



Agenda item: 7

General Debate

Statement by:

Finland



National intervention of Finland at UNCTAD 16 conference: Secretary of State Jukka Salovaara

It's my great pleasure to represent the Government of Finland at the 16th Ministerial conference of UNCTAD. As they say, "if the UN wouldn't exist, we would have to create it now". The same applies to UNCTAD as well: after 61 years the theme of **trade & development** remains more important than ever.

I would like to start my intervention by commending the leadership and vision of **Secretary General Rebeca Grynspar**. You have done tremendous work in leading UNCTAD from Bridgetown to Geneva and reforming it to meet the needs of the geopolitical turmoil of the late 2020s and the new realities as manifested for example in the form of the **UN80** process and – unfortunately – significantly changed global ODA-landscape.

Today's UNCTAD is an organization for **building bridges** and that's needed more than ever. However, this has not always been the case: I've sometimes heard UNCTAD been referred to as "**developing countries' organization**". I strongly disagree with such notion: UNCTAD needs to be an arena for

the whole wide UN membership to discuss Trade and Development. UNCTAD has a clear place in the **multilateral rules-based trading system with the WTO on its core**.

In other words, UNCTAD and this 16th ministerial conference need, above all, to be in service of **multilateralism**. Finland and EU are strongly committed to this.

Indeed, ladies and gentlemen, UNCTAD16's main object is to serve the process of **reviving our multilateral system**. The conference must be – and will be – one, where countries come together and agree on an ambitious and aspirational, yet realistic and coherent **outcome document**.

UNCTAD has a strong mandate in its sector, combining Trade & Development. This mandate has been strong in the past and will be renewed with hopefully clear priorities after this conference. Finland regards UNCTAD very high in all its 3 pillars and its expertise is second to none on its field. I want to emphasize, how important it is that UNCTAD **concentrates on its core mandate** and competence, complementing – not duplicating – other agencies' and organizations' work.

In the time of the triple-planetary crisis and persisting inequalities, I want to emphasize the importance of UNCTAD's work particularly on **sustainable trade, circular economy** and making trade benefit more people and groups who have been left behind. One specific sector is the **digital trade and e-commerce**, that is, working to bridge the digital divide on trade sector.

Inclusive trade still remains an issue. While we commend the work that has been done in the field of **trade & gender** and women's economic empowerment, more work lies ahead and we must not think that we could yet "tick that box".

Perhaps the newest theme under the inclusive trade is "**Trade and disability**", which Finland has been pioneering. In less than two years tangible results have been achieved in our architecture, most notably the creation of the **Inter-Agency Technical Working Group on Trade & Disability**. In fact, the initiative for its creation came from Secretary-General Grynspar. I thank you for that, Madame, once again. You can count on Finland continuing championing this work.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

I'm very proud of Finland's strong commitment to UNCTAD and this conference. Secretary-General Grynszpan visited Finland in May this year and met for example the President of the Republic, His Excellency Alexander Stubb.

UNCTAD made a call, and Finland answered promising 250.000 euros for the participation of LDC and SIDS countries' ministerial delegations at UNCTAD16. I am very happy to see that UNCTAD has been able to utilize that money with so many delegations being present. How could we talk about multilateralism and joint ownership if many countries would not be able to even travel to Geneva and participate in negotiations that affect their very countries?

Finland is a reliable and relevant partner for the LDCs and SIDS. One example of this partnership are **the LDC Future Forums which support least developed countries** in the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action and ultimately, the sustainable graduation from the LDC category. With regards to the **SIDS** countries, I would like to raise our strong support of the UN Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All initiative: for example The Finnish Meteorological Institute has helped to develop hydrometeorological

institutes in more than 50 developing countries with Finnish funding.

Finland has also been actively facilitating the negotiations on the outcome document. Our Permanent Representative, ambassador Heidi Schroderus-Fox has led as Friend of the Chair the two cluster groups firstly on **climate and environment** and secondly on **tailored approach to development and inclusivity**. I'm happy that this work has bore fruit and we are on our way to adopting the ambitious outcome document.

Finland has also financed a JPO to work in the digital and e-commerce unit of UNCTAD.

With these words, ladies and gentlemen, I want to wish us all an excellent and productive conference.