



Agenda item: 7

General Debate

Statement by:

North Macedonia





**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA**

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UNCTAD16 , General Debate

Statement by Ms. Natasha Hroneska, Chargée d’Affaires a.i.

Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address the 16th session of UNCTAD on behalf of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Allow me to begin by commending the leadership of the Secretary-General Rebeca Grynszpan, and the tireless work of UNCTAD in advancing a fairer global trade and development agenda. We also extend our sincere appreciation to Switzerland for hosting this important event.

We gather at a time of profound global uncertainty, which presents also great opportunity. The theme of this conference reflects the urgency of our shared mission. As our economies grapple with technological disruptions, climate pressures, and rising inequalities, we must ensure that transformation is inclusive and just.

The challenges to the multilateralism are pressing, but there are also reasons to be optimistic. In this regard we join the call for bold, cooperative solutions to rebuild trust in the international trade and sustainable development agenda. We support UNCTAD’s efforts to promote transparent, fair, and inclusive trade rules that work for all.

My country, North Macedonia, as a small but open and reform-oriented economy in the Western Balkans, has long championed multilateralism as a force for peace, stability, and shared prosperity.

We have been a stringent supporter of the multilateral trading system. Trade liberalization and regional integration have played a key role in boosting investment, growth, and market access. Our trade and investment policies are aligned with the WTO rules-based system, one that provides free flow of goods and services, protects supply chains and enables a favorable environment for SMEs.

We have been further investing in regulatory development. In this regard, we welcome UNCTAD's technical support through the project "EU4Business support to CEFTA for Non-Tariff Measures monitoring and reporting and support to the implementation of the CEFTA Dispute Settlement Mechanism", which is financed by the European Union.

In line with our commitment to the 2030 Agenda, we have integrated the sustainable development goals into our National Development Strategy 2024–2044.

Tackling climate change is of our utmost priority. In collaboration with international organizations, IFIs, and the private sector, we are actively driving forward transformative sustainable energy initiatives that are vital not only for environmental resilience, but also for long-term economic and social prosperity. In this context, we are proud to host the Fourteenth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development next week in Skopje, jointly organized by the five United Nations Regional Commissions and the UNDP.

Finally, we recognize the importance of ensuring that the technological transformation drives inclusive growth. Our Government has invested in an ambition digital agenda for strengthening our digital capabilities, investing in infrastructure to overcome the digital gap, and equipping our youth with the skills needed to thrive in the global digital economy.

As of January 2025, we have joined the expanded European Digital Innovation Hubs network, connecting our SME's, public institutions, and startups with cutting-edge technologies such as AI, and unlocking new opportunities for funding and growth. We will continue to work on digital solutions that are not a matter of choice, but as a necessity for a future driven by connectivity, innovation, and knowledge.

Excellencies,

While the UN80 initiative provides important context, we are gathered here not only to acknowledge the challenges ahead, but also to commit to concrete and actionable solutions.

North Macedonia stands ready to work with all partners, to shape a more just, resilient, and sustainable global economy.

Let us ensure that trade, investment, and technology can serve all nations, without anyone left behind.

I thank you.