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Report of the Trade and Development Board on its sixty-eighth session

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 21 June to 2 July 2021

Report to the United Nations General Assembly



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Introduction

The sixty-eighth session of the Trade and Development Board was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 21 June to 2 July 2021. In the course of the session, the Board held 10 plenary meetings, the 1206th to the 1215th, in both virtual and physical formats. Informal negotiations of the Preparatory Committee for the fifteenth session of the Conference were conducted between 25 June and 2 July 2021 and reported on at the closing plenary meeting.

I. Action by the Trade and Development Board

A. Least developed country priorities for the road to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Agreed conclusions 564 (LXVIII)

The Trade and Development Board,

Recognizing the importance of strengthened productive capacities and complementary domestic policies for achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the least developed countries,

Noting that countries with a broader and deeper set of productive capacities are better positioned to face the effects of domestic and external shocks,

Noting that the recent pandemic has confirmed that there is a need for global action for recovery, requiring coherent and comprehensive approach and measures, reflecting especially the needs of the least developed countries in the fields of trade, finance, technology and capacity-building, to effectively address the root causes of the slow progress of the least developed countries towards their graduation, smooth and sustainable transition and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Emphasizing that the least developed countries, by developing productive capacities, including trade and investment facilitation capacities, will be better positioned to enter and compete in international markets in goods and services, especially in more sophisticated value added goods and beyond primary commodities, and better leverage technology and innovation,

1. *Recommends* that, given the slow development of productive capacities in the least developed countries, the forthcoming programme of action to be adopted during the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, for the decade 2022–2031, should espouse productive capacities as the overarching organizing framework;

2. *Encourages* UNCTAD to continue to contribute to the implementation and evaluation of the new programme of action for the least developed countries, including by assisting the least developed countries in identifying and implementing domestic policies that will boost their productive capacities, while ensuring social, economic and environmental sustainability and inclusion, including for women and youth.

*1215th plenary meeting
2 July 2021*

B. Report of the Preparatory Committee to the fifteenth session of the Conference

Method of work of the Preparatory Committee from 2 July 2021

Decision 565 (LXVIII)

At its 1215th (closing) plenary meeting, on 2 July 2021, the Trade and Development Board agreed on a method of work for the negotiations of the Preparatory Committee for the period from 2 July 2021 to the opening of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. First, the aim of the meeting of the Preparatory Committee scheduled for 19 July 2021 would be to gavel ad referendum all paragraphs that could be resolved primarily through adjustments in the language used in drafting. Between 2 and 19 July 2021, informal-informal negotiations should continue. Second, the aim would be to have a clean draft negotiating text for endorsement at the end of the thirty-second special session of the Board, to be held from 6 to 8 September 2021. To that end, on 25 and 26 August 2021, the Chair of the Preparatory Committee would have a series of “confessionals” at which the Friends of the Chair would work with delegates to identify areas of convergence and divergence in relation to outstanding issues. Delegates could begin to share their views on outstanding issues prior to those dates. Based on the feedback from the confessionals, the Chair and the Friends of the Chair would engage in facilitation to attain the aim of a clean draft negotiating text by the close of the special session on 8 September 2021. As the introduction, chapter I and chapter II had been largely resolved, the allocation of specific remaining paragraphs to each Friend of the Chair would be determined after 19 July 2019. The Chair and two Friends of the Chair (Argentina, Ireland) would facilitate the remainder of chapter III. The two other Friends of the Chair (Lebanon, Panama) would facilitate the remainder of chapter IV.

C. Other action taken by the Board

High-level segment

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures: Preparatory meeting on the road to the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Least developed country priorities for the road to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

1. At its 1215th (closing) plenary meeting, on 2 July 2021, the Trade and Development Board endorsed the agreed conclusions on agenda item 2 (b), as circulated to the membership on 1 July 2021 (see chapter I, section A, above).

Report of the Preparatory Committee to the fifteenth session of the Conference

2. Also at its 1215th plenary meeting, the Board approved the method of work of the Preparatory Committee from 2 July 2021 to the opening of the fifteenth session of the Conference (see chapter I, section B, above).

3. The President of the Trade and Development Board, in her role as Chair of the Preparatory Committee, presented an oral report on progress on the draft negotiating text for the fifteenth session of the Conference. An additional 22 paragraphs had been agreed ad referendum during the sixty-eighth session of the Board. She further shared her assessment of the progress made to date and of the work that was pending. She noted that, while most chapters of the draft negotiating text could be resolved by changes in drafting, chapter IV was prospective in substance and aimed at seeking to make UNCTAD a stronger institution that required facilitation. Thus, she proposed the method of work to pursue in finalizing negotiations.

Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development

4. At its 1213th plenary meeting, the Board took note of the report on the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development, as contained in document TD/B/EPD/4/3.

Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa

5. At its 1212th plenary meeting, on 24 June 2021, the Board took note of the report by the UNCTAD secretariat (TD/B/68/2).

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 2020–2021 and their relevant impact; and the appointment of members of the Advisory Body

6. At its 1213th plenary meeting, on 24 June 2021, the Trade and Development Board took note of the report of the Chair of the Advisory Body for 2020–2021.

7. The representatives of several regional groups and many delegates expressed appreciation for the capacity-building activities delivered by the UNCTAD secretariat through regional, interregional pilot and short courses on international economic issues. They welcomed the fact that the seven short courses delivered in the reporting period had incorporated the economic ramifications of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in updated curricula. The interregional platform of the paragraph 166 programme brought together policymakers, allowed for follow-up training and the sharing of cross-regional perspectives. They looked forward to the next interregional course as soon as the health and travel situations permitted.

8. Regional groups and delegates welcomed the selection of Argentina and Pakistan as new multi-year venues for future regional courses of Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific, respectively. They called for the continued delivery of the programme in developing regions and to Geneva-based diplomates to enhance knowledge and build capacity, recognizing the high quality of all courses under the paragraph 166 programme.

