

Statement by Finland at the 8th session of the Trade and Development Commission, Geneva 4 November 2016.

Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. Chairperson, and the other bureau members on your election for this important role.

Mr. Chairperson,

Finland would like to thank the Secretariat for the report on the Expert meeting on Trade as a Tool for the Economic Empowerment for women.

We think that the fact that more than 80 participants from over 20 countries participated in the meeting demonstrates that there is a strong interest in discussing policies and measures needed for trade and trade policy to fully contribute to women's economic empowerment.

We in Finland have first-hand experience in knowing that empowering women not only strengthens the society as a whole but makes economic sense. It benefits everyone.

Therefore we have been and will keep supporting the important work of the UNCTAD Trade, Gender and Development Programme. We feel that the role of the Programme is increasingly important now, as we have a strong mandate from Nairobi to reinforce the work on the links between gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment and trade and development.

It is important to mainstream gender issues in all UNCTAD work. It is also important that we continue to provide the opportunity to experts to discuss in this kind of formal setting the policies and measures needed for the gender work.

At the same time we must ensure that we turn these discussions into action. The Secretariat has a key role in this, and I would like to express our grave concern about the fact that the regular budget resources of the Secretariat are very thin in this area. We think that it would be extremely important to strengthen the resources of the Trade, Gender and Development Programme to enable it to reinforce its work and to respond to the new mandate from Nairobi. We have provided funding to the Programme since 2012 and are currently preparing a new contribution for the next two years. However, in our view the Programme should not rely so heavily on extra-budgetary funding.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.