mrs. Annick H. Andriamampianina**  
**Ambassador Permanent Representative of Madagascar**  
**On behalf of the African Group**

**Mr. Chairman,**  
**Mr. Deputy Secretary General of UNCTAD,**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Distinguished Delegates,**

I would like, from the outset, to take this opportunity on behalf of the African Group to extend to Mr Mohamed Ismail of Sudan our congratulations on his election as Chair of the 67th session of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget.

Mr. Chairman,

Mindful of the goals set during previous sessions, with the achievements by UNCTAD secretariat following the resolutions taken, and the excellent manner in which you oversee our proceedings, the African Group wishes to express its full support to ensure that the discussions engaged at this session will be successful.

I then wish to express the appreciations and gratitude of the African Group to the Deputy Secretary General of UNCTAD's for his introductory remarks that will both inform and guide us during the debates of this session. My gratitude is also addressed to UNCTAD Secretariat for providing the delegates with the various documents that will undoubtedly enrich our discussions.

Indeed, the major items in the agenda, including the fundraising strategy and more particularly the communication strategy as well as UNCTAD's publication policy are of great interest to Africa. Within a global development goal, at a time when the actions initiated and carried out in the context of our work are proving increasingly strategic in view of their intended impact on target audiences, our actions should be more effective and efficient guaranteeing more justice for the countries concerned, despite the social and economic disparities that still constitute a parameter which should not be overlooked, but which should rather be considered objectively.

At a time when our working methods more closely associate social and private organizations for a participatory and synergistic approach, expected results can only be better. Moreover, intergovernmental organizations firmly believe that this innovative and rational approach is the logical extension of an approach of which all of mankind is the largest and sole beneficiary. This allows social democracy to have a greater impact and to be of benefit to the greatest number.

I would submit to our Assembly three points of interests to be considered with a lot of logic and insight during our discussions, firstly, from the horizontal perspective, it will reinforce the principle that our actions involve further target audiences, secondly, from the vertical perspective, the concept related to the communication strategy and

publishing can be done rationally taking into account the disparity of means, and finally try to identify small bottlenecks or so called minor constraints, which could undermine the deliverables, at a time least expected.

Indeed, it is high time to redouble our efforts in consolidating our achievements in accordance with the provisions of the Accra Accord, reaffirmed in the Doha mandate to streamline the program of UNCTAD publications to improve product quality, and respond more appropriately to the needs of Member States. This consolidation deserves more attention in order to touch a greater number of target audiences, especially policy makers in developing countries as well as of media organizations civil society, private sector, academia and the general public.

Here I wish to commend the many relevant initiatives of UNCTAD, which also broaden the horizons of cooperation and expertise with other organizations in the community and participate in the development and publication of analyzes and studies, and whose works converge in an endeavour to enable developing countries to benefit from international expertise in terms of orientation for growth and development. There is no need to recall that the main objective of the United Nations in establishing UNCTAD is to support the efforts of developing countries, in the interest of fairness and justice, to face international competition faced with realities which require a better balance in terms of the means at their disposal. Indeed, there is a common understanding that information and education are essential to contribute to peace and development in the world. Sharing knowledge and expertise, in a universal context, allows conveying a perception of multicultural development for the common benefit of mankind.

The African group wishes to reiterate its encouragement to UNCTAD secretariat, as has been the case at previous sessions, to further strengthen its efforts towards developing countries in general, especially least developed countries (LDCs), so that priority is given to them to ease and streamline communications and publications.

It is clear that progress in the field of information technology and communication (ICT) bring the modern world, and by extension UNCTAD, to rationalize the publications to the qualitative dimension to the detriment of the quantitative one, and in particular to promote more digital tools in its communications strategies and publications. This is what emerges from the statistics that show a progressive decrease in the number of publications issued, including 225 during the biennium 2008-2009, about 200 in 2010-2011, and 184 for the biennium 2012-2013. I recognize the desire of saving the costs related to these fields, in particular by using more ICT within UNCTAD, the impacts of which are characterized by an adaptation to the methods of work following the digital revolution in the world.