9. One regional group emphasized the importance of the paragraph 166 mandate and called for the further strengthening of the UNCTAD programme, by means of additional human and financial resources.

II. President's summary

A. Opening plenary meeting and general debate

Opening statements

10. In his final remarks, the outgoing President (Argentina) of the Trade and Development Board took the opportunity to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, including in her current role as Acting Secretary-General, for her dedication and ongoing support. He also welcomed the newly confirmed Secretary-General of UNCTAD, who would soon join the institution as the first woman in the role. He thanked delegations for their support in his role as Chair of the Preparatory Committee, as well as the secretariat for the flexibility and open-minded approach to continuing the work in the context of the challenging times in 2020. Despite the challenges, there had been progress towards the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

11. He said that the role and mandate of UNCTAD existed well before the COVID-19 pandemic. UNCTAD had worked since 1964 to bridge the gap faced by the least developed countries so prosperity could be prosperity for all. The pandemic had impacted all aspects of people's lives and of economies and, thus, expressed appreciation for the deep discussions that had been held on the pandemic's impacts on trade and development. He also noted the professional technical outcome of UNCTAD reports, which had been timely, to the point and had given solutions to fulfil the UNCTAD mandate. UNCTAD reports

were a reference for research and discussions and served as contributions for forthcoming significant events on trade and development at different international organizations.

12. The incoming President (United Republic of Tanzania) of the Trade and Development Board expressed her thanks to the outgoing President and counted on his continued active engagement as part of the Friends of the Chair of the Preparatory Committee. She also noted her expectation that the spirit of constructive engagement would be maintained as work towards finalization of the negotiating text for the fifteenth session of the Conference progressed.

13. She said that, as an anchor in the United Nations development pillar, UNCTAD had a vital role in helping countries during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The substantive outcome of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development should focus on the current key development challenges. The fifteenth session of the Conference was the time to move from actions to results, to realize prosperity for all and recover better from the pandemic.

14. Furthermore, the outcome should strengthen UNCTAD capacity to support developing countries in pursuing development through trade. As UNCTAD was its member States, supported by the secretariat, member States should embrace the role of UNCTAD in addressing the full range of trade and development challenges that were impeding the sustainable development prospects of developing countries. The policy space of all countries should be preserved, and better understood and applied, as economies were rebuilt from the pandemic and development was put on track to avoid another lost decade of development.

15. She noted that putting economies back on track would require long-term solutions to managing debt vulnerability, as would confronting the challenges of development financing. As an institutional stakeholder in the financing for development process, UNCTAD needed to play its full, mandated role. UNCTAD could also plan an important role in creating effective global responses for tackling illicit financial flows, particularly tax evasion and tax avoidance by multinational corporations, with contributions in an inclusive global forum for international tax cooperation.

16. The role of the multilateral trading system was also crucial in the current global economic slowdown. Trade should remain inclusive and able to support development initiatives. UNCTAD should be a strengthened forum for confronting the challenges faced by the multilateral trading system from an inclusive and equitable development perspective, and better equipped to support developing countries in participating in the system. She assured participants of her best efforts to ensure a successful fifteenth session of the Conference that would mark a significant step forward.

17. The representatives of many regional groups thanked the outgoing President for his contribution towards the fifteenth session of the Conference, particularly during a pandemic, and welcomed the incoming President, noting their commitment to UNCTAD and support for her leadership.

18. One regional group expressed the expectation that the part of the sixty-eighth session of the Board that would be devoted to negotiations of the Preparatory Committee would allow delegations to reach an agreement on at least most of the outcome document of the Conference.

19. Another regional group, also expressing the expectation of a successful outcome, said there was a need to reassert the necessity of leaving no one behind. Policies should be recast in pursuit of development for all, while also facing the challenges posed by the pandemic. Recovery would be lengthy, particularly in countries that had been facing serious challenges, such as conflict and drought, prior to the onset of the pandemic.

20. The Acting Secretary-General, welcoming the incoming President, noted that a new chapter would be opening for UNCTAD over the next four years. She likewise expressed her appreciation to the outgoing President for his cooperation and leadership during the pandemic and negotiations conducted virtually.

General debate

21. The general debate took place on 22 and 23 June 2021. The following speakers made statements: the representative of Afghanistan, 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 Guatemala, on behalf of the Group of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries; the representative of the State of Palestine, on behalf of the Arab Group; the representative of the Russian Federation, on behalf of the Eurasian Economic Union; the representative of Japan, on behalf of the JUSSCANNZ group; the representative of the Philippines; the representative of the Republic of Korea; the representative of Viet Nam; the representative of China; the representative of Colombia; the representative of Argentina; the representative of Egypt; and the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

22. The representatives of several regional groups highlighted the importance of strengthening UNCTAD, reinvigorating multilateralism and focusing on the needs of developing countries.

23. The representative of one regional group and many delegates made a call to strengthen the central role of the State for economic recovery and commit to a transformative approach. They underlined the importance of focusing on direct investments, digital development, climate change, illicit trade and financial flows and debt relief to help move towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. They also reaffirmed that developing countries should have differential treatment and that member States should avoid any sort of unilateralism as that was detrimental to development.

24. The representative of another regional group and one delegate stressed that they would collaborate on foundations and principles to ensure that the outcome of the fifteenth session of the Conference was focused on a transformational approach to supporting developing country economies, tackling environmental vulnerabilities and financing of development as well as on transforming multilateralism itself. Another regional group and another delegate called for international solidarity and trust so that no one was left behind and member States could advance towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

25. The representative of a fourth regional group stated that UNCTAD had been lagging behind in recent years and that some UNCTAD products had remained on the margins of international discussions. The aim was to bring back the value of UNCTAD and focus resources on areas with clear added value for beneficiary countries. He called for a focus on digitalization, debt relief, sustainable investment and the green economy.

