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Report of the Trade and Development Board on its seventieth session

Geneva, 19–28 June 2023



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Introduction

The seventieth session of the Trade and Development Board was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 19 to 28 June 2023. In the course of the session, the Board held 10 plenary meetings, the 1225th to the 1234th, in both virtual and physical formats.

At the opening plenary meeting, a moment of silence was observed in honour of the former Prime Minister of Italy following his passing.

I. Action by the Trade and Development Board

A. Productive capacities index for evidence-based policymaking

Agreed conclusions 577 (LXX)

The Trade and Development Board,

Recalling that the Bridgetown Covenant called for UNCTAD to formulate and promote policies fostering productive capacities and structural transformation in developing countries, working closely with other United Nations agencies, relevant international organizations and other stakeholders, including by matching needs with relevant support mechanisms and promoting dialogue among countries on their transformational efforts towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (TD/541/Add.2, paragraph 127 (u)),

Emphasizing the need to place productive capacities at the centre of a development planning and policymaking approach towards long-term, holistic and integrated interventions to accelerate inclusive growth and sustainable development,

Recognizing that countries need to prioritize developing new productive capacities, while simultaneously utilizing and maintaining existing ones,

1. *Welcomes* the productive capacities index as a practical tool to guide data-driven and evidence-based policy formulation aimed at fostering economy-wide productive capacities, structural economic transformation and resilience to external shocks;

2. *Encourages* member States that have engaged in the national productive capacities gap assessments and the secretariat to share the good practices and lessons learned in the process, as well as the advances in gearing their macroeconomic, industrial, agricultural and infrastructure policies towards developing economy-wide productive capacities, which is necessary to kick-start the process of structural economic transformation, while effectively addressing unemployment, poverty and the growing socioeconomic vulnerabilities;

3. *Stresses* that national policies and strategies and development partnerships and international support mechanisms are necessary for developing countries to build productive capacities, ensure diversification and structural economic transformation;

4. *Calls upon* UNCTAD, with the support of development partners, to continue supporting developing countries by building on ongoing operational activities such as the national productive capacities gap assessments and the carefully sequenced holistic programmes of productive capacities development, as well as to continue its collaboration and dissemination in the United Nations development system.

*1234th plenary meeting
28 June 2023*

B. Implementation of the outcomes of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Agreed conclusions 578 (LXX)

The Trade and Development Board,

Reaffirming that, in accordance with the Bridgetown Covenant, the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery needs to provide orientation for future work of the secretariat, deliberate on governance issues, ensure due transparency, accountability and performance measurement of secretariat's work, exchange on development issues and provide for policy dialogue and consensus-building (TD/541/Add.2, paragraph 27, bullet 3, and paragraph 118),

Recalling the need to meaningfully reinvigorate the role of UNCTAD as an important intergovernmental forum for consensus-building on trade and development (TD/541/Add.2, paragraph 110),

Reaffirming that reinvigoration of the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery could further improve the effectiveness and concrete impact of UNCTAD, including its contribution to the work of the United Nations General Assembly,

Recognizing that this reinvigoration process requires in-depth discussions, based on agreed performance assessments, which should culminate in time to be reflected in the outcome of the sixteenth session of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,

Emphasizing that this reinvigoration should be guided by the decisions captured in the Bridgetown Covenant, inter alia, paragraph 110 and paragraphs 118 to 123 (TD/541/Add.2),

1. *Decides* to engage in the reinvigoration of the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery, starting in the third quarter of 2023, to strengthen its decision-making and policy function, and its governance function, with the outcomes to be reflected in the sixteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development;

2. *Requests* the UNCTAD secretariat to prepare a non-paper detailing the background of the work of the various levels of the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery, to make arrangements for informal consultations, including through the support of relevant officials, and to inform of member States' progress in this regard at upcoming sessions of the Trade and Development Board;

3. *Confirms* that this reinvigoration will consider all levels and formats of the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery;

4. *Confirms* that the adoption of agreed conclusions, for the Trade and Development Board, could be part of the broader discussion on the reinvigoration of the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery, and notes the desire of agreed conclusions on a substantive agenda item of the seventieth regular session of the Board, to assess the impact of such outcomes.

*1234th plenary meeting
28 June 2023*

C. Other action taken by the Board

Productive capacities index for evidence-based policymaking

1. At its 1234th (closing) plenary meeting, on 28 June 2023, after consensus was reached, the Trade and Development Board adopted agreed conclusions on agenda item 7 (see chapter I, section A, above).

Implementation of the outcomes of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

2. Also at its 1234th plenary meeting, after consensus was reached, the Board adopted agreed conclusions, under agenda item 9, on the revitalization of the intergovernmental machinery (see chapter I, section B, above).

Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy

3. At its 1233rd plenary meeting, the Board took note of the report on the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy (TD/B/EDE/6/4), and endorsed the policy recommendations contained therein.

4. The representative of one regional group said that the session had followed the updated terms of reference, addressing the guiding questions and choice of panellists. He expressed interest in maintaining a hybrid mode for meetings to improve access for experts from capitals.

5. Another regional group and several delegates welcomed UNCTAD work on the digital economy along the three pillars and looked forward to continued engagement on electronic commerce (e-commerce), digitalization and data for sustainable development, as the digital economy was pertinent for inclusive development. Several delegates expressed support for UNCTAD work on measuring the digital economy to improve evidence-based policymaking.

6. Some regional groups welcomed the agreed policy recommendations in the report as good guidance for future work of member States and the secretariat.

Report by the Chair of the Advisory Body set up in accordance with paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action on the implementation of courses by the secretariat in 2022–2023 and their relevant impact; and the appointment of members of the Advisory Body

7. At its 1233rd plenary meeting, on 23 June 2023, the Trade and Development Board took note of the report of the Chair of the Advisory Body for 2022–2023.

8. Some regional groups and several delegates expressed appreciation for the activities of the UNCTAD secretariat in delivering six short courses, three regional courses and an e-course on building resilience and responding to shocks.

9. The representative of one regional group expressed gratitude towards the outgoing Chair of the Advisory Body and to UNCTAD for paragraph 166 capacity-building efforts that delivered trainings across the developing world, and recognizing Argentina, Egypt, Kenya, North Macedonia and Pakistan as host countries for regional courses. The curricula introduced participants to building resilience and responding to shocks. The programme was cross-divisional and cross-regional and collaborated with the regional economic commissions of the United Nations and national experts. He noted the valuable contribution of the paragraph 166 capacity-building programme and encouraged UNCTAD to continue delivering the trainings.

10. The representative of another regional group emphasized the importance of the paragraph 166 mandate. His group wished to encourage members of the Economic Community of West African States to nominate participants and be represented, to further benefit developing economies.

11. Several delegates, expressing appreciation to the host countries, noted the relevance of the UNCTAD trainings and short courses, enabling policymakers and Geneva-based delegates to better understand economic trends and formulate policies. They called on UNCTAD to continue delivering the programme in developing regions and to Geneva-based diplomats in Geneva, as it enhanced knowledge and built capacities.

