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General Debate

Statement by Finland

Wednesday, 20 July 2016

Speaker: Ambassador Päivi Kairamo

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Statement by Finland
Ambassador Päivi Kairamo
UNCTAD XIV General Debate on 20 July 2016

1. Chairperson, Excellencies; Ladies and Gentlemen; It is a great honour to speak on behalf of the Government of Finland at the UNCTAD XIV Conference. I would like to thank the Government of Kenya for hosting this very important event.
2. The world today is more interconnected than ever before and the challenges that we face are increasingly global from climate change to migration. While protectionist tendencies are gaining momentum in many countries, there is also good reason for optimism. There is increasing recognition that the world needs to come together to address the severe challenges that we are facing.
3. The year 2015 is proof of this with the landmark multilateral agreements that chart the course to sustainable development: the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the Paris Agreement at the Climate Conference.
4. 2015 was also an important year for multilateral trade negotiations. The WTO ministerial conference was held for the first time in Africa, right here in Nairobi in December. The “Nairobi Package” is directly relevant to developing countries containing decisions on agriculture, cotton and issues related to least-developed countries.
5. The UNCTAD XIV conference is an opportune time to take stock of the landmark agreements achieved last year and to consider UNCTAD’s role in

the new global trade and development landscape. It is an opportunity to consider areas where UNCTAD can best add value to achieve sustainable development.

6. Finland is pleased to note that many of the issues that UNCTAD has championed over the years are now firmly and prominently on the global development agenda. The Agenda 2030 now recognizes the vital role of trade, investment, technology and productive capacity in achieving sustainable development.
7. This is a major success and confirms the continued relevance of UNCTAD. Through its three pillars – consensus building; policy-oriented analysis; and technical cooperation – UNCTAD has an important role to play in the areas of trade and development and interrelated issues of finance, investment, technology and sustainable development.
8. However, UNCTAD also needs to continue its reform process. It is vital to prioritize and focus in areas where UNCTAD has a comparative advantage and where it complements the work of other international organizations. There is a need to strengthen results-based management within UNCTAD and to streamline UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities. With increasingly tight aid budgets, the need to demonstrate impact and value for money is more important than ever.
9. Finland is a long-term partner and donor to UNCTAD. Some years ago, President of Finland, President Halonen co-chaired the Panel of Eminent Persons that proposed ways to enhance UNCTAD's development role and impact. Finland has also contributed funds to several of UNCTAD's work programmes in recent years such as e-commerce, trade and gender and the Virtual Institute. We look forward to working with UNCTAD in the

coming years in areas such as e-trade and gender. We are particularly pleased that the *e-Trade for All –initiative* is launched here at the UNCTAD XIV conference.

10. Chairperson, I would next like to highlight some of Finland's priorities in trade and development policies that are also relevant to the work of UNCTAD.

11. Openness to trade is a key factor behind sustained economic growth. Countries that have integrated into the global economy and global value chains have had the best results in terms of reducing poverty. We recognize that many of the poorest countries, however, continue to face multiple challenges in accessing and benefiting from international trade opportunities. Initiatives, such as Aid for Trade, play an important role in supporting countries in this regard.

12. We need to ensure that trade and economic growth is inclusive. This means that gender, youth and the rights of vulnerable and marginalized communities have to be taken into account in trade and development policies and programmes. Finland's development policy places a particularly high priority on gender. We see that enhancing the rights and opportunities of women and girls strengthens the society as a whole and is critical for meeting development goals.

13. Creating decent jobs and income earning opportunities is also key to making economic growth inclusive. Particularly the private sector plays a critical role in job creation. It is important to focus on creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment that is conducive to investment and private sector development.

14. Finland's development policy emphasizes environmental sustainability. Economic growth has to be based on the sustainable use of natural resources particularly in view of climate change impacts.

15. Chairperson, Excellencies; Ladies and Gentlemen; Finland is fully committed to working with Member States and the UNCTAD Secretariat to leverage trade and development for inclusive and sustainable development in the context of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

16. Thank you.