26. The representative of another regional group and another delegate stated that UNCTAD should establish a dialogue mechanism between regional integration organizations on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and overcoming the pandemic, and a focus on fighting transboundary cartels. Regarding the outcome document of the fifteenth session of the Conference, the representative underscored that some approaches to gender, human rights and climate change presented as universal and consensual by some during the preparatory process were not so. Specificities of transition economies and middle-income countries should be taken into account, and the negative impact of unilateral restrictive measures should be included in the outcome document.

27. The representative of another regional group stressed the expectation of an outcome document for the fifteenth session of the Conference that reflected the transformations needed to address the current challenges in a measured and balanced way and that framed the role of UNCTAD in a way that promoted efficiency and equality in the work undertaken.

28. Many delegates called UNCTAD to foster equitable access to vaccines and to support health-care systems in developing countries.

29. Many delegates reaffirmed the need to maintain and further develop the UNCTAD pillars of work, namely research and analysis, intergovernmental consensus-building and technical assistance.

30. Several delegates highlighted the importance of fostering small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries as a means to strengthen economies.

31. Several delegates stressed that member States should maintain or increase current levels of official development aid and not reduce it.

32. Some delegates underscored the urgent need for UNCTAD to address the problems of food security and agriculture.

33. Some delegates highlighted that UNCTAD should continue to focus on women and gender equality.

B. High-level segment

(Agenda item 2)

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures: Preparatory meeting on the road to the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

34. The Acting Secretary-General of UNCTAD opened the discussions under the high-level segment. Two panel discussions followed.

(a) Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade and development

35. The Acting Secretary-General of UNCTAD noted that, 15 months since the first infections, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) remained a focus of discussions. Distribution and access to vaccines were unequal, allowing the virus to mutate and put everyone in danger. Furthermore, while the global economy had begun to improve, the recovery was highly unequal, as country capacity to invest in response and recovery policies varied considerably. UNCTAD had used its three pillars to support member States, through research, data, analytical reports and discussions, as well as adapting technical cooperation programmes to respond to needs. In response to requests, data in the report published in November 2020 on the pandemic's impact on trade and development had been regularly updated through an online portal, covering more than 25 indicators, starting from 31 March 2021.

36. The portal data revealed the significant differences in the pandemic's impact on developed countries and developing countries. She noted that developed countries would see a greater rebound in gross domestic product (GDP) than developing countries. The widening gap between rich and poor countries was concerning, while trade in services remained disastrous, mainly due to the pandemic's impact on tourism and aviation. The administration of vaccine doses per 100 people varied significantly from one country to another, with Africa well behind and estimates of extreme poverty for 2020 and 2021 had risen. The pandemic had also underscored the scale of the challenge to meeting the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Despite many calls by the international community for greater solidarity, she was not certain that the international community had been up to that call.

37. Development assistance through the Development Assistance Committee had reach a record, but the increase was far from compensating the magnitude of contractions in other resource flows. Debt and growing indebtedness could be alleviated by the Debt Service Suspension Initiative of the Group of 20, but many countries were either at a high risk of being overindebted or were already overindebted. The facts presented reflected the degree to which recovery was unequal and weak, and to which solidarity and cooperation would be essential to a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future.

38. The Prime Minister of Barbados welcomed the secretariat's continued cooperation with Barbados, the host country of the fifteenth session of the Conference. The theme of the high-level segment was particularly appropriate given current realities and expectations for the Conference.

39. The journey to the fifteenth session of the Conference began for Barbados in 2019. A key motivation for Barbados to offer to host the Conference was the uncertainty and volatility in the main negotiating theatres on international trade and the disturbing emergence of unilateralist and transactional policies on the part of most of the world's powerful nations. She and the then Secretary-General of UNCTAD had called for bold, assertive leadership to enhance the development prospects of developing countries. The shared goal was to seize the juncture in international affairs to reinforce the value of multilateralism and make the fifteenth session of the Conference truly transformational, with transformational outcomes. The Conference theme approved, from inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all, summed up their aspirations.

40. The arrival of COVID-19 was inconceivable then, but the devastating impact on the world economy, and on all developed and developing countries, was a reminder of a common humanity and shared responsibility. While some might not acknowledge it, no one was safe until all were safe. Within developing countries, the burden of decimated economies had fallen disproportionately on the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged. The capacity for a prompt and sustained recovery seemed limited to a handful of the world's wealthiest countries. The current realities of responding to COVID-19 and other existential crises would exacerbate the inequalities and vulnerabilities already being faced, unless there were systemic changes in the international financial architecture, particularly in the treatment of small island developing States and middle-income countries.

41. She noted that, with the exception of a few States affected by conflict, the countries most heavily impacted economically by the pandemic in 2020 were those most dependent on tourism and travel, such as Barbados. Most countries of the Caribbean had seen double-digit declines in GDP. In sub-Saharan Africa, the only countries with double-digit declines were tourism-dependent small island developing States. The same held for emerging and developing Asia. Only two developed countries that were heavily dependent on tourism also saw significant declines, while no other advanced economies recorded a double-digit decline. Vital tourism sectors would only begin to recover when international travel safely recovered. Yet, the appallingly inequitable distribution of vaccines made it even more difficult for most to create the conditions for safe inward travel.

42. The recent gesture of the Group of Seven was welcome, though some countries could not survive until the end of 2022 with the level of declines in 2020. Vaccine supplies were at exorbitant prices, paid through intermediaries, which were unaffordable. Thus, countries such as Barbados were not in a position to frame their development as desired because of threats they could not control. The COVID-19 and climate crises had also brought into focus the food security issue, which was a major concern for small, isolated islands that had the lowest priority in supply chains. The capacity to feed people was constrained by international trade rules that made small-scale farming unprofitable and intensified dependence on food imports, with international supply and transport arrangements subject to disruptions, whether because of COVID-19 or other catastrophic events. Importing the majority of what was consumed might also expose the populations of those countries to antimicrobial resistance, which could be the greatest global health threat by 2050. Regrettably, it seemed that 2050 was too distant to be deemed a priority for current decision-makers.