II. President's summary

A. Opening plenary meeting

12. In his final remarks, the outgoing President (Latvia) of the Trade and Development Board noted that the efforts of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and her colleagues had shown that UNCTAD was a key element of the United Nations development system, with global reach and impact. Completing the revitalization of UNCTAD meant having an intergovernmental machinery that corresponded to the secretariat's capacity. UNCTAD technical cooperation had made concrete contributions to beneficiaries, boosting the capacity of developing countries on trade and development, including in engaging in multilateral processes. The analytical work of UNCTAD had stimulated reflection and discussion on key issues and could help the world move closer to where it should be. Member States had agreed on the importance of revitalizing the intergovernmental machinery, which had been one of his priorities.

13. He had engaged the membership and the secretariat and noted a shared commitment to a revitalized intergovernmental machinery so that UNCTAD could fully deliver on what it was created for. Revitalization required member States to contribute meaningfully, at minimum, to the broader intergovernmental work of the United Nations on development. The revitalization process was by nature intergovernmental and thus should be driven by member States. What remained outstanding in the revitalization of the intergovernmental machinery, pertained, first, to institutional issues, such as the purpose of each layer of the intergovernmental machinery and, in turn, whether to make changes to its structure and, consequently, whether work methods needed reconsideration. Second were issues pertaining to intergovernmental meeting outcomes, including the question of revitalizing negotiations at UNCTAD.

14. Ultimately, it was the membership's responsibility to chart the most constructive way to address those issues. He had attempted to engage constructively and gradually, to advance the process while allowing for building trust and comfort. He had thus proposed to begin at the current session of the Board with agreed outcomes on two agenda items. The aim was to begin to recognize that something important was at stake, particularly given the multifaceted challenges and interrelated crises being faced, and that the work affected peoples' lives. He noted three suggestions that were being implemented on an experimental basis or that could be implemented with the agreement of the membership. First, on more efficient use of time, at the current session, for example, the secretariat had opened up the speakers list early and recommended voluntary time limits. He urged regional coordinators and groups to be more efficient in their consultations and avoid unnecessary delays in reaching agreement. Second, managing meeting agendas should be more strategic. The

secretariat had grouped related agenda items together for consideration to increase complementarity and efficiency. Third, fostering improved continuity of work was needed. For example, the Board could begin with the early nomination of the incoming Bureau, perhaps three months in advance, so that the Bureau could engage actively in the preparations for an upcoming session.

15. He assured the incoming President of the Board of his full support during his tenure.

16. The incoming President (Pakistan) of the Trade and Development Board thanked his predecessor for his unifying role, important legacy of constructive engagement and contributions in revitalizing the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery. He intended to continue helping to unite the Board and catalysing constructive and fruitful engagement so that UNCTAD could be the transformative institution it was intended to be.

17. For more than three quarters of a century, the United Nations had stood for a better world, and in many ways it had succeeded. Yet never since the foundation of the United Nations had the world faced more severe interconnected and intersecting crises and potentially existential threats. And almost six decades ago, the international community gathered in Geneva so that the United Nations could play a stronger role in ensuring that developing countries could fully and meaningfully benefit from the global economic system as an agent of economic development.

18. The current fundamentally changed world called for unity and fundamentally different approaches. The answer to how to do things differently to achieve objectives and aspirations that remained valid lay in part in how the membership engaged and exercising courage and imagination in important processes. The international community would gather later in 2023 at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit to keep the attainment of the Goals on track in the wake of the pandemic and other crises. The Summit of the Future would follow in 2024, when UNCTAD would also celebrate its sixtieth anniversary, which represented an opportunity to understand successes and learn lessons to improve as an institution.

19. The UNCTAD secretariat was doing its part, yet the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD should also make an intellectual contribution. Innovations and intellectual contributions could serve as important inputs to preparations for the sixteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which had the potential to be one of the most consequential in its history. At the fourteenth session of the Conference, the membership agreed to move from decisions to actions. At the fifteenth session of the Conference, the membership agreed on the transformations needed “to move to a more resilient, digital and inclusive world of shared prosperity”. At the sixteenth session of the Conference, the membership had the opportunity to build on the momentum and move closer to fully realizing the potential of UNCTAD “to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples”. It was an opportunity to fully harness the revitalized intergovernmental machinery to play its role in the broader system to realize the transformative mission of UNCTAD.

20. Concerted efforts were required and, as seen since Bridgetown, the membership shared the commitment, spirit and drive to succeed. He intended to further catalyse the work, including by encouraging greater engagement by permanent representatives. He would undertake a series of initiatives to consolidate and harness the increasing enthusiasm for UNCTAD and continue to build on the work already under way and the efforts of his predecessor, and in partnership with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. He expressed his commitment and full support of her leadership of the institution.

Opening statement

(Agenda items 4, 9, 10 and 12)

21. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD recalled the multiple challenges the world faced, with cascading crises causing debt distress, poverty, hunger and geo-economic fragmentation. Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals was moving backwards, with worsening poverty, hunger and gender equality. Only 12 per cent of the Goals were on track, midway to the 2030 deadline. Many developing countries faced debt distress, with a significant portion of revenues going towards debt servicing. An estimated 3.3 billion people lived in a country spending more on debt servicing than on health and education.

22. She emphasized that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was at stake due to those challenges. Together with the United Nations and the multilateral system, UNCTAD currently had a crucial role to play. UNCTAD brought the perspective of the global South and worked on safeguarding supply chains, promoting multilateralism, delivering on the Bridgetown Covenant and assisting developing countries in transforming their economies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

23. Quantitatively, the visibility of UNCTAD grew by 24 per cent. Publications reached more than 1 million downloads for the first time. The website had reached more than 7.7 million visitors, and social media presence reached half a million followers. The momentum in 2023 was positive, with increased video filming and viewership numbers increasing by 31 per cent in six months. Publications were being launched for the first time with communications materials in Hindi, Swahili and Urdu, as well as in the six official languages of the United Nations. Qualitatively, the clearest examples were the successful operation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the parallel Memorandum of Understanding between the Russian Federation and the United Nations, which would reach one year of continued operation, and work through the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, which was providing much needed cohesion among UNCTAD, the United Nations Development Programme and the Department for Economic and Social Affairs in the United Nations approach for international financial reform and enabled support on finance issues to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, including in international forums such as the Group of 20, Group of 7 and upcoming Paris Summit.

24. Addressing issues raised at the previous Board session, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD informed the membership on publications procedures. The UNCTAD publications committee had been revamped and a more rigorous peer-review process had been implemented, which enabled working collectively towards more cohesive messaging. The working group on environment and climate change ensured that UNCTAD proposals and positions at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties were coherent and was currently coordinating UNCTAD engagement with other United Nations entities at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties. The gender committee was developing a strategic plan for UNCTAD work on gender and trade. The working group on the World Trade Organization was preparing a strategy of engagement. The Statistics Service was treating data as an integrated and cross-cutting resource and had contributed to cross-organizational work, such as leading the work on “beyond GDP” and a costing exercise on funding gaps for the Sustainable Development Goals.

25. She underscored her engagement with several regional groups, including discussions at the recent chapters meeting of the Group of 77 on focus areas for the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit, Summit of the Future and Third South Summit and meetings with the European Union as a key development partner. UNCTAD was also collaborating with small island developing States on a

forthcoming plan to better support those countries. She would continue to reinforce engagement with groups in New York, such as the African Group, and keep up the dialogue in Geneva and New York, including on forthcoming conferences on small island developing States and landlocked developing countries in 2024.

