



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

As of 4 February 2022

**Statement by His Excellency Mr. Chad Blackman
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Barbados on behalf of the
Group of 77 and China at the 83rd Session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan
and Performance Information**

7 to 9 February 2022

Chair of the 83rd Session of the Working Party Mr. Martin Zbinden of Switzerland,
Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Ms. Rebeca Grynspan,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to start by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over this 83rd session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Performance Information, as well as Mr. Natee Vichitsorasatra of Thailand on his election as Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur. We are confident that under your joint leadership we will have a productive meeting.
2. We also wish to express our gratitude to Ms. Rebecca Grynspan, for being with us at this meeting, and for giving us an insightful presentation outlining her vision for the work of UNCTAD. Secretary-General, we commend you on your consultative process in the lead up to this meeting, which we think demonstrates an exceptional level of transparency and willingness to honour the member-driven nature of the work of the UNCTAD. We are heartened by your presence in the Working Party, and encourage you to continue participating in these meetings in the future, as these are important fora for exchanges between the Membership and the Secretariat.
3. Chair, whilst we recognise that the Vision will be presented again during the Trade and Development Board meeting to be held later this week, we would like to seize the opportunity presented today to react to some of the elements that have outlined in the Secretary-General's statement.
4. Firstly, our Group welcomes the initiative to mainstream the development perspective relative to the issues of the environment and climate change at UNCTAD. We concur that UNCTAD is not the forum for the environment and climate change to be discussed in isolation, but rather a forum to engage meaningfully on the nexus between these issues, and trade and development. We therefore welcome the initiatives outlined by the Secretary-General to create a development-friendly strategic framework for the treatment of the environment and climate change issues at UNCTAD.
5. Secondly, we would like to whole-heartedly acknowledge the elements raised by the Secretary-General on working towards avoiding another lost decade for developing countries, and ensuring that there is no further derailment of progress toward our achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Developing countries continue to be plagued by a number of supply-side constraints in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with most not being able to match the level of recovery achieved by advanced economies, and therefore limiting their ability to utilise domestic

resource mobilization as a way of getting back on track to fulfil Agenda 2030. It is crucial that UNCTAD continues to be a voice for developing countries in various fora and institutions, ensuring that our plight is heard and acted upon, particularly in relation to the issues of debt and finance, including through promoting and protecting an enabling international environment which could lead to increasing flows of foreign direct investment to developing countries free of some impeding factors such as illegal unilateral coercive measures. It is also paramount that UNCTAD continues to advocate and raise awareness about the need for increased support for the most vulnerable.

6. In relation to the more institutional elements that have been raised by the Secretary-General in her presentation, we are seeking assurances that the core expertise devoted to the strategic areas of UNCTAD will be preserved. This applies particularly to each Division's work on statistics. Underpinning research and analysis with relevant empirical evidence and data is a necessary condition to generate meaningful policy recommendations and coherence in the organisation's work. Each division must therefore maintain statistical capacity as it relates to its core areas of work. The ability to reconcile this principle with the need for an independent statistical quality assurance function, should be one of the main objectives of the exercise that has been announced.

7. Turning to the programme plan for 2023. Our Group is cognisant of the in-built limitations of the template provided by New York, which reduces the scope for the programme plan to serve as a vehicle to convey a comprehensive vision or implementation plan for the organisation. This shortcoming reinforces the need for us to focus our efforts on the development of a plan of implementation in the very short term, particularly if we are to have a common understanding of the issues related to the implementation of the Bridgetown Covenant. It is important that in addition to the general vision that has been presented today, that we establish concrete actions and measurable milestones that will allow for the progression of the implementation of the Bridgetown Covenant as well as assist the Secretariat to effectively budget and assess implementation. This is one of the elements that we would hope to discuss as part of the request for a plan of implementation for the Bridgetown Covenant.

8. The G77 and China will actively engage with the relevant Divisions in the informal sessions starting this afternoon, in order to get clarity on a number of the issues that have been raised and that are reflected in the 2023 programme plan document.

9. Chair, we would like to take advantage of the presence of the Secretary-General to say a few words on the issue of resource mobilization, which she announced would be tasked to a dedicated team under her direct responsibility. There is natural link between resource mobilization and the draft technical cooperation strategy which we are set to discuss during this session of the Working Party. An organisation-wide resource mobilisation strategy is essential if the Secretariat is to bridge the gap between technical cooperation demands and supply. We would therefore be interested in hearing more information on the proposed resource mobilisation strategy and the timeline for its finalisation. We also consider it important for the Secretariat to take into consideration best practices within the United Nations system and beyond, regarding the organisational issue of resource mobilization.

10. We would like to reiterate what we said at the 82nd session of the Working Party on this same issue, namely that our priority is to ensure sufficient, stable, and predictable funding for UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities, in line with the priorities and needs of beneficiary countries. Moreover, we would like to reiterate that our Group would expect UNCTAD to be able to complement the excellent technical cooperation it offers with a more proactive role in helping beneficiaries match their needs and priorities with those of donors.

11. Previous discussions have led us to conclude that a better funding arrangement could be achieved by packaging technical cooperation requests in comprehensive multi-year, regional or thematic programmes and/or by seeking funding for unearmarked or soft-earmarked programmes. Our Group believes that the technical cooperation strategy would benefit from some of these elements, and in particular from being discussed and considered in conjunction with the fundraising elements that are not currently included in the draft technical cooperation strategy being considered at this meeting. We will be liaising with our development partners in order to consider the best way to deal with this agenda item during this session.

12. To conclude, our Group would like to reiterate its support to Secretary-General Grynspar, including through our interface with our New York Chapter to ensure the approval of UNCTAD's budget and the proposed initiatives of the Secretary-General. We are committed to transforming UNCTAD to a stronger organisation, which can effectively serve the interests of developing countries. We will continue our efforts and engagement Secretariat and with our development partners.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.