43. The extraordinary measures for extraordinary times required by countries such as Barbados were, thus, breathing space – the adequate fiscal space to plan their own development – and a meaningful overhaul of the international financial architecture to create that space. Granting of concessional financing for middle-income and upper-middle-income countries that needed it was critical. Those countries had done well in their development efforts, largely on their own. Yet the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities and high cost of capital imposed on them by current, simplistic categorization effectively prevented them from dealing with vulnerabilities sustainably. The GDP per capita criterion was an outdated and distorted measure that did not reflect the fact that 70 per cent of the world's poor lived in middle-income countries.

44. Therefore, extraordinary measures should also include a more sensitive approach to COVID-19-related debt. The situation was similar to war debt after the Second World War; funding for the current COVID-19 “war” thus deserved similar treatment. She recalled that,

in 2019, the urgent priority was to make the fifteenth session of the Conference a transformational one and a defender of the value of multilateralism.

45. In 2021, as the first ministerial-level conference on trade since the pandemic, the fifteenth session of the Conference presented an even greater opportunity to make a difference. It was up to political leaders to demonstrate strategic moral leadership in support of the new global compact espoused by the United Nations Secretary-General. Looking back at the origins of UNCTAD, in 1964, the Prime Minister also recalled that newly independent States, such as Barbados, were emerging from colonialism and sought to find a place for developing countries in the international community. UNCTAD was created as a forum specifically dedicated to the trade and development concerns of developing countries. Extraordinary times led UNCTAD to establish the Group of 77, then the least developed countries. In the 1970s, UNCTAD took the lead role in the debate on the establishment of a New International Economic Order. UNCTAD had achieved much through its advocacy role on behalf of developing countries, but much unfinished business remained. The most extraordinary measure for current extraordinary times could be for UNCTAD to truly rediscover its committed activism on behalf of the developing countries that continued to strive to reform an international order not designed by or for them.

46. The Chief Statistician of UNCTAD briefly presented key statistics and analysis from the data portal with key indicators that provided updated information based on the UNCTAD 2020 report, *Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trade and Development: Transitioning to a New Normal*. He said the secretariat would welcome feedback, should another update be conducted, on which indicators were particularly useful or would be of interest.

47. Some delegates welcomed UNCTAD analytical work on the multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and recommendations for an equitable recovery, particularly in the UNCTAD report entitled *Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trade and Development*.

48. The representatives of several regional groups and several delegates noted that the pandemic had exacerbated existing imbalances and delayed progress, with only eight years remaining to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

49. One regional group and one delegate encouraged the harnessing of the power of trade to ensure equal access to safe and effective resources and vaccines at affordable prices (as global public goods), to close the gap between developed and developing countries and minimize inequalities.

50. Another regional group stressed the fundamental changes brought about by the pandemic. Several regional groups and delegates requested that UNCTAD contribute to reform of the international economic and financial architecture, by strengthening the institution's mandate and making the fifteenth session of the Conference a transformational conference to ensure a better recovery.

51. Several regional groups and delegates said that UNCTAD should play a central role in strengthening multilateral solidarity to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. Another regional group and several delegates noted, in addition, that there should be special consideration granted to the most vulnerable economies, among them small island developing States, which had been affected most seriously by the pandemic.

52. Some regional groups and delegates asked UNCTAD to continue targeted research to advise developing economies on sustainable and meaningful recovery and provide a platform for exchange. Some regional groups and several delegates said that greater sharing of technology and information was needed to reduce inequalities and harness digitalization as a tool for equitable recovery.

53. One regional group and one delegate said that inclusive trade policies should be at the heart of recovery to ensure the economic empowerment of women and youth. Another regional group and another delegate stated that the focus should also be on environmental and biodiversity considerations, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

54. Some regional groups and some delegates called for global cooperation on debt relief to the poorest countries, reform of the international taxation system to stop illicit financial flows, investment for sustained growth and climate finance in a transition towards a more sustainable global economy. Another delegate suggested that UNCTAD could also join efforts with the International Labour Organization, under Sustainable Development Goal 8, to explore options for mobilizing international financing for social protection.

55. Some regional groups and many delegates stated that the topic of the impact of the pandemic should remain on the agenda of the Trade and Development Board. One regional group called for a strong mandate for UNCTAD, in line with the aspirations and needs of the global South, and another regional group noted the need to face extraordinary times with concrete and targeted extraordinary measures.

(b) Least developed country priorities for the road to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

56. In her opening remarks, the Acting Secretary-General of UNCTAD said that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to be felt. In addition to the lives and livelihoods lost globally, the least developed countries had seen a reversal in hard-won progress in poverty reduction and other areas of socioeconomic development. Weak productive capacities and an inability to improve productivity in key sectors, such as technology-intensive manufacturing industries and services, had constrained the pace and quality of economic transformation in most least developed countries. An expansion of productive capacities – productive resources, entrepreneurial capacity and production linkages – created opportunities. Those three components together determined a country's ability to produce goods and services with positive spillover effects for the creation of productive jobs, technological learning, improved productivity and increased revenue.

57. The focus on productive capacities and the least developed countries at the high-level segment was because of the forthcoming Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Development Countries. *The Least Developed Countries Report 2020: Productive Capacities for the New Decade* had shown the need to improve them to be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. UNCTAD had developed practical and data-driven tools to support the least developed countries in efforts towards structural transformation and graduation. The multidimensional Productive Capacities Index measured and assessed a country's overall productive capacities and the underlying determinants, to identify the key areas on which to focus and the policies necessary to develop them.