26. On implementation of the Bridgetown Covenant through results-based management, she outlined advances in developing the UNCTAD theory of change, overarching results framework and the ongoing refinement of indicators to measure progress in implementing the Covenant, with the aim of reporting on the results of the four transformations, and other mandates. She recalled that the regular budget proposal for UNCTAD, for 2024, was at the maintenance level. She emphasized the importance of extrabudgetary resources to ensure that requests for technical assistance were adequately funded and noted the ongoing process of recruiting a fundraising specialist.

27. She noted the positive developments for the Palestinian programme and funding to develop an automated business registration system for the Ministry of National Economy of the State of Palestine.

28. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD highlighted upcoming UNCTAD flagship reports and events in the second half of 2023, such as the *Technology and Innovation Report*, *World Investment Report* and *Economic Development in Africa Report*, as well as the UNCTAD World Investment Forum in Abu Dhabi and UNCTAD E-week in Geneva.

29. She noted ongoing coordination efforts as part of “One United Nations”, on three briefs of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on “beyond GDP”, international financial architecture reform and the digital compact, as well as a report on the global debt crisis. Finally, she expected to update the membership on the sixtieth anniversary of UNCTAD and events for 2024 at the next session of the Board.

B. High-level segment: Decarbonization opportunities and challenges in the blue economy

(Agenda item 2)

30. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD introduced the topic of the high-level segment, highlighting the significance of the blue economy. Forty per cent of the global population lived near coastlines, and the value of assets linked to oceans, such as fisheries, shipping lanes and tourism, was estimated at \$24 trillion. Yet oceans were suffering the consequences of climate change, and those negative effects impacted primarily the blue economy in countries and communities that, historically, had contributed minimally to greenhouse gas emissions and were under-equipped for adaptation. Decarbonization was fundamental, and trade could bolster technology transfer and provide access to environmental goods and services. A “blue deal” to increase investment in sustainable ocean-based goods and services and ensure global, fair and multilateral action would support addressing inequalities in access and financing. For example, addressing the interlinkages between sustainable development, the blue economy and the pernicious effect of plastics on oceans was urgent. Plastic substitutions could reduce plastic pollution by almost 20 per cent, increase the value of key commodities from the global South and generate employment. The blue economy had immense potential for South–South trade initiatives, to create low-carbon markets and build resilient value chains.

31. A four-member panel shared experiences related to decarbonization opportunities and challenges in the blue economy. The panel consisted of the Managing Director of Europêche; Chair of the Marine Environment Protection

Committee of and Representative of Liberia to the International Maritime Organization; Deputy Minister of Tourism of the Dominican Republic; and Coordinator of Research and Development of the Energy Marine Map, under Energía Marina and the Marine Energy Research and Innovation Centre, and Board Member, Pan-American Marine Energy Conference Energy Association.

32. One panellist described the challenges for European fishing industry to move towards a zero emissions target. Another panellist presented the International Maritime Organization objective of adopting a revised greenhouse gas strategy in July 2023 for the shipping sector, with the goal of phasing out CO₂ by 2050. Another panellist presented the success of the Dominican Republic strategy in decarbonizing the tourism sector focused on hotels, energy production, sustainable tourism communities and sargassum. Another panellist introduced different ongoing ocean renewable energy projects in Chile and Latin America, which enabled energy production and benefitted remote areas not connected to the grid.

33. Several regional groups and many delegates agreed that the blue economy was highly relevant and that protecting ocean biodiversity and reducing the impact of climate change were necessary. Many delegates recalled recent positive developments in the multilateral arena concerning the new high seas agreement, and some delegates stressed that more ambitious targets were in sight in current negotiations on plastic pollution. One regional group noted the expectation of a new strategy at the International Maritime Organization to phase out greenhouse gases by 2050 in the shipping industry, while several delegates noted the World Trade Organization agreement on ending harmful fishery subsidies. Some regional groups and several delegates agreed that decarbonization of the blue economy would require increased financial support, technology transfers and capacity-building, particularly for developing countries. One regional group and several delegates emphasized the relevance of UNCTAD work on the blue economy and in support of small island developing States and encouraged the institution to pursue efforts under its three pillars of work.

34. Many delegates and one regional group shared national or regional initiatives on the blue economy aimed at protecting the environment and biodiversity of oceans while fighting climate change.

35. Another delegate underlined the burden on port and maritime routes, and thus the increase in CO₂ emissions, due to measures taken against his country. Another delegate requested that UNCTAD study tourism in the Dead Sea and detail recommendations to develop sustainable tourism and a blue economy in the region, including the small-scale fishing sector.

C. General debate

(Agenda item 3)

36. The general debate took place on 19, 20 and 21 June 2023. The following speakers made statements: the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; the representative of the European Union, on behalf of the European Union and its member States; the representative of Canada, on behalf of the JUSSCANNZ group; the representative of Namibia, on behalf of the African Group; the representative of Thailand, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group; the representative of Nepal, on behalf of the least developed countries; the representative of Lebanon, on behalf of the Arab Group; the representative of Maldives, on behalf of small island developing States; the representative of Honduras, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries; the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence

of the Charter of the United Nations; the representative of China; the representative of Germany; the representative of France; the representative of Ukraine; the representative of Viet Nam; the representative of Hungary; the representative of Belarus; the representative of Bangladesh; the representative of the Philippines; the representative of Cambodia; the representative of Angola; the representative of India; the representative of Peru; the representative of Portugal; the representative of Trinidad and Tobago; the representative of Jamaica; the representative of Pakistan; the representative of Lebanon; the representative of Spain; the representative of Chile; the representative of Indonesia; the representative of Yemen; the representative of Zimbabwe; the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran; the representative of the State of Palestine; the representative of the Russian Federation; the representative of the United States of America; the representative of Japan; the representative of South Africa; the representative of Kenya; the representative of Cuba; the representative of Brazil; the representative of Nigeria; and the representative of Malaysia.

37. Many regional groups referred to the multiple cascading crises of climate change, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the war in Ukraine in relation to how they had set back the progress of development and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Several regional groups and many delegates highlighted the urgent and bold actions required for the multilateral system to pursue solidarity in cooperation and foster a more effective international system. Some regional groups and many delegates said that the systemic shocks experienced around the world were not the doing of one country, with the least developed countries the most vulnerable to those shocks. Many delegates acknowledged that enhanced cooperation and integration between developed and developing countries was needed currently more than ever. Some regional groups and many delegates stated their commitment to support the countries impacted.

38. Several regional groups and many delegates acknowledged the progress made in UNCTAD work under the three pillars of research and analysis, consensus-building and technical cooperation. Many regional groups recognized the need to strengthen and revitalize the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery to restore meaningful and substantive negotiations at UNCTAD and advance global consensus on trade and development. Many delegates also noted that revitalization would come at an opportune moment, in the lead up to the sixtieth anniversary of UNCTAD and the sixteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Many regional groups called on UNCTAD to continue implementing its mandate in line with the Bridgetown Covenant and to strengthen the focus on the trade and development needs of the least developed countries in accordance with the Doha Programme of Action. Several delegates expressed the need for a dedicated small island developing nations programme, with streamlined support and tangible outcomes.

