



**General Statement by Pakistan
at the 71st Session of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board
(18 September 2024)**

**President of the Trade and Development Board Ambassador Paul Bekkers,
Secretary-General of UNCTAD Madam Rebecca Grynspan,
Excellencies and distinguished delegates,**

Pakistan congratulates you, Mr. President, on your election, and expresses full confidence in your stewardship of this meeting.

We commend Secretary-General UNCTAD for her comprehensive report, highlighting the organization's achievements across its three pillars: consensus-building, research and analysis, and technical cooperation.

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Cambodia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Bangladesh on behalf of the APG.

We welcome the extensive research carried out by UNCTAD through its flagship World Investment Report and Digital Economy Report. These reports provide crucial insights into the dynamics of trade and investment in a challenging global landscape.

We meet today under the weight of immense global challenges that are placing significant strain on developing countries. Economic disruptions, climate change, and geopolitical tensions have severely impacted the global south, halting developmental gains and deepening inequalities. My delegation would like to underscore the specific challenges that aggravate the plight of developing countries:

First, developing countries face severe financial pressures. Public debt in developing economies has surged to 70% of GDP, with many countries now spending more on debt servicing than on health or education. According to the World Bank, the global poverty rate is expected to rise for the first time in 25 years, with an additional 75 to 95 million people pushed into extreme poverty due to global shocks.

Second, apart from the existential threat posed by climate change, its costs far exceed the capacity of developing countries. Despite contributing less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions, Pakistan ranks among the top 10 countries most

vulnerable to climate change. According to the SDG costing project, the annual cost for 48 developing economies to fight climate change is projected to exceed \$5.5 trillion annually, which is about 18% of their collective GDP.

Third, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) remains a critical driver of development, but global FDI flows have been in consistent decline. As reported in the World Investment Report, last year FDI fell by more than 10 percent globally, and by 7 percent in the developing world. In key sectors such as energy, water, and infrastructure, the investment gap has widened from \$2.5 trillion in 2015 to over \$4 trillion annually, putting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at serious risk.

Finally, the ongoing digital divide remains a critical issue. Despite the rapid growth of digital economies globally, over 2.9 billion people still lack access to the internet, the majority of whom are in developing countries. This divide is not only a technological issue but one that risks deepening existing inequalities

Mr. President,

This situation reflects the dire need for renewed multilateral action, underpinned by reforms to reflect equitability in the global economic and financial systems. We offer the following recommendations:

First, the global financial architecture needs to be overhauled to address the growing debt burdens on developing countries. This includes a fairer allocation of Special Drawing Rights, restructuring of sovereign debt, reform of international credit-rating mechanisms, and the fulfilment of annual Overseas Development Assistance commitments by the international community.

Second, developing countries must have access to the tools and infrastructure needed to participate in the digital economy. Pakistan urges the international community to support efforts to expand digital infrastructure, promote technology transfer and raise digital literacy.

Third, the global community must fulfill its commitments to climate finance, with developed countries providing \$100 billion annually to support climate adaptation and mitigation in vulnerable countries. The transfer of green technologies and capacity-building efforts must also be accelerated to support climate-vulnerable countries in transitioning to a low-carbon economy.

Fourth, there is an urgent need to mobilize both public and private capital to bridge the investment gap in critical sectors, including infrastructure, healthcare, and renewable energy.

Last but not the least, multilateral cooperation remains our best hope for addressing the complex challenges we face today. UNCTAD's research, policy

recommendations, and technical assistance provide invaluable support to developing countries. We urge the international community to reinforce multilateral efforts aimed at fostering an inclusive global economy that leaves no one behind.

Mr. President,

Last week the Geneva Chapter of G77 & China celebrated its 60th anniversary and earlier this summer, we commemorated the 60th anniversary of UNCTAD. These events are meant not only to reflect on the Group's achievement but also to generate the necessary impetus and momentum to work towards our common goal of ensuring development for all.

As we gear ourselves towards UNCTAD 16, we must endeavour to strengthen UNCTAD's hands by empowering it with a robust mandate and reaffirming our commitment to multilateralism to address these critical challenges.

Only through this can we hope to implement much-needed reforms in global governance, invest adequately in sustainable development, and foster greater international cooperation, to achieve a fairer and more resilient global economy.

I thank you.

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