58. Trade preferences were an interrelated and important policy area for the least developed countries. While not a panacea for development, they offered opportunities for countries without adequate productive capacities to export. The right mix of entrepreneurship, local endowments and export-oriented trade policy reforms could enable least developed countries to benefit from trade preferences. She presented the new UNCTAD database on the rates of utilization of the Generalized System of Preferences to support countries in taking full advantage of trade opportunities.

59. As always, UNCTAD stood ready to share expertise and support to the least developed countries and vulnerable economies, particularly in the lead up to the fifteenth session of the Conference and Fifth United Nations Conference.

60. The keynote speaker, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had spread less rapidly and less severely in the least developed countries than in the rest of the world. She commended the early and effective health response adopted by many of them despite limited resources. The fall in foreign direct investment and remittances was, however, hitting the least developed countries hard. Almost half were at high risk of or already in debt distress. Weak growth was projected. In the short run, UNCTAD estimated an additional 32 million people in the least developed countries would fall into extreme poverty.

61. The long-run impacts of the pandemic, whose full effects were not yet known, would have important consequences on building productive capacities and development in those countries. Although the Debt Service Suspension Initiative had alleviated financial pressures in some least developed countries, it was clearly insufficient. At the same time, in

their fiscal responses, developed countries had spent nearly 580 times more per capita than least developed countries.

62. She noted that, overall, the vulnerabilities of least developed countries arose from their structural challenges and underdeveloped production systems. International support could and should fortify the building blocks that promoted productive capacity development and structural transformation, by adding value to goods and services. That meant promoting a shift towards higher value added economic activities and facilitating employment creation in those sectors. Enhancing productive capacities in the least developed countries would go a long way to strengthening graduation prospects and support those countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and prosperity for all.

63. If policymakers did not address unbalanced growth, weak macroeconomic fundamentals, shaky structural transformation and limited productive capacities, the least developed countries would continue to fall behind other developing countries. The international community should take bold steps to ensure that the least developed countries could recover quickly and develop more fully, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and their national development ambitions.

64. She urged delegations to make the most of the opportunity presented by the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in October 2021. The ministerial conference was an important event for developing countries and could make an essential contribution to the process for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The new programme of action to be adopted at the Fifth United Nations Conference should catalyse ambition action, across the decade of action, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Productive capacities were key parts of the picture, crucial for reducing poverty, creating jobs and ensuring inclusive growth and promoting environmental sustainability.

65. She stated that new and emerging challenges also needed to be addressed, including the climate crisis, support to graduation and after graduation, access to digital technologies and building resilience to future health shocks. The success of international efforts would depend heavily on coherence across trade, financial, economic and social policies.

66. In his presentation, the Minister of Trade and Industry of Angola focused on the concrete measures that the Government of Angola had taken to limit the effects of the spread of the pandemic and the strengthening of production capacities through economic reforms and commercial diplomacy.

67. The Chief of Staff of the World Trade Organization recalled the mixed results of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 and provided proposals in macroeconomics, health and institutional issues to support the least developed countries during the fifteenth session of the Conference and the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

68. One Co-Chair of the Preparatory Committee for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries proposed that vaccine production and a schedule of vaccinations for populations of the least developed countries could be available before 2022. Another Co-Chair of the Preparatory Committee suggested pragmatic measures; the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility could help produce and distribute vaccines.

69. The Chair of the Committee for Development Policy of the United Nations said that strengthening the productive capacities of the least developed countries should be at the core of all development policies.

70. In response to speaker presentations, the representatives of many regional groups made pleas for increased support from the international community for the least developed countries to reduce and eradicate the COVID-19 pandemic in those countries and revive their economies. Without that support, the least developed countries would not be able to emerge from the spiralling crisis. Several delegates likewise called for a surge in support and help from the international community for the least developed countries in terms of vaccines and economic stimulus and concluded that Fifth United Nations Conference on the

Least Developed Countries would highlight the basic needs of those countries and appropriate solutions.

C. Annual report of the Secretary-General

(Agenda item 4)

71. The Acting Secretary-General noted that, while a rebound in the global economy was stronger than forecast, there were many concerning developments impacting developing countries that served to guide UNCTAD work. The hurdles developing countries faced were manifold: the slow deployment of vaccines to developing countries; divergent growth paths; increases in inequality and extreme poverty; the widening digital divide; the rebound of trade in goods rather than of trade in services; the sharp decline in foreign direct investment; the increase in levels of indebtedness; a rise in aid that did not compensate for the contraction of other sources of development finance; and the climate crisis for which international efforts were falling short. The work of UNCTAD was thus guided by the objective of helping developing countries to overcome those challenges on multiple fronts. UNCTAD analytical work focused on helping countries understand the impact of the pandemic and on informing policymaking in the areas of trade, investment, finance, gender, technology and innovation.

72. She said that, furthermore, UNCTAD had met with the World Trade Organization to identify complementary areas of work and contribute to productive outcomes. She emphasized that UNCTAD could also provide substantial support to developing countries following an accession process. UNCTAD was also working closely with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to support the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

73. The representative of one regional group and one delegate expressed appreciation for the three pillars of UNCTAD work. They noted that UNCTAD provided critical policy advice, analysis and support to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis. Another regional group said that the efforts made to link the different pillars of UNCTAD work were appreciated, while noting there was scope to further strengthen cross-subprogramme coherence and fertilization.

74. One regional group and some delegates welcomed the return to multilateralism; multilateralism was central to UNCTAD work on consensus-building. The regional group and several delegates also expressed appreciation for the long-standing commitment of UNCTAD to multilateralism and consensus-building, expertise in supporting developing countries integrate into the global trading system and assistance in developing inclusive models of development.

75. One regional group and one delegate stated that closer collaboration between UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization was positive, particularly concerning UNCTAD support in relation to accession. Furthermore, the regional group said that UNCTAD work to support the least developed countries should be preserved, given its long-standing support for them.