39. In response, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD emphasized the importance of revitalizing the intergovernmental machinery and reaffirmed her support for efforts in that regard. She valued the support of member States on, among other topics, the high-level segment focus on the blue economy, the productive capacities index, the significance of gender, results-based management and evaluation, while highlighting the need for enhanced cooperation and integration between developing countries. She stressed that Africa needed economic diversification and support in overcoming commodity dependence and underscored the importance of integrating global value chains and transitioning to sustainable energy. She expressed gratitude for the valuable cooperation with some member States on fronts related to sustainable development and trade. She also emphasized the severe impact of cascading crises on 94 countries and 1.6 billion people, particularly in the areas of food and fertilizers, energy and finance, and stressed the need for new instruments and reforms in the

international financial architecture to address systemic shocks collectively and the vulnerability of developing countries. She highlighted the challenges of debt for many countries, with 52 countries facing difficulties on advancing public services and human development due to debt servicing. Finally, she stressed the continued efforts of UNCTAD towards a more resilient, equitable, just and sustainable world.

40. Several regional groups and many delegates recognized the work that UNCTAD had been contributing to the Global Crisis Response Group and its role in alleviating the food and fertilizer shortage through the Black Sea Initiative. Many delegates called for UNCTAD to continue work on reforming the international financial architecture through its involvement in international forums. That work would help to address their serious concerns concerning the vicious cycle of debt and the unsustainability of debt servicing. Some regional groups and many delegates welcomed the topic of the high-level segment on decarbonization opportunities. Many delegates mentioned that, despite the least developed countries being the least responsible for global emissions, those same countries were on the front lines of the climate crisis. The delegates called on UNCTAD to support them through the challenges related to sustainable energy transition. Several regional groups and many delegates recognized the key role that UNCTAD could play in assisting developing countries in enhancing their productive capacities. Enhanced productive capacities would facilitate structural transformation of economies through diversification, which would ultimately allow developing countries to integrate into global value chains and lessen their commodity dependence. Several regional groups and many delegates also highlighted the importance of bridging the digital divide and tapping the opportunities that lay in electronic commerce and digital transformation.

41. Several regional groups and delegates commended the efforts of UNCTAD to include gender in its work across all mandates but also called on UNCTAD to do more in that area. Trade should be more inclusive not only in its participation but also in the impact of trade reforms on women's well-being and gender inequality. Several other regional groups and delegates recognized UNCTAD work in producing an overarching results framework to assess institutional performance and enhance transparency and accountability. They emphasized that the ensuing positive influences on monitoring, reporting and evaluation could develop more trust between UNCTAD and member States, while also leading to more effective support.

42. One delegate said that the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam had long-term consequences for many countries. Some regional groups and one delegate said that the war in Ukraine was having devastating consequences for civilians, as well as for food security, energy security, finance and the environment.

43. In exercising the right of reply, another delegate said his country implemented the obligations under the Istanbul agreements. Nevertheless, only 7 per cent of Ukrainian cereals went to poor countries, and the level of food and fertilizers exports from the Russian Federation remained unsatisfactory.

44. In exercising the right of reply, one regional group stated that food prices dropped after European Union "solidarity lanes" and the Black Sea Initiative kicked in. According to export data, Russian grains and fertilizers continued to reach the global market, increasing fertilizer exports by 150 per cent in 2022. He also recalled that the Bridgetown Covenant included unilateral economic and financial measures but not coercive measures.

45. In exercising the right of reply, one delegate emphasized that, according to UNCTAD data, the Black Sea Initiative had exported 30 million tons of grain and foodstuffs, of which 64 per cent of wheat went to developing nations. The refusal of the Russian Federation to open a third port for food exports was contrary to the country's commitments, as was the continued threat to withdraw from the initiative.

46. In exercising the right of reply, another delegate stated that his country would continue to work with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Group of Seven countries and the broader international community to coordinate response measures and support Ukraine.

47. In exercising the right of reply, another delegate stated that his country could not accept the nuclear threat from the Russian Federation and urged the withdrawal of forces from the territory of Ukraine.

48. In his closing remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD reaffirmed the need for urgent and bold action to address challenges, such as the energy transition, decarbonization, debt, international financial architecture reform and bridging the digital gap. UNCTAD work would be guided by its three pillars and the Bridgetown Covenant. He emphasized the institution's commitment to trade and gender, support for small island developing States through a dedicated programme and assistance for the least developed countries in implementing the Doha Programme of Action. He emphasized the importance of aligning technical assistance with real needs and making the best use of available resources.

49. The President of the Board noted the rich discussion and suggestions throughout the debate. He noted the major milestones ahead to which UNCTAD could contribute in the lead up to the sixteenth session of the Conference.

D. *Technology and Innovation Report 2023: Opening Green Windows – Technological Opportunities for a Low-Carbon World*

(Agenda item 5)

50. In his introductory remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD emphasized that green windows of opportunity were time-bound and that developing countries should act quickly, with strong policy responses, to harness the full potential of green transformation. He called on member States to work in solidarity, cautioning that inaction could widen global inequalities.

51. The Director of the UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics presented the *Technology and Innovation Report 2023* and highlighted three pathways to seize the benefits of the green revolution. She stressed the importance of national policies, supportive trade rules, flexible intellectual property rights and stronger international cooperation to support developing countries to get on board the green revolution early.

52. A three-member panel made presentations on issues related to the focus of the report. The panellists were a Professor of Business Management, Department of Economics and Management, and Scientific Coordinator, Digital Manufacturing Lab, of the University of Padua, Italy; the Director of the Trade and Environment Division, World Trade Organization; and a Professor of Development Economics, Department of Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

53. One panellist emphasized the need for strengthening collaboration within global value chains and integrating sustainability with economic goals by means of technological solutions. Another panellist argued that trade in environmental goods and services could help fight climate change, highlighting the importance of aligning trade, development and climate agendas. Another panellist discussed how industrial policy could promote sustainable structural transformation and suggested building green coalitions to support policy implementation.

54. Several regional groups and delegates stressed the necessity of international cooperation to strengthen innovative capabilities in developing countries through supportive trade rules, development assistance and flexible intellectual property

rights. Some regional groups highlighted the importance of stable and predictable trade rules and intellectual property rights in incentivizing research and innovation. Another regional group and several delegates emphasized the need to facilitate technology transfer, and one delegate suggested that UNCTAD should play an active role in driving that agenda forward.

55. Some delegates underscored the importance of data governance, making progress in science, technology and innovation and adopting circular economy principles. One regional group raised concerns about gender inequality in science, technology and innovation, while some delegates expressed concern regarding the digital divide between and within countries. Several delegates noted the negative impact of geopolitical instability on science, technology and innovation development.

56. One delegate commended UNCTAD for the policy recommendations in the report and suggested that UNCTAD continue supporting member States in accelerating progress towards sustainable development.

57. Another delegate called on the World Trade Organization to present its actions at the United Nations to non-World Trade Organization members.

E. Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa

(Agenda item 6)

58. A representative of the UNCTAD secretariat presented the main activities in support of Africa, particularly research and technical assistance, and their positive results and impact in Africa.

