

PRESS RELEASE

Philippine Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva



Philippine envoy backs UNCTAD chief's vision for reform

4 March 2022, Friday, Geneva, Switzerland – Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva Evan P. Garcia met with U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Secretary-General Rebecca Grynspan today to exchange views on revitalizing UNCTAD and implementing the Bridgetown Covenant.

“We support the revitalization of UNCTAD,” Ambassador Garcia said.

The Philippine envoy welcomed Secretary-General Grynspan’s vision to enhancing UNCTAD’s voice in global economic governance, noting the need for practical solutions to promote recovery from COVID-19 crisis and sustainable development.

“My job is to maintain the global development agenda on the table,” Secretary-General Grynspan said, explaining that UNCTAD plays an important role in keeping this agenda at the center of multilateral conversations especially given recent geopolitical dynamics.

The two officials also agreed on the need to strengthen technical cooperation within UNCTAD’s framework, with the Philippine ambassador welcoming the UNCTAD secretariat’s draft technical cooperation strategy. Ambassador Garcia stressed that such cooperation must be “demand-driven” rather than “donor-driven.”

Secretary-General Grynspan said she is prioritizing technical cooperation, an important component of which is resource mobilization. At a recent meeting of UNCTAD envoys, Ambassador Garcia also stressed the need for stable, sufficient, and predictable funding, encouraging donor countries to enhance the UNCTAD secretariat’s independence in mobilizing funds for technical cooperation projects.

Secretary-General Grynspan also emphasized the need for “an economic development paradigm that includes environmental issues. Ambassador Garcia expressed support for her vision of climate action that is not just be environmentalist but also developmentalist, noting that the Philippines has long stressed the nexus between climate change and development issues.

The Philippines has also emphasized for UNCTAD to enhance its voice on global economic affairs, including through closer engagement with other multilateral economic institutions, including the Group of Twenty (G20), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank.

This engagement, Ambassador Garcia told UNCTAD envoys last month, should prioritize “finding practical solutions that work for developing countries” while staying true to its traditional role as “the conscience of global development.”

The Philippine envoy also assured the UNCTAD chief that his delegation will serve as bridge builder between her office and the Asia-Pacific missions in Geneva. The Philippines assumed the coordinatorship of the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) within UNCTAD yesterday.

“You need a group of friends that understand your vision,” Ambassador Garcia said, noting that the Philippines, along with many delegations of ASEAN Member States, are actively engaged in UNCTAD processes and have been supportive of the Secretary-General

UNCTAD is the U.N. focal point on trade and development issues, working to promote the interest of developing countries across the three pillars of consensus-building, research and analysis, and technical cooperation.

Last year, UNCTAD ministers, including Philippine Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr., agreed on the Bridgetown Covenant, a document that provides the mandate for UNCTAD’s work in the next four years. The Philippines was one of the focal negotiators for the Group of Seventy-Seven (G77) and China during talks leading to the said document’s adoption. **END**