

Luz Maria de la Mora

Director, Division on International Trade and Commodities

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Dialogue on trade and Sustainable Development Goals with mediterranean countries

I would like to start by expressing my appreciation for the long-standing collaboration we have enjoyed with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, having joined forces in several initiatives to exchange experiences and lessons learned, including through the Global Services Forum and many trade dialogues. I am glad we meet again today under the Multilateral Dialogue Geneva.

I am also pleased to welcome representatives of think tanks from mediterranean countries. Trade plays an especially important role in your economies, with exports representing a larger share of gross domestic product than the global average. This makes today's discussion on trade and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) very timely, focusing specifically on SDG 8 on decent work and growth, SDG 9 on industry and innovation, and SDG 17 on partnerships.

Trade drives SDG 8 by fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and better jobs. It advances SDG 9 by providing access to technology and services that strengthen industries and infrastructure. Services are central to this story: they account for about half of world exports, and one-third of manufacturing exports. Indeed, these important issues will also be discussed at our Global Services Forum during the 16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 16) next month.



Yet services trade is often invisible – because it is intangible and increasingly digital – even though it is growing twice as fast as trade in goods. UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) works to help countries measure this trade better, supporting SDG targets 17.18 and 17.19 on data and statistical capacity. Our new Primer on data for trade in services and development policies is one tool for policymakers to make evidence-based decisions.

Finally, trade is at the heart of SDG 17 itself: Building a fair multilateral trading system, boosting developing-country exports, and expanding market access for least developed countries. UNCTAD's work on regional agreements and commodities supports these goals directly, helping countries diversify and grow.

I am confident our dialogue today will be rich and productive. I thank the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung for our valuable partnership, which I hope will continue to grow in the years ahead.

Contacts

Luz Maria de la Mora
UNCTAD
luzma.delamora@unctad.org