59. The representative of one regional group welcomed UNCTAD research and technical assistance for Africa, particularly the assistance in relation to the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Sustainable Development Goals. He called on development partners to increase support to UNCTAD so that the institution could respond to the region's many needs. Another regional group underscored the need for integration of the productive capacities index into technical assistance activities. Requests for technical assistance from Africa to UNCTAD were increasing, which was a sign of confidence. The European Union–Africa partnership was illustrative of the support to Africa.

60. Another regional group welcomed the Agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area with the support of UNCTAD. Another regional group expressed appreciation for UNCTAD support to promote trade and development in Africa, as outlined in the Bridgetown Covenant, and called on donors to continue supporting UNCTAD activities in the region.

61. One delegate commended UNCTAD technical assistance on debt management and the productive capacities index and called for the expansion of technical assistance from UNCTAD. Another delegate noted the focus on economic transformation, addressing vulnerabilities, building resilience, improving competitiveness and the economic empowerment of women and entrepreneurs. Another delegate welcomed the European Union–UNCTAD Joint Programme for Angola and technical assistance on creative industries, illicit financial flows, rules of origin and trade facilitation. Another delegate emphasized her country's support for Africa in the key sectors of energy, water, services, infrastructure, tourism and development of the private sector. Partnerships had been established and one office was located in Addis Ababa and another office was planned in Douala, Cameroon.

62. One delegate recalled his country's strategic cooperation with Africa, doubling its official development assistance in 10 priority sectors. Another delegate commended UNCTAD technical assistance on building productive capacities.

Another delegate stressed that, as Africa was the cradle of humanity, the region deserved special attention and called for technology transfer and increased aid for UNCTAD technical assistance to Africa.

63. One delegate, welcoming UNCTAD technical assistance, recalled his country's partnership with Africa in several sectors, such as education (training of African students) and collaboration with Russian companies. He noted that, despite economic measures, his country increased exports to Africa of cereals and fertilizers. One regional group and one delegate noted that economic measures did not apply to cereals and agricultural products.

64. Thanking delegations for their support, a representative of the UNCTAD secretariat summarized discussions on the need to increase financial support for Africa activities, continue providing technical assistance in support of the African Continental Free Trade Area and use of research results to help countries in building productive capacities and address vulnerabilities. The secretariat would continue to share the results of UNCTAD activities in Africa.

F. Productive capacities index for evidence-based policymaking (Agenda item 7)

65. Under the agenda item, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD emphasized that productive capacities should be at the centre of national development policies, particularly as the least developed countries and small island developing States faced many challenges. The international community should support developing countries by reviewing development partnerships, to go beyond official development assistance, market access and technical assistance, and include transfer of technology and know-how, as well as building technological capabilities and innovations. The productive capacities index allowed policymakers to assess productive capacities, benchmark performance, monitor the effectiveness of past policies and improve policy choices. The index was also a complementary tool to assess the economic vulnerability of the least developed countries.

66. The Director of the UNCTAD Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes underlined the importance of using the productive capacities index as a powerful tool that enabled the least developed countries to draw up coherent development policies. The index could contribute to addressing structural vulnerabilities, lack of productive capacities, entrenched commodity dependence and structural transformation. The Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries recognized the productive capacities index as an evidence-based policymaking tool.

67. A panel presented their perspectives and experiences with the productive capacities index, illustrating the potential usefulness of the index to measure, evaluate and establish a coherent set of evidence-based objectives and development policies. The panel comprised the Associate Dean of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (China); the Acting Managing Director of the United Nations Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries; and the Ambassador of Angola, an UNCTAD beneficiary country.

68. The representative of one regional group recalled the many challenges facing the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. He expressed appreciation for the holistic approach of the second generation of the productive capacities index and urged members to work with the UNCTAD secretariat in using it.

69. Another regional group noted that the multidimensional index could look comprehensively at the different needs of countries and help chart a sustainable and inclusive development path. The productive capacities index could be used to strategically orient UNCTAD work across the three pillars, as well as specific country-focused work. He expressed interest in any experience in promoting the index in the United Nations development system, such as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. Another regional group welcomed the productive capacities index as a tool for a longer-term, holistic, programme-based approach and looked forward to hearing more about the work with Angola and other countries. Several regional groups expressed interest in understanding the operational value of the index, including how the approach would feed into the ongoing results-based framework would be measured and evaluated. The index could be enriched to also capture innovation and technology for all countries.

70. One regional group called for strengthening partnerships to improve productive capacities and achieve structural economic transformation. Another regional group noted the index's empirical approach, which allowed for evaluation and guided decisions for structural transformation. Another regional group drew attention to the economic crisis and its harmful impact, particularly on Haiti, and expressed support for the holistic approach of least developed country technical assistance. One delegate underscored the importance of cooperation between China and Africa, through the nine projects announced at the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation that had achieved remarkable results. One regional group confirmed the value of the Angola programme financed by the European Union as an example of a comprehensive approach facilitated by the productive capacities index.

71. Several delegates commended the productive capacities index, including the objectives, methodology and empirical approach, and commented on the quality of statistics and lessons already learned from the index, as well as the main challenges.

72. The Director responded to questions, emphasizing the issue of political will and commitment. National statisticians could use the productive capacities index and verify statistical data; UNCTAD would update data. For some panellists, the index could be used at different levels; it was an ambitious project, and academics could contribute.

G. Evolution of the international trading system and its trends from a development perspective

(Agenda item 8)

73. In his introductory remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD stated that the multilateral trading system should be better aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and more inclusive, facilitate structural transformation in developing countries and foster sustainable development. Trade policy could help address the global challenges of climate change and digitalization.

74. The Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization outlined the organization's efforts to promote development and assist developing countries in areas such as fishery subsidies and plastic pollution. He welcomed continued cooperation with UNCTAD and other partners.

75. A representative of the UNCTAD secretariat made a presentation that addressed trade trends from a development perspective. Despite global trade growth and poverty reduction, many least developed countries still did not participate adequately in trade and were dependent on commodities and financially vulnerable. Digitalization and decarbonization posed opportunities and challenges for gaining from global value chains.

76. Many regional groups and delegates agreed on the need to address inequalities, digitalization and climate change issues and the catalytic role of trade for development. Many delegates called for greater financial and technical support for developing countries. Some delegates stressed that integrating development into trade should consider the domestic context. Several delegates mentioned that green technology transfer and electronic commerce could be leveraged for development.

77. One regional group and several delegates expressed concerns about unilateral restrictive trade measures and their impacts on developing countries. One regional group and several delegates highlighted the legality and proportionality of the measures.

78. Some regional groups and several delegates stressed the role of international cooperation. Several delegates noted the potential of regional associations. One delegate called on countries to respect international agreements, while one regional group and some delegates stressed consideration of the needs of developing countries in trade negotiations. One delegate urged implementation of World Trade Organization decisions that were favourable for the least developed countries. One regional group and several delegates appreciated the support UNCTAD provided through research and policy recommendations. Several regional groups and one delegate welcomed intergovernmental discussions at UNCTAD, while several regional groups and some delegates noted technical assistance.

79. The secretariat representative took note of delegates' comments, saying that UNCTAD would continue working on analysing the missed opportunities of the multilateral trading system and issues such as gender equality and microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in trade.

