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General Debate

Statement by the Ambassador of Ireland to Kenya

Wednesday, 20 July 2016

Speaker: H.E. Dr Vincent O'Neill

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United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Fourteenth Session

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STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF IRELAND

H.E. Dr Vincent O'Neill

Ambassador of Ireland to Kenya

Madam President, (or Mr/Madam Vice-President)

The Irish delegation fully aligns itself with the statement already delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Let me begin, Madam President, by expressing our deep gratitude to the Government and people of Kenya for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to us this week.

We have come to Nairobi to address the most pressing issues affecting the global economy, and to shape global policy responses to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

The theme of UNTAD XIV “From decision to action” has set us the important task of finding solutions so that globalisation and global trade benefits all people on this planet, especially the marginalised and poor.

Last year the international community adopted a number of agreements.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda, taken together, shape a blueprint for sustainable development for all countries for the next fifteen years.

The Summit to adopt the 2030 Agenda, which took place in New York in September, was one of the biggest ever gatherings of political leaders at the United Nations.

Ireland is proud to have co-chaired the negotiations on the SDGs together with Kenya.

The overall objective is that these agreements will deliver a broad new, integrated agenda for global development which has the potential to move the world onto a sustainable path, end poverty and leave no vulnerable group behind.

Madam President,

At this Conference, we must reaffirm the important role of UNCTAD and the key contribution that it can make to this new global development agenda.

We must define the shape of the work programme for UNCTAD for the next four years - so that it is focused on those areas where it can make the most valuable contribution to global development efforts and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ireland is a strong supporter of the UN Delivery as One initiative and we stress the importance of cooperation between UNCTAD and other UN entities.

In order to ensure coherence and effectiveness, UNCTAD's activities should avoid any duplication and be consistent and coherent with the work of other international organisations, including UN regional commissions, the International Trade Centre, the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF and the OECD.

Ireland believes that increased trade, both regionally and globally, is central to sustainable economic growth, in particular for Least Developed Countries.

Enhancing market access is an important factor, but increased trade is about more than access: developing countries need assistance to enhance their capacity to link into global value chains.

The strengthening of countries' capacities to participate in the global trading system is essential for growth. There is clear evidence that more efficient ports, smoother customs administration processes and better communication networks can make a real difference, as can technical assistance towards meeting international legal and market standards.

Ireland has seen first-hand UNCTAD's strength in the delivery of technical training and building capacities for trade.

Since 2007, we have supported the English-speaking network of UNCTAD's successful 'Train ForTrade' Port Management Programme. While benefiting from the knowledge and expertise of six ports across the island of Ireland, the Programme is ensuring sustainability and local ownership by training senior management from participating ports to serve as local instructors. Some of these instructors now also deliver training to other members of the network in an example of South-South cooperation.

We encourage UNCTAD to build on this positive example of incorporating sustainability into programme delivery in the years ahead.

Ireland also supports UNCTAD's Debt Management and Financial Analysis System programme which assists developing countries to manage their public finances responsibly.

In this regard, good governance, economic and legal transparency and stability are a prerequisite. Through its work in research and technical assistance, UNCTAD has a key role in supporting the efforts of developing countries to ensure that such conditions can be built and maintained.

Gender inequality remains a central development challenge. Addressing gender inequality which is a priority focus for Ireland, is not only a matter of respecting fundamental human rights; it is essential to effective poverty reduction and it makes business sense.

For women in developing countries, the ability to engage in trade increases their potential for income generation, enables them to make productive investments, and helps to reduce poverty. UNCTAD should further enhance and deepen its work in this area.

Madam President,

International Agreements, no matter how well crafted, remain on paper unless they are implemented. If our challenge last year was to agree the SDGs then our challenge this year is to focus on implementation.

It is very important therefore that UNCTAD XIV reaffirms our commitment to work together through innovative approaches that ensure a strong contribution towards the timely and full realization of the ambitious goals in the 2030 Agenda. None of us here underestimates the challenges of implementing that Agenda nor should we underestimate the opportunities that can arise from successful implementation.

I thank you for your attention.