



Statement
Illicit Trade Forum 2020
(3-4 February 2020)

**Excellencies,
Distinguished panellists and participants,**

I wish to commend UNCTAD Secretariat and TRACIT on organizing the Illicit Trade Forum 2020 and prioritizing the important issue of illicit trade. Fruitful discussion of the learned panelist has enhanced our collective insights. Illicit trade is a multi-dimensional phenomenon requiring multi-disciplinary solutions. There is a need of global response.

Mr. Chair,

Pakistan is an important country in international trade. It provides transit route to its land locked neighboring country and Central Asian States. Like all countries and regions that straddle on transit routes, Pakistan also face challenges of illicit trade in terms of crowding out legitimate economic activity, depriving governments of revenues for investment in vital public services, dislocating millions of legitimate jobs and complicating border management. We have accordingly enacted a number of firewalls from robust security and anti-narcotics apparatus to strong regulations to counter financial transactions and illicit flows. These have been well acknowledged by UNODC and other multilateral institutions.

Mr. Chair,

Illicit trade is robbing governments of taxable income, breeding corruption, undermining trust in institutions and the rule of law, while generating enormous illicit financial flows and revenue for organized criminal and terrorist groups, feeding violence and undermining the goals for global peace and stability. Illicit trade also dampens private sector investment, holds back research and development (R&D) and discourages technology transfer. It leads to unfair competition and undermines private sector contributions to economic growth and employment. It chokes off market growth and sabotages global supply chains alongside squandering

natural resources and endangering market security. Stopping illicit trade is becoming social and economic imperative.

Mr. Chair,

Collaboration between countries to combat against networks that facilitate illicit trade across borders is critical. Several governments are individually taking steps to curtail illicit trade, their approach has often been siloed. Disjointed international response, with little cross-cutting work on the common challenge has little impact. There is need of concerted efforts to combat the negative forces of illicit trade and plug the fiscal leakages associated with it.

Collaborative relationship between business, law enforcement and government agencies, is a crucial element to effectively fighting illicit trade. Effective public-private partnership can identify and shut down large facilities manufacturing counterfeits. Conducting training sessions for law enforcement and customs officers around the world on how to distinguish genuine products from counterfeits can also help controlling the fake products in the market.

Mr. Chair,

Looking at the interconnected nature of the problem, the commonalities and points of convergence, coordinated efforts by the national authorities in tandem with the international support seems imperative. UNCTAD has a vital role to play through its training and capacity building expertise.

I would also like to commend the work of TRACIT, “Mapping the Impact of Illicit Trade on the Sustainable Development Goals”. It would help governments and business better understand how their efforts to achieve sustainable development must account for the negative forces of illicit trade.

Finally, Pakistan would welcome mainstreaming of the issues related to illicit trade and rectifying steps into UNCTAD-XV outcome.

I Thank You.