80. A five-member panel discussion followed, comprising the Director of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, Economic Commission for Europe; Leader of the Shared Economic Prosperity Cluster, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; Director of the Regional Integration and Trade Division, Economic Commission for Africa; Officer-in-Charge of the International Trade and Integration Division, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; and the Director of the Trade, Investment, and Innovation Division, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The panellists spoke on the issues presented, providing regional perspectives.

81. One panellist noted that Asia and the Pacific, with China, India and Viet Nam, were leading the way. Notably, trade gains in the region had increased women's participation in the labour force. The trade boost from declining tariffs had been somewhat offset by increasing non-tariff measures. Furthermore, trade gains had contributed to increased greenhouse gas emissions, due to intense fossil fuel use and environmental standards that were not stringent.

82. Another panellist highlighted that the African Continental Free Trade Area was the greatest source of gains from trade. The region suffered from climate change without being a major contributor to global emissions. The international trading system had not always favoured Africa. During the era of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, only three African countries were involved in the negotiations. Since 1995, Africa's voice was increasingly heard, with 43 African countries having become members of the World Trade Organization.

83. Another panellist stated that the Arab region had experienced increased trade since 1995 due to integration into the global trading system and a proliferation of regional trade agreements. Increased trade had been translated into economic achievements, such as economic growth and job creation. However, additional challenges included the gender employment gap and increased inequality.

84. Another panellist highlighted that, despite a heterogeneous combination of economies in transition and resource dependent countries, the region had undergone a series of reforms since 1995. Those yielded tangible results in countries such as Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and others. Her regional commission was working in those countries to address challenges such as resource extraction, trade facilitation for landlocked countries and digitalization.

85. The final panellist outlined how countries in Latin America and the Caribbean had engaged in reforms since 1995 to fully benefit from commodity supercycles. However, many reform benefits had faded and challenges, such as poverty, had returned. Currently, Latin American countries did not retain much value added and were engaged mainly in forward linkage activities and acting as service providers to firms located abroad.

86. During discussions, one delegate requested more support to vulnerable countries regarding extreme climate events and debt management. Another delegate raised the obstacles faced at the World Trade Organization to addressing development, which resulted in many African countries turning to regional trade agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Area.

87. In concluding, the panellists identified the graduation of least developed countries, digital economy, continental integration, green economy, circular economy, gender, investment and innovation as priority areas.

H. Closing plenary meeting

88. The representative of one regional group welcomed the outcomes, namely, the agreed conclusions, and thanked the membership for the flexibility exercised during the process until reaching consensus that addressed challenges that member States wanted to overcome and would welcome the same spirit in the future. With regard to agenda item 9, he specified that the mention of the substantive item and, similarly, of the assessment of the impact of outcomes, in paragraph 4 of the agreed conclusions, which stated, “notes the desire of agreed conclusions on substantive agenda item”, referred only to the productive capacities index agreed at the current session. Thus, he noted that, for group, the wording did not set a precedent to require assessment of other outcomes in the future. Another regional group and several delegates concurred with the understanding that the wording in the agreed conclusions did not set such a precedent.

89. The representative of another regional group noted that the current session of the Board had been substantial. Many elements observed indicated a desire and willingness of the entire membership, and the secretariat, to make the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery work better and be more impactful. The membership had engaged in topics such as the blue economy, the restored trade agenda item and the productive capacities index, which demonstrated the value of the Board when it engaged in substance. The annual report presented was a good attempt to improve transparency, accountability and results-based management by the secretariat. He noted the important compromises reached, most notably on the two agreed conclusions, and recognized the flexibilities and leadership demonstrated by the regional coordinators directly involved in the process. He was pleased that the membership managed to overcome challenges and arrive at the outcome reached. He commended the work of the secretariat, which worked as a true facilitator of the discussions. On the outcome, he highlighted that it had been an exercise in trust building as much as it was paving the direction for the road ahead. For trust to be built and nurtured, respect and understanding of respective positions, as well as of tentative agreements reached, were paramount. All members should invest more for the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD to be credible and impactful. The work

was only beginning. The agreed outcomes set ambitious objectives ahead, even if it should be highlighted that the outcomes did not set a precedent for potential future Board outcomes. The task ahead was to define how the revitalization of the intergovernmental machinery would look in practice and enshrine that in the outcome of the next ministerial conference. His group was strongly committed to that ambitious process to ensure a better and impactful UNCTAD fit for the challenges in the final stretch towards the 2030 Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

90. The representative of another regional group expressed appreciation for the work of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and her team to help improve the decision-making, programming and policy functions of UNCTAD. At the session, issues such as climate change, green technologies, productive capacities, capacity-building in Africa and the ocean economy had been discussed, and updates were provided on the implementation of the outcomes of the fifteenth session of UNCTAD and the preparatory process for the sixteenth session. Her regional group would continue to be fully engaged. The membership had agreed to go through a negotiation process to find common ground for agreed conclusions, primarily as a trust building exercise. In the future, she hoped that negotiation partners maintained a focus on how to reduce poverty and ensure that trade could lead to sustainable development outcomes for all people in developing countries.

91. One delegate thanked the President of the Board for facilitating the work and helping to build trust between regional groups. Agreed conclusions had been achieved in accordance with the consensus-building mechanism of UNCTAD. Despite some misunderstandings on some controversial issues, they had managed to overcome them, which reinforced the importance of listening and understanding the concerns of all. Good understanding and transparency were of utmost importance to make progress. He concurred with the need for mutual respect. His delegation wanted to reinvigorate the work of the UNCTAD and, therefore, overcoming all obstacles was needed in order to build trust. Finally, he assured delegations that all had worked with good will in order to achieve an outcome. That was the objective of all.

92. Another delegate noted positive moments. He recalled the founding principle of UNCTAD in support of the equal integration of developing countries into the multilateral trading system. He welcomed the substantive discussion on the key issue of trade, which he would like to see regularly on the agenda, with coordinated policy recommendations and conclusions. He also noted the inclusion in the agenda of the productive capacities index and developing it for developing countries in line with policies for resilience and diversification of exports. All were steps in the right direction, which would facilitate strengthening of the economic sovereignty of developing countries. He also noted the agreed conclusions on an intergovernmental machinery that indicated a renewed interest in intergovernmental work at UNCTAD. Consultations slated for the third quarter of 2023 on this issue should be considered as a structural component of preparing for sixteenth session of the Conference. He also welcomed the new Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations and group coordinator. He expressed confidence that the Group would make a positive, substantive contribution, particularly in preparations for the next quadrennial conference.

93. The representative of another regional group highlighted the commitment to the development of Africa, recognizing the crucial role that UNCTAD played in achieving Sustainable Development Goals. She supported the agreed conclusions of the session, reiterating a call on UNCTAD, along with development partners, to continue supporting developing countries by building on ongoing operational activities, such as national productive capacities and the programme of productive capacity development, as well as to continue collaboration within the United Nations development system.

94. Welcoming the agenda items discussed at the session, one delegate expressed support for UNCTAD to continue to retain the topics in future agendas. He also expected the Board to play its implementing role as discussed and decided at the last conference. He noted the way forward for the sixteenth session of the Conference and sought formal, constructive cooperation, as at the current session, for the next course of negotiations.

