

**Statement by Her Excellency Dr. Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana on behalf
of the
African Group at the 83rd Session of the Working Party on the
Programme Plan and Programme Performance
7-9 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. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group, and we align with the statement made by Barbados on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. Chairperson, the African Group takes this opportunity to welcome and congratulate you on your appointment. The Group wishes to also congratulate Mr. Natee Vichitsorasatra of Thailand on his election as Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.
3. Allow me to also commend and extend our gratitude to the outgoing Chair, and one of our own **Ambassador Lucy Kiruthu, DPR of Kenya** and Vice Chair **Ms. Alison Urquizo of Peru** for their dedication and able leadership in guiding the work of the Eighty Second Session of the Working Party.
4. The African Group takes this opportunity to thank the Secretary General for her vision in the work of UNCTAD especially as it relates to implementation of the Bridgetown Covenant. Madame SG, we are grateful that the development of your vision and of the technical cooperation strategy are all done in the context of the pandemic and would have to be adapted to the uncertainties and unpredictability of the environment we live in.

5. We acknowledge the progress made in the development of the draft technical cooperation strategy, which will not be finalised and adopted at the next Trade and Development Board in the next couple of days. The African Group urges that the process of finalisation of the strategy be expedited, in full consultation with all member states and regional groups, for the strategy to be implemented in tandem with the Bridgetown Covenant at the earliest opportune.
6. We note with appreciation, that UNCTAD will continue under the technical cooperation strategy, to prioritise in terms of geographical scope, Africa, the least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies, as well as middle-income countries, who have been hit hard by the COVID-19 Pandemic.
7. Chairperson, among our priorities we believe that the new technical cooperation strategy will assist us mitigate the new emerging issues that continue to devastate the humanitarian and socio-economic status of our countries. Recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic and addressing existing inequalities and vulnerabilities remain our priority.
8. The African Group would like to reiterate the importance of cooperation and synergies between the different departments and divisions of the UNCTAD Secretariat in the area of technical cooperation and as it relates to recovery from the Pandemic to ensure efficiency of its work.
9. As I conclude, I would like to reiterate our gratitude for the continued support from UNCTAD, and to further assure of our support and commitment to the Secretariat, to ensure successful implementation of the Bridgetown Covenant.
10. I thank you