



Agenda item: 7

General Debate

Statement by:

Czechia



Czech Republic Statement – UNCTAD16 General Debate

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to address you on behalf of the Czech Republic.

First, allow me to congratulate Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan on her re-election and to express our full support for her leadership in guiding UNCTAD in the spirit of the UN80 reform agenda.

Since UNCTAD15, the world has changed dramatically. The COVID-19 pandemic, intensifying geopolitical tensions - including Russia's illegal aggression against Ukraine - and accelerating climate and digital transitions have reshaped global trade and development. These unprecedented challenges make open dialogue and effective multilateralism more urgent than ever. Czechia believes the way forward is reform and cooperation, not weakening multilateralism. Together, we can achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

Czechia fully aligns with the European Union statement and wishes to highlight and add a few points of particular importance.

UNCTAD's Role and Reform

We support efforts to realign UNCTAD's work with its core strengths, ensuring complementarity with other UN bodies and avoiding duplication. In times of scarce resources, UNCTAD must focus where it adds the greatest value:

- Providing evidence-based analysis;
- Supporting countries in designing and implementing effective policies;
- Delivering targeted technical assistance, especially for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.

We rely on UNCTAD, in cooperation with other international bodies, to translate our common commitment to a just and sustainable economic order into practical support and coordinated global efforts.

Trade and Investment for Development

Czechia is convinced that trade and investment are powerful drivers of prosperity, provided they take place within a rules-based, fair, open, transparent, predictable, and inclusive multilateral framework. These conditions have never been more indispensable.

In this context, we strongly support the WTO as the cornerstone of the multilateral trading system, as well as the efforts to make it fit to meet today's challenges. This includes greater flexibility and the incorporation of Joint Statement Initiative agreements - such as Investment Facilitation for Development - into the WTO framework. We look forward to the upcoming 14th WTO Ministerial Conference in Cameroon to advance the much-needed reform.

Earlier this year, at the FFD4 in Seville, we welcomed the *Sevilla Commitment* as a vital framework for scaling up investment and closing the SDG financing gap. Czechia particularly supports its focus on enhancing fiscal space, reforming the international financial architecture, and aligning international support with national strategies. We also value its emphasis on inclusive governance, gender-responsive budgeting, and targeted support for countries in special situations - essential for resilient and equitable development.

Global Context and Security

We cannot ignore the impact of Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which continues to have devastating consequences for global trade, food security, and development financing. These challenges must be addressed through coordinated multilateral responses, while ensuring that UNCTAD remains a non-politicised platform focused on technical cooperation.

In this regard, we commend Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan for her leadership in facilitating the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which helped mitigate disruptions to global food supply chains and demonstrated the value of pragmatic solutions in times of crisis.

Sustainability, Inclusion, Digital

Economic growth must be decoupled from environmental degradation and be inclusive, sustainable, and resilient. We must tackle inequalities, promote gender equality, empower women and youth, and uphold human rights. These are not peripheral issues - they are central to achieving the SDGs.

Digital transformation brings immense opportunities for growth and innovation, yet disparities in access and capacity persist. Within its well-recognized niche, UNCTAD can play a vital role in helping countries bridge these gaps, strengthen capacities, and advance digital transitions.

Czechia's Contribution

Czechia is proud to be an active member of the international community, supporting partners through its development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. We remain committed to advancing inclusive multilateralism with the UN at its core, and to fostering global solidarity through targeted, needs-based support, particularly for countries in special situations. Our approach emphasizes country ownership, policy coherence, and the effective linking of humanitarian and development efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenges we face are immense, but so is our collective capacity to overcome them. Only by working together we can address climate change, combat poverty, and tackle inequalities - paving the way for lasting peace and prosperity.

Thank you, and we thank Switzerland for hosting UNCTAD16.

* * *