95. Another delegate welcomed the two agreed conclusions, saying that the outcomes demonstrated the good faith and flexibility of all members. The agreed conclusions could strengthen the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD, and she looked forward to cooperation in the future.

96. In his closing remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD noted that the discussions were substantive and timely. The secretariat was encouraged by the quality and degree of participation in the debates and aimed for an even stronger high-level segment in 2024. The secretariat would also ensure that a background paper would be made available on time for the restored trade agenda item, to enhance the exchange in future sessions. The Board session marked an important step in revitalizing the intergovernmental machinery. The secretariat recognized the efforts of the President and member States to discuss matters frankly and find common ground. The two sets of agreed conclusions beyond the traditional topics adopted reflected the commitment and willingness to revitalize the institution. As promised by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, the secretariat would do its best to support the efforts and implement the mandates of the membership. The agreed conclusions on the productive capacities index reflected intergovernmental consensus on one of the most innovative UNCTAD products in recent years and was an area that drew on all three pillars of work. The exchange on the index also allowed for further improvements, such as the integration of a gender dimension.

97. Moreover, two procedural innovations were introduced, namely, opening up the speakers list for debates in advance and the combined consideration of related agenda items into one plenary meeting. There were lessons to be learned, and the secretariat looked forward to improving and refining further the working methods for the forthcoming executive session. The Board also set the groundwork for moving ahead, so that the sixteenth session of the Conference could be one of the most consequential in years and consolidate the place of UNCTAD in the development machinery of the United Nations, as a major United Nations conference on development, which would also enable UNCTAD to make important contributions to other major United Nations conferences and summits on development and related processes in New York.

98. The President of the Board thanked all members for their commitment, trust and confidence in him in steering the work of the Board. The progress made was only possible when all members met halfway. At the same time, the session was just the beginning of what had been referred to as a trust building exercise. In the weeks and months ahead, he would endeavour to play whatever role possible to further build trust and in the work ahead, including the revitalization of the intergovernmental machinery. Beyond that, he intended to focus on finding space to improve working methods. He would thus be engaging the membership in the months ahead.

III. Procedural and related matters

A. Opening of the session

99. The seventieth session of the Trade and Development Board was opened on 19 June 2023 by Mr. Bahtijors Hasans (Latvia), outgoing President of the Board at its sixty ninth session.

B. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1 (a))

100. At its 1225th (opening) plenary meeting, on 19 June 2023, the Trade and Development Board elected Mr. Khalil ur Rahman Hashmi (Pakistan) President of the Board at its seventieth session.

101. Also at its 1225th plenary meeting, on 19 June 2023, the Board undertook the election of officers to serve on the Bureau of the Board at its seventieth session. Accordingly, the elected Bureau was as follows:

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Khalil ur Rahman Hashmi (Pakistan)
<i>Vice-Presidents:</i>	Mr. Rui Macieira (Portugal)
	Mr. Bahtijors Hasans (Latvia)
	Mr. José R. Sánchez-Fung (Dominican Republic)
	Mr. Héctor Constant (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)
	Mr. Febrian A. Ruddyard (Indonesia)
	Mr. Cleopa Mailu (Kenya)
	Ms. Anna Vitie (Finland)
	Mr. Andrei Rusu (Romania)
	Mr. Jackie Ndombasi Mboyo (Angola)
	Ms. Karin Goebel (Germany)
<i>Rapporteur:</i>	Mr. Paul Bekkers (Kingdom of the Netherlands)

102. Following established practice, the Board agreed that the coordinators of regional groups of UNCTAD would be fully associated with the work of the Bureau of the Board.

103. One delegate expressed confidence that the newly elected members of the Board would make a positive contribution to its work. He recalled, however, one year earlier, his delegation had joined the consensus to support the election of the outgoing President of the Board. It was a difficult decision but was taken in the interest of harmony in the work of the Board. His delegation was currently faced with a similar challenge: the approval of two representatives from Group D as members of the Bureau of the Board. His delegation had decided not to object to the election of the Bureau at the opening, guided by the same considerations in 2022: a deep respect for UNCTAD and ensuring that counterproductive politicization of the work of the Board was not allowed. He thus expressed the hope that the representatives of Group D would work towards consensus in the work of the Bureau and not foment future dividing lines and dissent. In addition, given the variety and diversity in Group D, he considered that the Group was no longer relevant for procedural and substantive work. While he could not propose a solution, he wanted to draw the matter to the attention of the members of the Board and the secretariat.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the session

(Agenda item 1 (b))

104. Also at its 1225th (opening) plenary meeting, the Trade and Development Board adopted the provisional agenda for the session, as contained in document TD/B/70/1, but amended to reflect agreement on the topic of the high-level segment (see annex I).

D. Adoption of the report on credentials

(Agenda item 1 (c))

105. At its 1234th (closing) plenary meeting, on 28 June 2023, the Trade and Development Board adopted the report of the Bureau on the credentials of representatives participating in the seventieth session of the Board, as contained in document TD/B/70/L.2.

E. Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy

106. At its 1233rd plenary meeting, on 23 June 2023, the President of the Board recalled that the topic, guiding questions and provisional agenda of the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy had been approved through a silence procedure that concluded on 16 June 2023 and would be included in an annex to the report of the current session (annex II).

107. One regional group expressed support for the agreed topic of the next session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts and further discussions on leveraging digitalization for sustainable development.

F. Provisional agenda of the seventy-fourth executive session of the Trade and Development Board

(Agenda item 13)

108. At its 1234th (closing) plenary meeting, on 28 June 2023, the Trade and Development Board approved the provisional agenda of the seventy-fourth executive session of the Board, as contained in a non-paper (annex III).

G. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters

(Agenda item 14)

Report by the Chair of the Advisory Body set up in accordance with paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action on the implementation of courses by the secretariat in 2022–2023 and their relevant impact; and the appointment of members of the Advisory Body

109. At its 1233rd plenary meeting, on 23 June 2023, the Board elected the members of the Advisory Body for a period of one year, for 2023–2024, as follows: Mr. José R. Sánchez-Fung (Dominican Republic), Mr. Muhammadou Kah (Gambia), Mr. Ali Bahreini (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Cleopa Mailu (Kenya) and Mr. Alfredo Suescum (Panama).

110. The Board also agreed that, in accordance with past practice, the President of the Board would chair the Advisory Body for the same period.

111. At its 1234th (closing) plenary meeting, on 28 June 2023, the Board further elected as members of the Advisory Body, for 2023–2024, Ms. Faouzia Boumaiza-Mebarki (Algeria) and Ms. Teuta Agai-Demjaha (North Macedonia).