76. Another regional group and one delegate stated that UNCTAD research and analysis and policy recommendations were valued, particularly in the areas of debt, illicit financial flows, digital economy, productive capacities and investment. The regional group welcomed the UNCTAD call for debt relief, the proposal of a Marshall Plan to mobilize unfulfilled official development assistance commitments and the creation of an international debt authority.

77. One regional group said that targeted technical assistance and capacity-building, particularly through the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System and the Automated System for Customs Data programmes, which were crucial, and called on to donors to increase resources for them. Capacity-building for microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises were also an essential part of the response to the crisis.

78. Another regional group said that the increasing presence of gender and human rights as part of UNCTAD work was highly valued, though UNCTAD was encouraged to further integrate the issues into substantive work and analysis.

79. Another regional group stated that UNCTAD should also continue updating data and providing analysis and recommendations on best practices across all subject areas.

80. One delegate said that the fifteenth session of the Conference could help lift populations out of poverty and to build partnerships and understanding. Another delegate said that UNCTAD needed to function flexibly to respond to current challenges to empower the vulnerable to build back. UNCTAD should be enabled to deliver the best possible outcomes.

81. One regional group noted that, for due consideration of the agenda item, a report should be distributed ahead of the meeting. The Acting Secretary-General noted that time had been limited to prepare a written report, given the unique circumstances of the change in UNCTAD management early in 2021 and the demands of responding to the pandemic. She added that that would not preclude the preparation of one in the future.

D. *Technology and Innovation Report 2021: Catching Technological Waves – Innovation with Equity*

(Agenda item 5)

82. The Director of the UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics presented highlights of the *Technology and Innovation Report 2021: Catching Technological Waves – Innovation with Equity*. As argued in the report, the accelerating pace of development of frontier technologies represented not only opportunities but also challenges such as job displacement, job polarization and various forms of inequality. She also introduced a frontier technology readiness index, which measures the national capabilities to use, adopt and adapt frontier technologies, and stressed that, while developed countries overall performed better, there were outperformers among developing countries. The existence of developing country outperformers indicated that readiness was not entirely bound by levels of development. She concluded that policy response and international cooperation were essential in promoting innovation as was mitigating risks, such as by building stronger national capabilities in science, technology and innovation, increasing women's participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and promoting inclusive debate on frontier technologies.

83. One panellist introduced various national initiatives to promote innovation and argued that more support for lower-middle-income and low-income countries, especially in information and communications technology infrastructure and skills development, was necessary. Another panellist mentioned that conditions such as conscious design accompanied by appropriate public policies would allow frontier technologies to reduce and not increase inequalities. Another panellist stressed the importance of mitigating inequality in access to information and communications technology infrastructure between and within countries and emphasized the urgency of building capacity in frontier technologies in developing countries to enable a transition to a path for significant technological development.

84. The representatives of several regional groups and some delegates commended UNCTAD for the *Technology and Innovation Report 2021* and welcomed the policy recommendations it contained, particularly those on strengthening national innovation systems. Some regional groups and several delegates stressed the necessity of international cooperation to narrow the technological divide and reduce inequality among countries. Some regional groups and one delegate also suggested that UNCTAD should play an active role in facilitating such international cooperation, including the continuation and expansion of science, technology and innovation reviews.

E. Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development

(Agenda item 8)

85. Following the presentation of the report of the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development, the representatives of several regional groups and some delegates welcomed the report and acknowledged UNCTAD work as a valuable contribution to international discussions on financing for development. The representatives of some regional groups recalled that work in the area was in keeping with the original 1964 mandate of UNCTAD and had been confirmed and extended at subsequent ministerial conferences. The representative of another regional group expressed disappointment with the report, suggesting that the process for the preparation of the session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development was not followed appropriately and that issues discussed in it were beyond the mandate of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts.

86. Some regional groups and one delegate emphasized the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the economies of developing countries and on rising debt burdens, which undermined the ability of developing countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. In that regard, one regional group recalled that one of the key messages of the report was that debt treatments could be needed to put some countries on the path to achieve debt sustainability, recover from the pandemic, create fiscal space and revive economic growth. One delegate welcomed the extension of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative of the Group of 20 until the end of 2021.

87. One regional group and one delegate noted that the pandemic highlighted the pressing need to rethink the current international debt architecture, as it did not help developing countries to navigate debt vulnerabilities, particularly as the current system had no structured debt workout mechanism. The regional group called on UNCTAD to continue work on exploring policy measures to reform the existing debt architecture and towards a monetary and financial system that was compatible with inclusive and sustainable development.

88. Some regional groups and some delegates stated that the need to strengthen international cooperation and multilateralism in mobilizing financing for development positioned the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development as an essential platform for discussing the myriad financing challenges facing developing countries, particularly in a post-COVID period. Another regional group considered the fifteenth session of the Conference as an opportunity to reinforce the role of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development in supporting the financing needs and interests of developing countries.

F. Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa

(Agenda item 9)

89. In the context of the pandemic, the Director of the UNCTAD Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes presented specific examples of UNCTAD technical assistance activities in support of Africa. He noted that the activities were aligned with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the development aspirations encapsulated in Agenda 2063 of the African Union. Work conducted by the division for the reporting period included: (a) tracking and monitoring the impact of the pandemic on the continent; (b) contributing to structural transformation by tackling illicit financial flows for sustainable development in Africa; (c) fostering regional integration in Africa, and non-tariff measures, under the African Continental Free Trade Area; (d) promoting trade facilitation in Africa; (e) helping African countries to manage debt and secure investments; and (f) supporting African countries to harness entrepreneurship, science and technology.

