

Trade and Development Board
Twenty-sixth special session
15, 20 June 2012
Geneva

General statements by member States
Speaker: Norway

Friday, 15 June 2012

*Not checked against delivery**

* This statement is made available in the language and form in which it was received. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.

UNCTAD, 26. Special Session of the Trade and Development Board.

Intervention by Mr. K.Stormark, DPR, Permanent Mission of Norway.

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

1. Norway has over the years been a staunch supporter and a friend of UNCTAD as the focal point within the UN for dealing with trade and development issues, including debt issues. As you are aware we have provided political support and considerable financial contributions to the organization since the beginning. As a comment to earlier speakers, I would like to underline that we, as a developed country, are not out to destroy UNCTAD and we are in favour of UN-reform not only for UNCTAD, but also others.

Although UNCTAD has a crucial role within aid for trade issues, we have also seen several other actors have established themselves in the same field, providing competition for the same funds.

2. Norway has noted with pleasure the successful outcome of UNCTAD XIII in Doha. This has provided UNCTAD with a revised universally approved mandate. It is now extremely important that we get a strong, dynamic and efficient organization to implement this mandate. In my view the mandate itself is not worth much if you do not have an equally competent and strong organization implementing it.
3. We have taken duly note of the JIU report and the response from the Secretariat. We would on the basis of that like to express our concerns on the systemic situation within UNCTAD.
4. Like others, we believe that UNCTAD must be strengthened and improved. In our view the organization is not at present able to play that role fully. There is a considerable need for reforms and modernization of the organization.
5. We are aware that budgetary reductions and dwindling resources constitute a problem for the workings of UNCTAD. But, sometimes these constraints can also be turned into something positive and provide a window of opportunity for change.
6. Norway believes that UNCTAD in general would benefit from a major reorganization based on the JIU-recommendations. We fully support the establishment of a plan of action, as mentioned by the EU, the LDC-spokesperson and the Swiss, to be discussed in the TDB in September. If a credible plan can be established and approved by all, Norway is willing to consider financing external consultants for the follow up, if that can speed up implementation.
7. Norway will encourage all actors present, the Secretariat and the member states alike, to use this opportunity to make a joint comprehensive and concrete plan of action with the explicit aim of strengthening UNCTAD and make it a valuable tool for its mandate. We are worried that failure to act on this occasion will lead to an unfortunate marginalization of UNCTAD.

Thank you

Areas for review:

- Introduction of RBM
- Assisting in drawing up a possible new organizational structure.
- Look into UNCTAD's relationship with other actors within trade and development
- Look into the outreach programme, incl the number of meetings.