Designation of intergovernmental bodies for the purposes of rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the Board

112. At its 1234th (closing) plenary meeting, on 28 June 2023, the Board approved one new application from the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization, as

contained in document TD/B/70/R.2, to be granted status with UNCTAD. The organization would be added to the list of intergovernmental bodies.¹

Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board

113. Also at its 1234th plenary meeting, on 28 June 2023, the Board approved two applications, from the Women's International Shipping and Trading Association, as contained in document TD/B/70/R.1, to be granted observer status with UNCTAD under the special category, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, as contained in document TD/B/70/R.3, to be granted observer status with UNCTAD under the general category.²

Review of the calendar of meetings

114. Also at its 1234th plenary meeting, on 28 June 2023, the Board approved the calendar of meetings for the remainder of 2023 and the first half of 2024, as contained in a non-paper dated 20 June 2023.³

Review of the lists of States contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX)

115. At its 1234th (closing) plenary meeting, the Board noted that there was no action to be taken with regard to the membership list.⁴

Administrative and financial implications of the actions of the Board

116. At its 1234th (closing) plenary meeting, on 28 June 2023, the Board was informed that the actions taken at its seventieth session had no additional financial implications.

H. Other business

(Agenda item 15)

117. At its 1234th (closing) plenary meeting, the Board recalled its approval of the topic and guiding questions for the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development, following a silence procedure that concluded on 26 April 2023, and decided to include them in an annex to the report of the current session (annex IV).

I. Adoption of the report

(Agenda item 16)

118. At its 1234th (closing) plenary meeting, on 28 June 2023, the Trade and Development Board adopted its report which would contain the President's summary on all substantive items, the agreed conclusions adopted and other action taken by the Board, including on procedural and related matters, as well as reflect the proceedings of the closing plenary meeting. The Board further authorized the Rapporteur, under the authority of the President, to finalize the report to the General Assembly as appropriate, taking into account the proceedings of the closing plenary.

¹ To be issued as document TD/B/IGO/LIST/12.

² The updated list will be issued as document TD/B/NGO/LIST/28.

³ The official calendar of meetings will be issued as document TD/B/INF.257.

⁴ The current membership list is contained in document TD/B/INF.255.

Annex I

Agenda of the seventieth session of the Trade and Development Board

1. Procedural matters:
 - (a) Election of officers
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the session
 - (c) Adoption of the report on credentials.
2. High-level segment: Decarbonization opportunities and challenges in the blue economy
3. General debate.
4. Annual report of the Secretary-General.
5. *Technology and Innovation Report 2023: Opening Green Windows – Technological Opportunities for a Low-Carbon World.*
6. Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa.
7. Productive capacities index for evidence-based policymaking.
8. Evolution of the international trading system and its trends from a development perspective.
9. Implementation of the outcomes of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
10. Preparatory process for the sixteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
11. Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy.
12. UNCTAD contributions to the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields.
13. Provisional agenda of the seventy-fourth executive session of the Trade and Development Board.
14. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters:
 - (a) Report by the Chair of the Advisory Body set up in accordance with paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action on the implementation of courses by the secretariat in 2022–2023 and their relevant impact; and the appointment of members of the Advisory Body
 - (b) Designation of intergovernmental bodies for the purposes of rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the Board
 - (c) Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board
 - (d) Review of the calendar of meetings
 - (e) Review of the lists of States contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX)
 - (f) Administrative and financial implications of the actions of the Board.
15. Other business.
16. Adoption of the report.

Annex II

Topic, guiding questions and provisional agenda of the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy

Topic

Building digital readiness: From assessments to implementation

Guiding questions

1. What are the main challenges for developing countries to engage in and benefit from e-commerce and the digital economy?
2. What are good practices and tools for effective implementation of policy measures at the national level to overcome the main challenges? What is the role of national Governments, agencies, United Nations resident coordinator offices and others in this process?
3. How can international cooperation help enable greater benefits from e-commerce and digital trade?
4. How can international partnerships and coordination for digital cooperation help to accelerate progress in building readiness for e-commerce and the digital economy?

Provisional agenda of the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Building digital readiness: From assessments to implementation.
4. Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy.
5. Provisional agenda of the eighth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy.
6. Adoption of the report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy on its seventh session.

Annex III

Provisional agenda of the seventy-fourth executive session of the Trade and Development Board

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work.
2. Interdependence and development strategies in a globalized world.
3. Investment for development: Investing in sustainable energy for all.
4. Economic development in Africa: The potential of Africa to capture technology-intensive global supply chains.
5. UNCTAD contribution to the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries.
6. Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people.
7. Report of the Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance.
8. Provisional agenda of the seventy-fifth executive session of the Trade and Development Board.
9. Other business.
10. Report of the Trade and Development Board on its seventy-fourth executive session.

Annex IV

Topic, guiding questions and provisional agenda of the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development

Topic

Delivering development finance to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Making development finance contribute to environmentally sound industrialization

Guiding questions

1. What policies, initiatives and instruments (domestic, regional and international) can be considered to promote and facilitate inclusive and sustainable industrial development and climate transition in developing countries?
2. What best practices can be identified for supporting sustainable business models and their related challenges?
3. How can international cooperation support structural transformation and aid countries to identify and leverage finance that contributes to the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement objectives?

Provisional agenda of the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Delivering development finance to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Making development finance contribute to environmentally sound industrialization.
4. Provisional agenda of the eighth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development.
5. Adoption of the report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development on its seventh session.

Annex V

Attendance*

1. Representatives of the following States members of the Trade and Development Board attended the session:

Albania	Jamaica
Angola	Japan
Argentina	Jordan
Austria	Kazakhstan
Bangladesh	Kenya
Barbados	Kuwait
Belarus	Kyrgyzstan
Belgium	Latvia
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Lebanon
Brazil	Lesotho
Bulgaria	Lithuania
Burkina Faso	Luxembourg
Cambodia	Madagascar
Canada	Malawi
Chile	Malaysia
China	Mauritius
Colombia	Mexico
Congo	Morocco
Costa Rica	Mozambique
Côte d'Ivoire	Namibia
Croatia	Nepal
Cuba	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)
Cyprus	Nicaragua
Czechia	Nigeria
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	North Macedonia
Denmark	Pakistan
Djibouti	Panama
Dominican Republic	Peru
Ecuador	Philippines
Egypt	Poland
Estonia	Portugal
Ethiopia	Republic of Korea
Finland	Republic of Moldova
France	Romania
Gabon	Russian Federation
Gambia	Rwanda
Germany	Serbia
Ghana	Slovenia
Greece	South Africa
Guyana	Spain
Honduras	Sri Lanka
Hungary	State of Palestine
India	Sudan
Indonesia	Switzerland
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Syrian Arab Republic
Iraq	Thailand

* This attendance list contains registered participants. For the list of participants, see TD/B/70/INF.1.

Ireland	Togo
Italy	Trinidad and Tobago
Türkiye	Tunisia
Uganda	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Ukraine	Viet Nam
United Republic of Tanzania	Yemen
United States of America	Zambia
Uruguay	Zimbabwe

2. The following members of the Conference not members of the Board attended the session:

Bahamas
Brunei Darussalam
Cabo Verde
Holy See
Maldives
Samoa

3. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

Common Fund for Commodities
European Union
Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
Organization of Islamic Cooperation

4. The following United Nations organs, bodies and programmes were represented at the session:

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
Economic Commission for Africa
Economic Commission for Europe
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
United Nations Environment Programme

5. The following specialized agencies and related organizations were represented at the session:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
International Maritime Organization
World Bank Group
World Trade Organization

6. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the session:

General category
Civil Society Coalition
International Network for Standardization of Higher Education Degrees
Village Suisse ONG