90. The representative of one regional group welcomed the report on activities undertaken in support of Africa and encouraged no effort to be spared on the three pillars of

the UNCTAD mandate. The representative of another regional group likewise strongly commended the work carried out by UNCTAD for Africa, such as the Productive Capacities Index, policy development, capacity-building on illicit financial flows and trade facilitation, and outcomes, such as the adoption of policy measures in support of regional value chains and fostering industrial policy coordination. She pointed to the challenge of regional integration within the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the need for continued UNCTAD assistance, including to recover from economic shocks and the pandemic. The representative of another regional group expressed appreciation in particular for the online UNCTAD technical assistance platform and wished for an assessment of all technical assistance.

91. One delegate expressed gratitude for the technical assistance received, including on electronic commerce, trade and gender and support for small and medium-sized enterprises. Another delegate expressed the desire for strengthened coordination of UNCTAD technical assistance for African countries, such as the Central African Republic, which needed support. While welcoming the UNCTAD technical assistance received by different countries, another delegate called for technical assistance from UNCTAD in relation to the free trade area and for eradication of illicit financial flows.

92. Another delegate noted that cooperation between Africa and the Russian Federation had taken off in various areas and a road map was being drawn up. Many delegates expressed appreciation to UNCTAD for the technical assistance provided and called on the international community to support the institution financially so that technical assistance in support of Africa could continue. They invited UNCTAD to double the efforts to support Africa in relation to integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

93. The Director recalled that the international community called for a balanced economic recovery and UNCTAD would continue efforts in that regard. UNCTAD was also strengthening centres of excellence, such as in the case of Nigeria. He noted further that a drop in spending on Africa was a consequence of the effects of the ongoing pandemic.

G. 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

(Agenda item 10)

94. Under the agenda item, the Acting Secretary-General of UNCTAD discussed how UNCTAD had placed importance on responding to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis as an integral part of the United Nations family. She highlighted the institution's commitment to contributing to and engaging in the United Nations reform process and the progress to date so far. She further highlighted that the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development would be the first development conference to be held since the outbreak of the pandemic and could contribute to the major conferences and summits to follow, including the Twelfth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

95. The representative of one regional group stressed that the work of UNCTAD with the United Nations country teams should be further strengthened and highlighted that the multi-partner trust fund was a good example of UNCTAD participation at the national and regional levels. He stated that work at the national and regional levels should not overshadow or replace UNCTAD work in the areas of consensus-building, normative work and research and analysis. UNCTAD work along its three pillars should continue, and UNCTAD should remain in a central position to pursue dialogue on global solutions for global problems, in line with the views and priorities of member States.

96. In response, the Acting Secretary-General assured the regional group that the UNCTAD secretariat intended to fully maintain all three pillars of work, including the

political mandate on consensus-building, emphasizing that work at the national and regional levels would not be delivered to the detriment of the political mandate.

97. The representatives of some regional groups noted the need for greater coordination within the United Nations system and appreciated reform efforts to strengthen the integration of United Nations work and establish an effective and accountable Resident Coordination system. They welcomed UNCTAD efforts in that regard. They called on UNCTAD to further increase collaboration with partner organizations at the national level, which would increase efficiency and accountability and help in achieving a more coordinated and coherent development response.

III. Procedural and related matters

A. Opening of the session

98. The sixty-eighth session of the Trade and Development Board was opened on 21 June 2021 by Mr. Federico Villegas (Argentina), outgoing President of the Board at its sixty-seventh session.

B. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1 (a))

99. At its 1206th (opening) plenary meeting, on 21 June 2021, the outgoing President of the Board said that he took it that the Trade and Development Board wished to elect as incoming President of the Board, by acclamation, the candidate nominated for the post. The Board thus elected Ms. Maimuna Kibenga Tarishi (United Republic of Tanzania) President of the Board at its sixty-eighth session.

100. Also at its 1206th (opening) plenary meeting, on 21 June 2021, the Board undertook the election of officers to serve on the Bureau of the Board at its sixty-eighth session. Outstanding nominations would be addressed afterwards. Accordingly, the elected Bureau was as follows:

President: Ms. Maimuna Kibenga Tarishi (United Republic of Tanzania)

Vice-Presidents: Mr. Vaqif Sadiqov (Azerbaijan)
Mr. Héctor Virgilio Alcántara (Dominican Republic)
Mr. Esmaeil Baghaei Hamaneh (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Mr. Michael Gaffey (Ireland)
Mr. Uehara Kenya (Japan)
Mr. Cleopa Mailu (Kenya)
Mr. Salim Baddoura (Lebanon)
Mr. Thomas Nauta (Netherlands)

Rapporteur: Ms. Débora María Ponce de Günther (Guatemala)

101. 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.

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

(Agenda item 1 (b))

102. Also at its 1206th (opening) plenary meeting, the Trade and Development Board adopted the provisional agenda for the session, as contained in document TD/B/68/1 (see annex I).¹

D. Adoption of the report on credentials

(Agenda item 1 (c))

103. At its 1215th (closing) plenary meeting, on 2 July 2021, the Trade and Development Board adopted the report of the Bureau on the credentials of representatives participating in the sixty-eighth session of the Board, as contained in document TD/B/68/L.2.

E. Report of the Preparatory Committee to the fifteenth session of the Conference

(Agenda item 6)

Provisional agenda of the thirty-second special session of the Trade and Development Board

104. Also at its 1215th plenary meeting, the Board approved the provisional agenda of the thirty-second special session of the Trade and Development Board, as shared virtually during the meeting on 2 July 2021, including the items proposed for referral (see annex II).

F. Provisional agenda of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy

(Agenda item 7)

105. At its 1215th plenary meeting, the President of the Trade and Development Board noted that the members of the Board were not ready to take action on the provisional agenda of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy and suggested that consideration of the item should be referred to the thirty-second special session.

G. Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development

(Agenda item 8)

106. Also at its 1215th plenary meeting, the President of the Board noted that the members of the Board were not ready to take action on the provisional agenda of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development and likewise suggested that consideration of the item should be referred to the thirty-second special session.

