

RWANDA

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Statement by
Honorable Madame Monique Nsanzabaganwa
Minister of Trade and Industry
at the General Debate of UNCTAD XII
Accra, Ghana

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the Government of Rwanda, I'm pleased to address this august audience at the twelfth session of UNCTAD.

2. I wish to begin by congratulating the Government and People of Ghana, for hosting UNCTAD XII; for the excellent preparation and for the warm hospitality we have enjoyed since we arrived in this beautiful city of Accra. I also take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary General of UNCTAD, Dr. Supachai and his team, for their continued commitment to advocating the cause of development. Rwanda recognizes and commends the development role that UNCTAD has been playing since its creation in 1964.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. Africa's share of world exports has declined to a mere 2.7 per cent in 2006. Despite this evident marginalization, the sustained economic growth achieved in a number of African countries, including Rwanda, since the beginning of the 21 Century gives hope. This was a result of robust reforms undertaken by African leaders at national, sub-regional and continental level.

4. In Rwanda, the results we have achieved are remarkable despite the dramatic situation resulting from the genocide that befell our country in 1994. Today, Rwanda has seriously embarked on the development route by introducing necessary reforms and by the firm commitment and hard work of its people. Cemented by a healing, reconciled and unified nation, these reforms resulted into a stable macro-economic environment; an investment climate conducive to domestic and foreign direct investments; as well as notable achievements in social sectors such as Education and Health with a successful gender mainstreaming in all sectors of the Rwandan society.

5. In the overall vision for future development and prosperity of the Rwandan people, trade constitutes one of the main factors leading to our objectives. We want to become home to entrepreneurs who will transform our agricultural produce into commercially viable and competitive goods both at local, regional and international market. In the current context of food crisis, agricultural productivity growth is of high urgency for our people. In my country, a green revolution was launched in the last quarter of 2007, which completely turned round the trend in the sector, from a negative growth rate to an 8% growth rate at the end of that quarter alone. However, we are constantly reminded that such performance is hardly sustainable if nothing is done to reduce dependency on the weather conditions and manage properly our abundant water resources. Therefore, modernization of the agriculture through adequate investment in building productive capacity, including through investment in rural infrastructure such as rural feeder roads, water harvesting and irrigation, and agricultural R&D is of paramount importance.

6. Moreover, as urbanization is undoubtedly accelerating, development of new manufacturing and services sectors is vital in order to create productive employment. Our target is to create as many off-farm jobs as is required to reduce the population engaged in the agriculture from 83% in 2005 to 50% by 2020. Rwanda is endeavoring to position itself as a service and redistribution hub in the region. Towards this objective, Rwanda has started ICT and financial sector development with a view to encouraging entrepreneurs to create export-oriented services industries with adequate and modernized infrastructure. Rwanda capital market was launched in 2007 while Government is set for the completion of its privatization program in the banking and insurance sector. A major breakthrough in solving the energy problem is expected by mid-2008 as a pilot plant is currently being installed which will transform methane gas into electricity. We also want to become home to Entrepreneurs who will develop our tourism potential into a dynamic sector that generates wealth. We are on the right track, the journey is still long, the work ahead is challenging, our aims are high, but achievable.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

7. Development is a global responsibility. The international community committed to supporting the weakest economies, by global solidarity, the aim being to achieve development goals. For boosting trade and creating employment, the donor community committed during the WTO Hong Kong ministerial conference to providing developing countries with additional and predictable financial assistance known in the form of "Aid For Trade". Our countries are eagerly waiting for this initiative to materialize, which would assist us in building the supply capacity and the competitiveness of our industries, with a view to sustaining the current economic growth. We are also looking forward to the quick operationalization of the Enhanced Integrated Framework. Both initiatives constitute valuable tools to enable us reap expected benefits from the Doha Development Round.

8. However, in order for our countries to achieve successful integration into multilateral trading system and benefit more from it, there is need for greater regional integration and increase in South-South trade. This should translate into elimination of

all barriers that currently hinder smooth flow of trade among neighbouring countries. Such increased trade among Developing Countries is an important factor for their own development.

9. We expect UNCTAD to play a key role in influencing the speed at which countries such as Rwanda will graduate to higher income categories. UNCTAD should assist our countries in setting clear benchmarks and reviewing them on a regular basis, and case by case for a customised action framework. UNCTAD can play an advisory role to Least Developed and Developing Countries, looking at means at their disposal that can contribute to making an impact in terms of development, reviewing them on a regular basis, and assisting them in addressing bottlenecks. This advisory role of assessing existing input in our countries and finding ways of better utilizing them for development will put UNCTAD on a path of influencing development, hence its active role in assisting countries to graduate from one category to the higher one.

10. We commend UNCTAD's role in research and analysis as well as various useful publications on trade and development they have been producing. UNCTAD should however, also consider focusing more on searching for tailor-made solutions to individual Developing Countries, since each country is faced with specific challenges, calling for particular solutions. The one-size-fits-all solutions will not bring about the needed positive changes. To the contrary, our poor countries may go on sliding back, as it has been the case during the last decades. In concrete terms, we believe that UNCTAD can meet our expectations and fulfil its assigned mission by advising individual countries on trade and development policy options in a comprehensive manner, as well as strategies for their implementation. In this regard, the debate on strengthening UNCTAD in order to enhance its development role and impact should go in that direction.

11. As one of the Agencies of the UN Family, UNCTAD should work in close collaboration with other Agencies under the "One UN" concept for which my country Rwanda is one of the 8 pilot countries, in order to assist our efforts in a harmonized and targeted manner

12. In conclusion I wish to assure you that the delegation of Rwanda will continue to work closely with others in this dialogue aimed at strengthening UNCTAD. Together we can make UNCTAD become a beacon of hope and inspiration to developing countries and their citizens, and to the world at large.

I thank you