



Remarks by Mr. Michael Møller  
United Nations Under-Secretary-General  
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva

Remarks to welcome the President of Ireland, H.E. Michael D. Higgins,  
at the opening of the 10<sup>th</sup> UNCTAD International Debt Management Conference  
Monday, 23 November 2015 at 10.15  
Room XVIII, Palais des Nations

Your Excellency, Mr. Michael Higgins, President of Ireland,

Your Excellency, Mr. Luis Alberto Arce Catacora, Minister of Economy and Public Finance,  
Plurinational State of Bolivia,

Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD,

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues:

It is a great honour and pleasure to welcome His Excellency Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, to this crucial 10<sup>th</sup> International Debt Management Conference here in Geneva.

Responsible debt management is essential, particularly at a time when many Member States have experienced major economic difficulties.

Ireland has made tremendous efforts to maintain official development assistance and humanitarian support for other countries despite the difficult economic situation Ireland faced in recent years. Your presence at this conference, Mr. President, is therefore a very valuable opportunity to share your country's experience on addressing serious economic and financial challenges without undermining the spirit of solidarity much needed in today's world.

This year, important pillars of international solidarity have been established on disaster risk reduction and with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I very much hope that an ambitious accord on combating climate change will follow at the COP 21 in Paris shortly. But all these frameworks rely on financing. The conference in Addis Ababa in July this year was an

important step towards a viable financial basis. And the International Debt Management Conference which we are opening today, is a timely opportunity to further strengthen long-term thinking and risk-management. Far too often have economic and social gains been wiped out by a crumbling debt-structure.

Debt management cuts across the work of International Geneva – the operational hub of the UN system. Human rights dimensions of debt have been discussed at the Human Rights Council. Trade is critically affected by poor debt management, and humanitarian relief coordinated in International Geneva can become necessary when Governments struggle to provide essential services once funding dries up. These are but a few examples that illustrate that we need to work horizontally across the system and with other partners from Civil Society and the private sector to reduce volatilities.

Ireland is an important supporter across many of these issues. Your Excellency's visit to Geneva illustrates this commitment. Such engagement at the highest level from our Member States is vital to further strengthen the work in International Geneva and around the world for a sustainable future. I thank you, Mr. President, for Ireland's wide-ranging support and wish all delegations a fruitful conference.

Thank you very much.