

Trade and Development Board, 73rd session
Item 3, General debate

National statement of Italy

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

At a time of fragile growth and overlapping crises, our collective responsibility is to strengthen multilateral cooperation and **ensure that trade and investment deliver tangible benefits for all**, particularly developing countries and least developed countries.

An open, transparent, predictable and rules-based **multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core, remains indispensable**. Italy supports constructive engagement in the negotiations on WTO reform to make the Organization more effective and responsive to today's challenges. We must rebuild trust, bridge differences and work towards concrete outcomes that strengthen the system and its credibility.

In this context, UNCTAD has a vital contribution to make. Its analysis, consensus-building and technical cooperation help developing countries identify policy options, strengthen productive capacities and participate more fully in international trade. **Italy supports the effective implementation of the Geneva Consensus through UNCTAD's three pillars**, with a clear focus on translating trade and investment into diversification, decent jobs and sustainable growth.

In the context of UN80 and increasingly constrained resources, **clear priorities and stronger coordination across the UN system are essential** to preserve UNCTAD's development impact and avoid duplication.

Italy stands ready to continue working with UNCTAD to strengthen multilateral cooperation and turn our shared commitment to sustainable and inclusive growth into concrete results.

Particular attention must be paid to countries facing structural vulnerabilities and limited fiscal space. Enabling them to move towards higher-value activities requires investment in skills, infrastructure, technology and stronger institutions. It also requires ensuring that small businesses, women and young people can access the opportunities created by trade.

These priorities are central to **our national plan for Africa**. We pursue partnerships based on equality, mutual benefit and priorities identified together with our African partners. Our objective is to support locally owned development, strengthen capacities and generate lasting economic opportunities, including through cooperation between public institutions and the private sector. In this context, we have also launched a **debt-for-development swap initiative** for the 2026–35 decade, in favour of African countries with debt positions vis-à-vis Italy. The converted funds will be used to finance jointly agreed development programmes.

Our development efforts go hand in hand with renewed determination to **achieve just and lasting peace**. Ongoing conflicts have devastating consequences and far-reaching effects on the global economy, particularly on energy, agricultural products and fertilizers.

Disrupted trade routes, uncertain supplies and higher input costs are particularly damaging for vulnerable economies. They weaken agricultural production, deepen food insecurity and divert scarce resources away from development.

Italy therefore stresses the urgency of diplomatic efforts to end hostilities and achieve peaceful solutions in accordance with international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. Restoring conditions for economic recovery is essential to safeguarding development prospects.

Thank you.