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General Debate

Statement by the State Secretary at the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation of
Sweden

Tuesday, 19 July 2016

Speaker: H.E. Mr Erik Bromander

*Not checked against delivery**

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REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Sweden

**Swedish national statement at UNCTAD XIV, 19 July,
Nairobi, Kenya**

Chairperson, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to our host country, Kenya, for their excellent organization of the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Few question the power of trade and investment as engines for growth and development. In fact, when adopting the 2030 Agenda, world leaders have recognized trade and investment as important means of implementation in our pursuit of a fair and sustainable global development. In our pursuit of a world where poverty is eradicated and prosperity is shared.

In Sweden, a small open economy, we have learned from our own experiences the crucial role that trade can play to sustain economic development. Trade was a key factor in transforming Sweden from one of the poorer countries in Europe to a modern welfare state. Today, the Swedish government remains committed to free and fair trade and is a strong supporter of the WTO. We see that open markets and a free, rules-based and transparent multilateral trade regime is a precondition necessity for well-functioning global value chains and sustainable trade and investments. And we acknowledge the need for Aid for Trade to support developing countries, in particular the LDCs, to take advantage of the opportunities brought about by trade liberalisation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In our pursuit of a world where poverty is eradicated and prosperity is shared, we cannot afford holding back half of the world population. Gender equality is not only a core development objective in its own right – it is also smart economics! We recognize that countries in which a large share of women

participate in the labour market enjoy greater economic growth than countries restricting the right of women to work on equal terms with men. Investing in gender equality is a necessary precondition to reap full benefit of trade liberalisation. It is a means of domestic resource mobilisation which will benefit society as a whole.

We have to mobilise our best efforts to strengthen women's and girls' rights and economic empowerment. The area of trade and development is no exception. As part of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, we have all agreed to address the specific challenges of women to facilitate their equal and active participation in domestic, regional and international trade. In practice, this must be achieved by integrating gender considerations when formulating trade policy, when negotiating trade agreements, and when implementing Aid for Trade programmes. UNCTAD has a key role in this work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Implementing the comprehensive, universal and integrated 2030 Agenda is a common challenge which requires global cooperation as well as policy coherence for sustainable development. As a multi thematic organization, UNCTAD is in a strong position to contribute to a coherent approach within trade and development, and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development.

Sweden would like to highlight a few areas where the contribution of UNCTAD could be particularly important.

Firstly, trade barriers.

Today, trade policy has already come a long way from being solely about tariffs. Eliminating non-tariff barriers can result in great gains for all of us, but the LDCs and other developing countries stand to gain the most. Actions to cut red tape and measures to facilitate trade are priorities for Sweden. Thus we encourage the ratification and implementation of WTO's Agreement on Trade

Facilitation. It is also important that UNCTAD continues the excellent work done in this area, with an increased emphasis on trade barriers affecting women's participation in trade.

Secondly, e-commerce.

Digitalisation and e-commerce have a tremendous potential to fulfil the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, by facilitating access to information, networks, goods and services, as well as contributing to economic development, trade and job creation. In many countries, not least the LDCs, more efforts are needed to unlock this potential. UNCTAD can play a leading role in this regard, through its technical assistance, and in cooperation with other international organisations. The Swedish support to UNCTAD's global initiative eTrade for All is a sign of the importance my government attaches to e-commerce and its potential for trade, growth and development.

Thirdly, investments.

To implement the 2030 Agenda, global investment needs are enormous. As you may be aware, UNCTAD has calculated that to

achieve the sustainable development goals, the annual investment gap in developing countries amounts to 2.5 trillion dollar.

UNCTAD's work on Foreign Direct Investment and development is a good example of an area where the organization has a comparative advantage. The organisation also has a central role in assisting the LDCs and other vulnerable countries to create an enabling environment for promoting sustainable investments. Sweden and UNCTAD are long-standing partners in the area of investment, and I am very pleased to announce a renewed Swedish three-year contribution (of 1.8 million USD) to UNCTAD's work in this area.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Within its mandate, and in particular in the areas mentioned, UNCTAD holds a unique position in the UN system to provide strong, coherent and effective support to developing countries. To ensure an important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, we need to have a strong, transparent and accountable UNCTAD. To increase the impact of the three pillars of UNCTAD, results-based management practice has to be

mainstreamed. Allocating UNCTAD's resources to where they will have the maximum effect will make best use of the organisation's contribution to the 2030 Agenda, and thus be beneficial to all of us. But it would be of most value for the producers, traders and consumers in developing countries that directly benefit from UNCTAD's work.

Sweden is a major contributor to UNCTAD's technical assistance programmes, and a strong supporter of multilateralism. We acknowledge the great demand for UNCTAD's expertise in the areas of trade, investment and related topics, in particular by the LDCs and other vulnerable countries. I would like to take this opportunity to urge all of us to work even harder for reaching a successful outcome of this conference. An outcome where UNCTAD makes progress for the benefit of global trade and development as well as our pursuit of a world where poverty is eradicated and prosperity is shared.

Thank you for your kind attention.