You will understand, however, that the realities of ICT in developing countries still raise a number of questions and concerns to the extent that the evolution of computer technology differs from one country to another, or even from developed to developing countries. Most target audiences in developing countries have only very scarce means at their disposal, implying obvious inequality of opportunities between rich and poor countries. This in turn implies better international cooperation in terms of technology transfer.

Meanwhile, the African Group remains confident that the traditional system of paperback publications are still an effective way for the countries concerned, in parallel to the process of increasing the use of computer technology, provided that this way, that I consider transient, will allow developing countries, to enjoy an equal and efficient use of ICT in the future.

Mr. Chairman,

To contribute to the discussions during this session, the African Group intends to raise the following points:

The African Group requests UNCTAD to carry out an evaluation study to African countries on the impact, relevance and better access to the documents published and distributed by UNCTAD for the attention of the target audiences such as policy makers, civil society , academia , the private sector , and of course as far as possible the general public.

To do this, the African Group considers that UNCTAD should include African expertise in those studies, also taking into account proposals, endeavours or projects from African capitals.

The African Group wishes to reiterate its position for UNCTAD to continue publishing all flagship reports in particular those on Africa, placing particular emphasis on the linguistic aspects of the documents released. Indeed, given the two major linguistic communities of the continent, the Anglophone and Francophone countries, it should be noted that the distribution of these reports in French is regularly delayed, which prevents one to exploit them as they should be. However, I note the exception of the accelerated translation of the 2013 Report on Economic Development in Africa, the French version of which was ready, in Word format, even before its media launch in July 2013. We would like to extend our congratulations to UNCTAD on this occasion. Africa pins her hopes on this kind of initiative becoming a final and permanent rule.

Moreover, the African Group also wishes for UNCTAD to quantitatively strengthen publications on commodities, which are still central to Africa and to developing countries also on the new and emerging issues related to enhancing the developing countries and in particular African countries capacities like those related to the use of ICTs and effects of new issues like those related to Environment e.g. climate change on developing countries.

The African Group finally wishes to call for more effective action, so that civil society and the African academia be more involved in the work of UNCTAD, this also enhances the outreach efforts to the main beneficiaries of the work of the UNCTAD.

In the context of the fundraising strategy, the African Group recognizes the importance of the constant contribution of the partner countries in the implementation of the communication and publishing strategy which is still vital in the current state of affairs. It has been reported that approximately 92 % of funding for our actions come from voluntary contributions from friendly countries and development partners; about 6% of the budget comes from UNCTAD. This means that our actions work through

voluntary contributions and in many circumstances it is earmarked funding. I would like to acknowledge this.

Mr. Chairman

The African group would like to support the conclusions and recommendations in the document dated 19 March 2013, and would also like to highlight the importance of the sustainability and predictability of resources available to secretariat to fulfil the Technical cooperation dimension of the work of the UNCTAD, the African group welcomes the efforts by some countries to provide clarity and initial predictability on the allocated resources, the group believes that predictability and sustainability of resources enhances the longer term planning and the effectiveness and full engagement and benefiting of developing countries of the Technical cooperation provided by the UNCTAD, also the group is of the view that earmarked funding sometimes does not really help in ensuring country ownership in developing countries, and also limits the full realization of the potentials of the UNCTAD and its ability to be fully responsive to the needs of the developing countries following a country driven country ownership approach.

We wish to express our gratitude. Africa will endeavour to further contribute to enhancing the impact of communications in particular those initiated by UNCTAD, in a context of great solidarity and mutual assistance for the benefit of all stakeholders.

This constitutes the common African position that I wanted to present in the context of this our session.

Mr. Chairman,

We know that since taking office in September 2013 as Secretary-General, Dr. Mukhisa KITUYI has unwaveringly been committed to the cause of the Organization, constantly associating his team and the Secretariat General in his efforts to achieve the objectives resulting from UNCTAD XIII, and to work with us, toward effective dissemination while integrating good communication practices. The African Group wishes to commend his great skills in presiding over the organization during his tenure.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish you every success in conducting your work.

Thank you for your kind attention.