¹ The topic of item 2, the high-level segment, was agreed by the extended Bureau of the Board on 29 April 2021, as follows: Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures: Preparatory meeting on the road to the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries: (a) Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade and development; (b) Least developed country priorities for the road to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

H. Provisional agenda of the seventy-first executive session of the Trade and Development Board

(Agenda item 11)

107. Also at its 1215th plenary meeting, the President of the Board noted that the UNCTAD secretariat had suggested postponement of consideration of the item to the thirty-second special session of the Board.

I. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters

(Agenda item 12)

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 2020–2021 and their relevant impact; and the appointment of members of the Advisory Body

108. At its 1213th plenary meeting, on 24 June 2021, the Board elected the members of the Advisory Body for a period of one year, for 2021/22, as follows: Mr. Shoaib Timory (Afghanistan), Ms. Ravesa Lleshi (Albania), Mr. Federico Villegas Beltrán (Argentina), Mr. José Valencia Amores (Ecuador), Mr. Ahmed Ihab Abdelahad Gamaleldin (Egypt), Mr. Muhammadou M. O. Kah (Gambia), Mr. Mr. Cleopa Mailu (Kenya), Ms. Teuta Agai-Demjaha (North Macedonia), Mr. Idris Al Khanjari (Oman), Mr. Khalil Hashmi (Pakistan) and Mr. Hector Constant Rosales (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela).

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

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

110. There were no new applications before the Board for its consideration. A list of the 115 intergovernmental bodies currently in status with UNCTAD is contained in document TD/B/IGO/LIST/11.

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

111. There were no new applications before the Board for its consideration. A list of the 242 non-governmental organizations currently in status with UNCTAD is contained in document TD/B/NGO/LIST/27.

Review of the calendar of meetings

112. At its 1215th plenary meeting, on 2 July 2021, the Board approved the calendar of meetings for the second half of 2021 and the tentative calendar of meetings for 2022, as contained in a non-paper dated 1 July 2021, which took into account the suggestions made by the extended Bureau of the Board at its meeting on 29 June 2021.²

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

113. At its 1215th plenary meeting, the Board approved the application of the Republic of Korea, endorsed by Group B, and with the agreement of the Asia-Pacific Group, to be moved from the States in list A to the list B States annexed to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX).³

² The official calendar of meetings will be issued as document TD/B/INF.251.

³ The updated membership list will be published as document TD/B/INF.250.

Administrative and financial implications of the actions of the Board

114. At its 1215th plenary meeting, the Board was informed that the actions taken at its sixty-eighth session had no additional financial implications.

J. Other business

(Agenda item 13)

115. There were no further issues presented for consideration by the Board.

K. Adoption of the report

(Agenda item 14)

116. At its 1215th (closing) plenary meeting, on 2 July 2021, the Trade and Development Board adopted its report which would contain the President's summary on all substantive items, the agreed conclusions under item 2 (b), the provisional agenda of the thirty-second special session of the Board approved under item 6 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.

Annex I

Agenda of the sixty-eighth 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.
3. General debate.
4. Annual report of the Secretary-General.
5. *Technology and Innovation Report 2021: Catching Technological Waves – Innovation with Equity.*
6. Report of the Preparatory Committee to the fifteenth session of the Conference.
7. Provisional agenda of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy.
8. Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development.
9. Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa.
10. 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.
11. Provisional agenda of the seventy-first executive session of the Trade and Development Board.
12. 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 2020–2021 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.
13. Other business.
14. Adoption of the report.

Annex II

Provisional agenda of the thirty-second special session of the Trade and Development Board

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the session.
2. Substantive preparations for the fifteenth session of the Conference:
 - Report of the Preparatory Committee.
3. Provisional agenda of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy.
4. Provisional agenda of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development.
5. Provisional agenda of the seventy-first executive session of the Trade and Development Board.
6. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters:
 - (a) Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board;
 - (b) Review of the calendar of meetings.
7. Other business.
8. Adoption of the report of the Trade and Development Board.

Annex III

Attendance*

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

Afghanistan	Japan
Albania	Jordan
Algeria	Kazakhstan
Angola	Kenya
Argentina	Kuwait
Austria	Kyrgyzstan
Azerbaijan	Latvia
Bahrain	Lebanon
Bangladesh	Lesotho
Barbados	Madagascar
Belarus	Malawi
Belgium	Malaysia
Bhutan	Mali
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mauritius
Botswana	Mexico
Brazil	Morocco
Bulgaria	Mozambique
Burkina Faso	Myanmar
Cabo Verde	Namibia
Cambodia	Nepal
Canada	Netherlands
Central African Republic	Nicaragua
China	Nigeria
Colombia	North Macedonia
Congo	Pakistan
Cuba	Panama
Czechia	Philippines
Côte d'Ivoire	Poland
Djibouti	Portugal
Dominican Republic	Qatar
Ecuador	Republic of Korea
Egypt	Republic of Moldova
Ethiopia	Romania
Gabon	Russian Federation
Gambia	Saudi Arabia
Germany	Serbia
Greece	Slovenia
Guatemala	South Africa
Haiti	Sri Lanka
Honduras	State of Palestine
India	Sudan
Indonesia	Thailand
Iran, Islamic Republic of	Togo
Iraq	Tunisia
Ireland	Turkey
Italy	Turkmenistan
Jamaica	United Arab Emirates

* This attendance list contains registered participants. For the list of participants, see TD/B/68/INF.1.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
United Republic of Tanzania	Viet Nam
Uruguay	Zambia
	Zimbabwe

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

Bahamas
Niger

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

Common Fund for Commodities
Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf
European Union
Organisation internationale de la francophonie
Organization of Islamic Cooperation

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

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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

United Nations Industrial Development Organization
World Trade Organization

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

General category

International Network for Standardization of Higher Education Degrees
Society for International Development
Village Suisse ONG
