



Cambodia's Statement

83rd Session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Performance

7 to 9 February 2022

Mr. Martin Zbinden, Chair of 83rd Session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Performance,

Ms. Rebeca Grynszan, Secretary-General of UNCTAD,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. Firstly, I would like to join others in congratulating you, Chair and Mr. Natee Vichitsorasatra of Thailand on your election as Chair and Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur respectively for the 83rd session of the working party.

2. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Secretary General, Ms. Rebeca Grynszan, for being with us here today and share her direction and vision to strengthen the work of UNCTAD for the collective benefit of all member states. We fully agree with the Secretary General that we need to have a closer coordination in the UN system and that UNCTAD should play a central role as the focal point for trade and development and that the work we do here in all areas should be extended to influence the work of other agencies and forum within the UN system.

3. Chair, we align our statement with that of the Group of 77 & China, and the Asia-Pacific Group. At this juncture, however, I would like to make a few additional general comments from the perspective of a Least-Developed Country.

- First, we are all agreed that the least-developed countries are the most vulnerable group and that special support should be provided to this group of countries. The Bridgetown Covenant encapsulates the priorities of the LDCs by specifying the need for transforming economies through diversification. A number of developmental needs are important and chief among them is the need for structural transformation of the economy which is envisaged as a long term solution to solve the challenges faced by LDCs which include commodity dependent, low value-addition, lack of diversification and limited export basket, non-tariff measures among others. We commend the works of UNCTAD to provide study and analytic support such as on productive capacity and economic vulnerability and others related thematic studies that could be used to provide policy recommendations toward structural transformation.

- Second, I would like to also raise the issue of the rapid development of e-commerce and digital trade which has widened the digital divide between LDCs and other economies. This is a crucial topic as during the pandemic, we have seen a large increase in e-commerce activities in all parts of the world. In this regard, it is important to make sure that LDCs do not get left behind on the digital front and that assistance and support are provided to build digital infrastructure, technology transfer, strengthening the legal and regulatory framework, and capacity development to foster innovations to benefit from e-commerce. In relation to this, UNCTAD's assistance to support the implementation of Trade Facilitation Agreement has proven beneficial for LDCs in addition to the improvement in automation in trade facilitation and logistics system to support cross-border e-commerce.
- Third, we need to take into account the expected outcomes of the 5th UN Conference on Least Developed Countries to support the implementation of the next Program of Action for LDCs 2021-2030. As the Secretary General has pointed out, UNCTAD is an important forum for discussing trade and development issues and as such it should also be an important agency to support the implementation of the new program of action.

4. To conclude, Chair, Cambodia will continue to engage actively with all the divisions of UNCTAD and Member States in the work of UNCTAD to make it an even more stronger organization. We express our profound gratitude to the Secretary General of her strong commitment to support the LDCs. We also express our strong commitment to work and support the Secretary General's vision and to the effective implementation of the Bridgetown Covenant which is central to the developmental needs of the developing countries including LDCs.

5. With that note, I would like to thank you and we look forward to fruitful deliberation in the next parts of the program.