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General Debate

Statement by the Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway

Wednesday, 20 July 2016

Speaker: Ms. Camilla Høvdning Blom

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UNCTAD 14 – Statement by Norway, 20 July 2016
Deputy Director Camilla Høvdning Blom, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

On behalf of Norway, I would like to start by highlighting the **2030 Agenda** and the Sustainable Development Goals. They constitute the strategic background for UNCTAD's work. Implementing the SDGs will require an unprecedented collective effort by all countries, the UN, the private sector and civil society alike. We must build broader and better partnerships.

Norway is among the first to report our national progress on implementation of the SDGs, this was done by prime minister Solberg at the High-level Political Forum in New York yesterday. Norway sees the 17 SDGs as a roadmap for fixing what is broken in our globalised and interdependent world.

We expect UNCTAD to demonstrate that it can contribute to the implementation of the goals, - and thereby contribute to the further integration of developing countries into regional and global trade. UNCTAD has an important role to play through its technical assistance, trade facilitation is a case in point.

To maximise the potential of trade we need a well-functioning framework. Maintaining the WTO as the forum for a rules-based multilateral trade regime is Norway's top trade policy priority. This is crucial not least for promoting the interests of developing countries.

[While on the whole trade expansion contributes to economic growth and increased employment, a considerable number of developing countries, and in particular many least developed countries, remain at the margins of this process.]

It is clear that we need to do more to promote economic growth and job creation in the least developed countries. We know that a thriving private sector is essential for developing countries to become middle-income countries.

We also know that Aid for Trade is of particular importance to deal with supply-side constraints in the **LDCs**. Norway would like to see an increased share of Aid for Trade resources and ODA in general going to those most in need.

Both in our development cooperation and in our trade policy this means giving priority to the least developed countries. In this regard I would like to give tribute to UNCTAD's active engagement and support of the Enhanced Integrated Framework for the LDCs.

Achieving **women's economic empowerment** must be high on UNCTAD's agenda. Equal opportunities for women is vital for economic growth and a prerequisite for a just society. Development requires investing in the most valuable resource of any country: Its population. Education for girls, women's legal rights

to land and women's access to financial services are key to integrate women into the economy.

Gender is and has been a priority and a cross-cutting issue in all Norwegian policies for many years. But we strive do to even better. So should UNCTAD. On the Norwegian side, our Foreign Minister will soon present a new and updated Action Plan for women's rights and gender equality.

Norway has a long-standing cooperation with UNCTAD on debt issues. As the focal point of the United Nations system for debt issues, UNCTAD is well positioned to shape opinions and promote important debt-related issues at the international level.

Norway has been a donor to the project on Promoting Responsible Sovereign Lending and Borrowing, as well as the DMFAS Programme.

We encourage UNCTAD to continue its efforts to seek wider endorsement for the Principles on Responsible Sovereign Lending and Borrowing. Furthermore, we recognise the DMFAS Programme's important role in helping governments manage their debt, and we are in the process of closing an agreement regarding a new grant to the programme.

Finally, I would like to touch briefly on the need for results-based management and increased effectiveness. The recommendations by the Joint Inspection Unit have to be implemented. We appreciate the reform work already undertaken by Secretary General Kituyi, DSG Reiter and their team. These reform efforts must continue for UNCTAD to play its proper role as a champion for trade and development.

Thank you.