



Agenda item: 7

General Debate

Statement by:

Portugal





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**Intervenção da Secretária de Estado dos Negócios Estrangeiros e da
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My dear colleagues, good afternoon.

Portugal stands before you as a bridge builder, a listener and a champion of multilateralism.

From the Atlantic shores of Europe, Portugal has always looked outward — not in search of dominance, but of dialogue, partnership, and shared prosperity. Our history is one of connection: building bridges across oceans, linking peoples, cultures and economies.

Today, as we gather for the sixteen United Nations Trade and Development ministerial meeting, that same vision calls us to

renew our collective commitment to a fairer global economy — one that serves people and planet alike.

As Kofi Annan once reminded us, *“We can have peace and security only if we have prosperity and jobs.”* Those words remain a timeless truth. Trade and development are not parallel paths; they are one and the same journey — and it is our responsibility to ensure that this journey leaves no one behind.

Portugal stands firmly for multilateralism, dialogue, and rules-based cooperation. inclusive trade, responsible investment and fair access to markets are not optional aspirations — they are the very foundations of sustainable development.

Portugal's foreign policy, as well as our development cooperation 2030 strategy, are guided by the conviction that economic growth must go hand in hand with social inclusion and environmental sustainability. For Portugal, trade and investment are instruments, not of competition alone, but of shared progress.

Through bilateral and triangular cooperation, Portugal supports our partners to “Collect More” and “Spend Better”. We invest in robust, tailor-made programs that enhance strategic debt management, modernize customs and improve public sector governance. This means supporting efforts to strengthen budget frameworks, improve oversight of public enterprises, and upgrade financial systems to promote transparency and efficiency.

Portugal is also committed to bridge divides by promoting equitable access to digital opportunities, while remaining attentive to the – critical - intersection between technology and security. In doing so, we reaffirm our dedication to the protection and promotion of Human Rights in the digital space.

As a concrete example of our commitment, Portugal has launched three capacity-building fellowship programmes with the UN on Digital Innovation and Transformation, Oceans and Outer space – three areas where we recognise potential for return on investment and Portugal is leading the way.

Also, the Seville Commitment, adopted by consensus at FfD4, was an incredible milestone for our goal to ensure a sustainable development finance policy, and underscored capacity building

and technical cooperation activities (so dear to Portugal) as fundamental pillars for advancing sustainable development, in general.

These principles also underpin our positioning within the European Union, particularly through the Global Gateway framework — mobilising sustainable investment in digital, energy and transport infrastructure, and supporting local value creation in Africa and beyond.

The same principles that guide our engagement within the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, where Portugal continues to promote and is heavily invested in capacity-building, knowledge sharing and economic partnerships that strengthen our collective development.



Turning now to our businesses.

Small and medium enterprises represent 99,7% of Portugal's private sector and employ approximately 80% of the population.

We have not doubt they are the backbone and engine of our economy – not only as source of employment, but also as drivers of innovation and warrants that growth is inclusive.

Yet, we recognise they often face major barriers — from access to finance, to digitalisation, to compliance with global standards.

That is why we welcome and highly endorse UNCTAD's programmes that empower entrepreneurs and local businesses, as well as other UNCTAD-led initiatives focused on Portuguese-speaking African countries' enterprises.

Beyond this, we also see the blue and green economies as essential frontiers for sustainable growth. As a maritime nation with one of the world's largest Exclusive Economic Zones, Portugal believes that the ocean is not only a shared heritage. It fosters innovation, allows for clean energy and represents a great deal in biodiversity protection.

But we also acknowledge ocean-related challenges, which disproportionately impact Least Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and we strongly support the recognition of the ocean-climate-biodiversity and climate-peace-security nexus across several international multilateral fora.

We therefore encourage greater cooperation between UNCTAD and partners in promoting sustainable ocean-based industries —

from fisheries to renewable energy — as part of the global response to climate change.

Dear colleagues,

Portugal strongly believes that global challenges demand collective responses, and our record as an engaged, constructive, and principled UN member state speaks for itself.

At UNCTAD16, let us reaffirm our common purpose: to make trade and investment engines of inclusion, not exclusion; of sustainability, not depletion; of empowerment, not dependency.

We must continue to strengthen South–South cooperation, ensure equitable access to digital technologies, and foster investment that aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals.

We must give developing and least-developed countries the policy space, resources and tools to build resilient, diversified economies.

I conclude reminding us of this year's moto "Shaping the future: Driving economic transformation for equitable, inclusive and sustainable development".

May this be the spirit that guides our work at UNCTAD: a spirit of openness, solidarity and shared destiny. Because when nations trade fairly, they prosper together — and when we build bridges, we all move forward!

I Thank you.