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BRIEFING ON THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE 12TH
UNCTAD SESSION

Briefing on the Preparations for the 12th UNCTAD Session

1. UNCTAD XII will be held from 20 to 25 April 2008 in Accra, Ghana. Like previous conferences, it will provide an opportunity to define the major aspects of the next four-year programme of work and to move discussions forward on the main theme.
2. The 192 UNCTAD Member States decided that the main theme of the Conference will be: Addressing the challenges of globalization for development. The following will be sub-themes:
 - a. Enhancing coherence at all levels for sustainable economic development and poverty reduction in global policy making, including the contribution of regional approaches.
 - b. Key trade and development issues and the new realities in the geography of the world economy.
 - c. Enhancing the enabling environment at all levels to strengthen productive capacity, trade and investment: mobilizing resources and harnessing knowledge for development.
 - d. Strengthening UNCTAD; enhancing its development role, impact, and institutional effectiveness.
3. At the 54th Session of the Trade and Development Board (TDB), UNCTAD's governing body, it was decided to establish a Preparatory Committee for UNCTAD XII to be chaired by the Board Chairperson. The African Group designated Cote d'Ivoire as Vice-Chairperson of the Board and Chad as coordinator of the Group with effect from September 2007. The two countries will work in close collaboration with other African countries to defend Africa's interests during UNCTAD's preparatory deliberations, bearing in mind notably that the final text of the mid-term review and the Sao Paulo Consensus are the reference documents for preparing the 12th Session of the Conference, in view of the attainment of the MDGs in 2015. It should be noted that the Chair of the G77 and China will revert to Africa as from January 2008.
4. The African Group prepared a position with a view to its inclusion in UNCTAD XII. That position which was defended during the G77 meeting and the meeting held in China always features in the compiled document which is the subject of negotiations.
5. It emerged on the ongoing discussions that the aim of the developed countries is to limit the mandate of UNCTAD by avoiding issues related to international coherence, systems, as well as room for political maneuver.

Developing countries, African countries in particular, are defending trade and development-related issues such as commodities, direct foreign investment, competition right and policy, regional trade agreements, international trade negotiations at the WTO, aid for trade, climate change and the strengthening of the role of UNCTAD.

6. Preparations at the level of the host country: the Ghanaian Minister of Trade, Industry and the Private Sector informed the TDB that accommodation arrangements were satisfactory and that the Conference would be held at the Conference Centre backed by two temporary facilities. UNCTAD Secretariat has set up its own internal coordination committee which is cooperating with the authorities of the host countries.

7. The Civil Society Forum will be held from 17 to 25 April 2008 on the sidelines of the twelfth session of the conference and the declaration arising therefrom will be adopted during the opening plenary session of the Conference.

8. During UNCTAD XII, a high level panel on creative industry and development industries will be organized. It is important that Africa gets mobilized to participate in this event, given its enormous potentialities and comparative advantages in the area of art and creativity. This will be an opportunity for Africa to showcase its talents and attract investment for the promotion of creative industries in Africa.

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