THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

28 February 2020

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to inform you that pursuant to General Assembly resolution 74/204, I will convene an informal interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on Commodity Markets on Friday, 22 May 2020, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York.

The informal interactive dialogue will review world commodity trends and prospects, particularly in commodity-dependent countries. It will also provide a platform to discuss the challenges being faced by commodity-dependent developing countries and the impact on the capacity of these countries to implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development, as well as to share recommendations on improving both macroeconomic and microeconomic prospects.

The draft concept note and the provisional programme for the event is attached. For further information, Mr. Daniel Gimenez, Senior Adviser, and Ms. Nehali Anupriya, Adviser, may be contacted at Daniel.gimenez@un.org and nehali.anupriya@un.org.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

WHAT NEXT FOR COMMODITY MARKETS?

INFORMAL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON COMMODITY MARKETS

22 May 2020

Trusteeship Council Chamber, UNHQ, New York

Background

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in its resolution A/RES/74/204 decided "to hold a one-off one-day informal interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on commodity markets [...] to review world commodity trends and prospects, and possible strategies for economic and export diversification, as well as value addition, particularly in commodity-dependent countries, with the aim of sharing experiences and lessons learned".

UNGA notes the negative effects of commodity price volatility in commodity-dependent developing countries (CDDCs), as well as net commodity-importing developing countries. It also acknowledges, on one hand, climate change affects the commodity sector and, on the other hand, the production, transportation, processing, use and disposal of commodities affect climate change. Heightened vulnerabilities to climate and other external shocks and, as a result, volatile export revenues can have a detrimental impact on CDDC's capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It is, therefore, important that developing countries that are dependent on the commodity sector keep track of important market developments, particularly trends in prices, supply and demand, as these factors influence their socio-economic development and capacity to meet the SDGs by 2030. In addition, considering their strong exposure to the vagaries of climate change, this issue should be prominent in policy debates on CDDCs development.

Rapid technological progress offers solutions for improved market monitoring as well as enhanced transparency and management of commodity exchanges. Technological development is also associated with groundbreaking innovations with the potential of transforming commodity value chains. CDDCs and their development partners should keep abreast of major and new trends and explore avenues where and how technology could be used to address some of the most enduring issues, while highlighting the challenges associated with the adoption of new technologies in a CDDC context.

Format

The one-day informal interactive dialogue will consist of an opening segment, a presentation by UNCTAD and FAO, two panels and the closing segment. Panelists will include experts, high-level government officials and representatives from the private sector, civil society and international financial institutions, among others.

Participants

In addition to Member States and Observers of the General Assembly, the meeting is open to the United Nations system and accredited representatives of civil society.

Outcome

The outcome will be a President's summary to be circulated to all Member States, the UN System and other stakeholders.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

10:00-10:20	**Opening Segment** H.E. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, President of the UN General Assembly
10:20-11:00	**Global Trends in Commodity Markets – Presentation by FAO and UNCTAD** Commodities play an important role in the economies of many developing countries, with about two-thirds of developing countries deriving at least 60% of their export revenues from the commodity sector. As a result, in these countries, commodity price movements significantly impact economic growth, macroeconomic stability, poverty, food security, and the path to a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable growth. The presentation will provide information on recent developments in commodity markets and their implications for food security, growth and sustainable development in commodity-dependent developing countries. This will set the stage for the two panel discussions.
11:00-13:00	**Panel 1: Commodity Markets, Climate Change and SDGs** Commodity markets can significantly contribution for the delivery of the 2030 Agenda, including on SDG 13: Climate Action and SDG 2: Zero Hunger. Climate change has important consequences for commodity value chains, and commodity-dependent developing countries face specific and disproportionate climate risks. Panelists will be invited to discuss how commodity-dependent countries can diversify production and exports to mitigate risks associated with commodity dependence, which have been magnified by climate variability. The session will also debate on how to ensure this structural transformation process, featuring both horizontal and vertical diversification to increase resilience and promote value addition, to be inclusive and support the implementation of the SDGs.
15:00-17:00	**Panel 2: Technology and Commodity Markets** Technology and innovation play a crucial role in economic growth and development. CDDCs can leverage technology to escape the commodity dependence trap. In agriculture, technology and innovation are central driving forces for achieving SDG 2. For non-agricultural commodities, digital technology and other recent technological developments, can be harnessed to maximise benefits from the commodity sector, increase productivity and contribute to economic structural transformation (SDG 8 and 9). In addition, digital technologies increase commodity market transparency, help streamline supply chains and enhance trade facilitation. Challenges include overcoming the technological divide and ensuring that the technology is accessible and scalable and that all market participants, including small farmers, share the gains. The session will debate opportunities and challenges deriving from technological progress and innovation in commodity markets and trade. It will also discuss potential solutions to bridge the technological divide, such as technology transfer, capacity building and the need for improved global partnership and cooperation.
17:00-17:15	**CLOSING SEGMENT** ▪ H.E. Tijjani Muhammed Bande, President of the UN General Assembly