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**Opening Statement of GRULAC
Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance
22nd – 26th January 2024
Geneva, Switzerland**

President of the 87th Session of the Working Party

Deputy Secretary General of UNCTAD, Mr. Pedro Manuel Moreno

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and gentlemen

Jamaica delivers this statement on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC).

At the outset, the Group joins other delegations in congratulating you and other bureau members elected to preside over this 87th session of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance.

The Group thanks DSG Moreno for his opening remarks, which included the relevant updates on the implementation of activities and plans of UNCTAD since the last meeting of this Working Party.

Mr. President,

The Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance is of great importance to the region as it allows member states to shape the Organization's work program. As countries continue to grapple with a plethora of trade and development challenges and inadequate gains in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNCTAD's support to members must be oriented towards promoting inclusive and sustainable development and enhancing our responsiveness and resilience to crises. In this connection, we thank the UNCTAD Secretariat for preparing the draft programme plan and performance for the year 2025, which has taken into consideration the feedback received from members during the 86th Session of the Working Party, and guided is by the Bridgetown Covenant.

GRULAC notes the issues to be addressed in the 2025 program plan including SDG investment facilitation, reducing debt vulnerability, improving the availability of digital economy statistics, and promoting productive capacities and structural transformation. These are all areas of interest for the

region, and we call on the UNCTAD Secretariat to ensure extensive cross-fertilization and cooperation across the subprogrammes to guarantee effective delivery to member states as was mentioned in the program plan. As a region, we can attest to the positive work done by UNCTAD and we are pleased that it was captured in the program plan document. In 2023, the work of sub-programme 2 contributed to increased awareness of the importance of regional cooperation in achieving green transformation in Latin America and identifying key sustainable value chains in five countries, which exceeded the planned target of at least three countries. While we are delighted with the impact of these and other projects, we are of the view that more can be done to support the region further in addressing perennial trade and development challenges.

Mr. President,

We are acutely aware of the financial challenges being faced by the Organization and the wider UN system. In this regard, we note that the Office of the Secretary-General will be recruiting a fundraising expert to implement a more coherent and centralized approach towards funding. The Group looks forward to receiving further details on this recruitment process. The demand for UNCTAD's support from member states continues to increase, and as such, the Organization must find innovative ways to sustain and improve its delivery to members, including through partnerships and strategic donor engagement. We commend UNCTAD for its collaboration with other international organizations and further encourage cooperation with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) in a complementary manner. The Group wishes to highlight the joint Trade Pavilion at COP28 and thanks Secretary General Grynspan for her participation and leadership on this initiative. At the last meeting of the Working Party, it was announced that there will be the establishment of a Working Group on WTO and we are pleased there has been outreach to members and plans for a Trade *dialogue series* ahead of the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference.

At the organizational level, the Group welcomes and encourages efforts to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization namely:

- The establishment of an interdivisional task team mandated, inter-alia, to organize training for divisions and increase the outreach of UNCTAD;
- The development of a new organizational-level results framework by the Office of the Secretary-General and the aligning of indicators and reporting on results by the Divisions through the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting (IPMR) tool; and

DRAFT

- The establishment of interdivisional working groups on the environment and climate change, as well as an organizational-level strategy on disability inclusion.

GRULAC looks forward to further updates on these and other developments at future sessions of the Working Party.

Finally, Mr. President, as we have raised in previous meetings of the Working Party, we remain concerned about the lack of adequate geographical and gender balance within the Organization. We appreciate the efforts being undertaken to remedy this, and request periodic updates on this matter. As a Group, we are also concerned about the delays in recruiting personnel to fill posts within the respective Divisions and Units.

GRULAC is committed to advancing the work of UNCTAD, and you can be assured of the Group's continued support during our deliberations this week.