

Statement Delivered by Mr. Bodh Raj Niroula, Joint Secretary,  
Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Government of Nepal at  
UNCTAD XII  
Ghana, 18-25 April 2008

Mr. President  
Your Excellencies  
Mr. Secretary General  
Head of the Delegations  
Distinguished delegates

It is a great honour for me and my delegation, to be a part of UNCTAD XII. I would like to thank the government of Ghana for the generous hospitality and the warm reception, as well as the extensive preparations made for this important event.

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President on being elected as the president of UNCTAD XII. My delegation is confident that under your dynamic leadership and able guidance this conference will be a resounding success. I also wish to congratulate the Vice president and rapporteur of this conference.

Since its establishment in 1964, the role of UNCTAD as an authoritative knowledge-based institution, aiming to help shape the current policy debates and thinking on development, is commendable. I would like to thank UNCTAD and its Secretary General, Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, for promoting development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy and for bringing equitable trade and development issues to the forefront of discussion.

UNCTAD today is as relevant as it was in 1964, especially for shaping human development friendly globalization. However, the world economy and economic relations of the countries (increased interdependence) is significantly different today than it was four or five decades ago. And UNCTAD is expected to deliver its specialized services in a more coordinated manner than ever before to the world's people that are most in need. Moreover, the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, which led to the strengthening of the legal framework governing international trade, also demands for the reshaping and restructuring of UNCTAD activities and work.

Mr. Chairperson,

Globalization has become an unavoidable phenomenon in the modern economic era. Though, the demand for '*globalization with a human face*' is not a new concept, it is still a distant reality. The process of globalization has created both winners and losers, at all levels of humanity.

On the one hand, fast accelerating globalization of trade and capital flows has created tremendous opportunities by expanding trade opportunities, facilitating competition and absorbing knowledge. But, it has also created several challenges and difficulties, especially for countries with weak supply-side capacities. Globalization with unprecedented competition and connectivity has brought about immediate and far-reaching impact on the lives of our people. However, due to our limited capacity to cope with fast changing economic environment, globalization has left millions either marginalized or adversely affected.

We believe that integration of LDCs into the world economy is one of the major challenges of the globalizing world. Developing countries, especially LDCs continue to be marginalized, and they have yet to fully benefit from trade opportunities.

Mr. Chairperson,

We believe that a successful and faithful implementation of the Doha Work Programme of the WTO would contribute substantially to make trade work for all and to help bring 'the development dimension' into the forefront of international trade. As UNCTAD is uniquely placed as an intergovernmental organization that deals with the development, trade and interrelated issues in a holistic manner; UNCTAD, should play an important role in timely accomplishing the Doha Work Plan. In brief, the three interrelated yet critical areas of UNCTAD activities, namely, forum for intergovernmental deliberations; research, policy analysis and data collection; and technical assistance are more demanding in today's world.

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to highlight some specific issues of Nepal. The past decade is unique in Nepal's history, both economically and politically. This landlocked and least developed country underwent a civil unrest that took the lives of

nearly 15,000 people. At the same time, to take advantage of globalization, economic reform processes were initiated in the mid-1980s. Integration of trade in the poverty reduction strategy is underway and has been a priority of the government, as the country has witnessed positive impact of trade on poverty alleviation. We are convinced that we need more trade and greater diffusion to make our efforts sustainable in the days ahead. It is with these objectives in mind and to mainstream ourselves into international trading regime that we joined the WTO in April 2004.

Mr. Chairperson,

However, despite extensive economic and trade liberalization, Nepal's economic performance has been poor. Moreover, the reform process has negatively affected some segments of the society and economy. Experts claim that the civil unrest in Nepal is the outcome of disappointing developmental results led by unplanned and unsystematic reform that weakened state institutions. In this context, we realize that increasing global integration alone is not sufficient to address our development needs.

The recent political break-through has brought some hope, but long lasting peace will depend on the government's ability to deliver economic prosperity.

Mr. Chairperson,

The challenge faced by Nepal is further compounded by its status of a land locked country. The Almaty Ministerial Conference held in 2003 was of special significance in stressing the need for better transit facilities for landlocked countries. We call for effective implementation of the programme of action with support from the international community.

Mr. Chairperson,

The work of UNCTAD, especially on macro-economic and trade policy issues, has been very helpful for shaping our macroeconomic and trade policies, thereby meeting challenges of globalization. I would also like to take this opportunity to express sincere appreciation to UNCTAD for its valuable technical support and cooperation to Nepal in trade and investment related issues for the last several decades. My delegation is hopeful that this conference will make positive contributions in establishing equitable

international economic order which guarantees equality, stability and prosperity for all in keeping with the demand of the times and aspirations of all the people. In this context, we urge the international community to extend support to UNCTAD with more resources taking into account the central role of UNCTAD in prompting the goals in trade liberalization, poverty alleviation and capacity building of LDCs.

Lastly, Mr. Chairperson, I urge the global community to pay greater attention to supply constraints and productive capacities of developing countries, particularly LDCs, through the "Aid for Trade" initiative of the WTO.

Thank You!