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Statement by H.E. Mr. Miroslav Somol,
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Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me express on behalf of my delegation sincere thanks to the host Government of Brazil and to the people of Sao Paulo for their excellent organisation of our Conference, which marks 40 years of its successful life. My Delegation's thanks go also to Mr. Rubens Ricupero for his tireless efforts at the helm of the UNCTAD.

UNCTAD XI is the first major UN conference where my country, the Czech Republic, participates as a full member- of the European Union. We have always attached great importance to the development dimension of international trade relations and I am glad to stress that our membership in EU will give us new impetus and wider possibilities to continue and indeed expand our traditional policy. Let me share with you some ideas on present and future role of UNCTAD in international economic developments.

We gathered here to review and to add value to the Bangkok Plan of Action, the paper we formulated four years ago to guide the future work of UNCTAD. My delegation is of the opinion that the Bangkok Plan of Action served UNCTAD well over the last four years and that it should remain the main framework for UNCTAD's activities. As we do see the need for further changes in UNCTAD's work, its Programme of Action should be adapted to the outcomes of recent global UN conferences, which have taken place since UNCTAD X. Particular attention should be given namely to the Monterrey Consensus. Equal consideration should be given also to the ongoing UN reform. This process aimed at simplification, streamlining and harmonisation of the UN procedures cannot bypass UNCTAD if it has to provide effective assistance for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Now it is desirable to bring new dynamism into the UNCTAD's work and to ensure greater synergy between main UNCTAD's activities as already mentioned by the EU presidency in its intervention.

UNCTAD has still a unique position as a focal point of the United Nations for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues. It is undoubtedly rather broad mandate, which allows utilize its capacities very flexibly in responding to the needs of developing countries and especially LDCs. There is, however, certain risk, that the current activities of UNCTAD might be too broad. If the Millennium Development Goals and other targets, which the international community agreed to achieve, should be met, overlaps in the work of international organisations and the UN Agencies cannot be tolerated. UNCTAD should therefore strengthen the core elements of its mandate and not extend its activities in too many areas.

Activities of UNCTAD should be carefully coordinated with activities of other international organisations and remain country-specific and based on comprehensive

needs assessments. Priority should be naturally given to the countries with greatest needs, namely the LDCs.

UNCTAD's technical assistance should be focused mainly to help developing countries and namely LDCs to integrate better into the world trading system. UNCTAD should continue providing its assistance to these countries with formulation of proposals for their trade and investment strategies in order to help them to meet the challenge of sustainable development.

One of the important fields of UNCTAD's work is support of the regional integration, especially South-South integration, which can contribute considerably to the economic and social development of respective countries. We think that Generalised System of Trade Preferences is one of the most important instruments for strengthening such collaboration and for improving of market access especially for LDCs. We fully associate with the ideas delivered by the EU presidency concerning revitalisation of the GSTP and its connection with the differentiated responsibilities of developing countries.

UNCTAD has also comparative advantage in other areas such as supporting the commodity dependent countries, building their international competitiveness and promoting good governance and supportive investment climate. These are the areas where UNCTAD should further enhance its activities.

It is true that in the short run, implementation of trade reforms may have not only positive effects and adjustment costs for particular- sectors of the society. There might be discussion whether the activities to mitigate these negative effects should be considered as UNCTAD's core activity. We are of the opinion that UNCTAD, in close cooperation with other agencies like WTO and other institutions of the Integrated Framework, could be very active also in this important area.

My last comment concerns UNCTAD's multi-stakeholders partnerships, which we consider to be very important. A long-term development strategy clearly requires both public and private action including the involvement of civil society. The presence of non-state actors and their involvement in conference side events here in Sao Paulo are a good sign for the future.

Thank you for your attention.