



Agenda item: 7

General Debate

Statement by:

Ukraine



**THE 16TH SESSION OF THE UN CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND
DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD16)**

General debates

Statement by Ukraine

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

The 16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development takes place at a time of great uncertainty, with the world economy facing significant challenges. The principles of openness, cooperation, and rules-based trade and investments, which underpin the multilateral trading system, are being tested at a moment when global solidarity is needed more than ever.

The theme of this Conference resonates deeply with my country, which is pursuing a future rooted in sustainable development, equity, and opportunity. Yet, our path has been violently disrupted by Russia's unprovoked and illegal full-scale war of aggression. This war is not only an assault on Ukraine's sovereignty and our people, it is an attack on the global principles of peace, development, and multilateralism.

Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine continues for the fourth year in gross violation of the UN Charter and with far reaching global consequences for our shared developmental objectives agreed through the Agenda 2030. This war had aggravated global food insecurity and negatively impacted energy reliability and debt sustainability, thus contributing to the global cost-of-living crisis that has hit the most vulnerable hardest.

Over more than a decade of Russia's aggression, from the illegal occupation of Ukrainian territories in 2014 to the full-scale invasion in 2022, Ukraine has endured a relentless and compounding toll on its people, economy, and sovereignty.

The total cost of recovery and reconstruction for Ukraine is projected to exceed 500 billion over the next decade and recovery is still constrained by security risks and energy disruptions caused by continuing Russia's attacks on our critical civilian infrastructure.

Despite all of this, Ukraine remains committed to the Sustainable Development Goals and to inclusive economic transformation.

We are advancing a green and digital economy. We prioritize renewable energy, climate-resilient infrastructure, sustainable agricultural practices and digital innovation to rebuild smarter, cleaner, and more efficiently. Education, healthcare, gender equality and social protection remain central even in a war time period.

We are also focused on human capital. In Ukraine MSMEs are the backbone of the economy, comprising over 99% of all business entities, providing 74% of all jobs, and creating 64% of the added value. The Ukrainian government in cooperation with international partners, is striving to support MSMEs' owners and women entrepreneurs, through targeted grant programs to develop new skills and capacities under the wartime conditions.

Mr. President,

Ukraine stands steadfast in its commitment to maintain the role of a guarantor of global food security. Despite the unprecedented challenges, Ukraine remains one of the world's leading exporters of sunflower oil, oilseeds, corn, barley, sorghum, feed grains and wheat. The lives of around 400 million people around the world in more than 100 countries today depend on Ukrainian food exports.

Ukraine acknowledges with appreciation UNCTAD's instrumental role in supporting the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which allowed millions of tonnes of Ukrainian grain to reach countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East during a time of unprecedented food insecurity.

This is a testament to what multilateralism can achieve even in times of war, and a clear example of how trade can be a tool for peace and stability.

Our successfully implemented humanitarian initiative "Grain from Ukraine" is turning now into a broader program "Food from Ukraine". In this regard it is important to secure free, full and safe navigation in the Black and Azov Seas and that sea routes and ports are not threatened or blocked by threat of or use of force.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce the upcoming Fourth International Summit on Food Security to be held just in a month in Kyiv and to invite you all to contribute jointly into supporting those who are suffering most.

We see the future of international development as one rooted in partnership, justice, and innovation. We have to tackle sustainable growth in all three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. But we must rethink the global development architecture to reflect the realities of today's interconnected challenges, conflicts, climate, inequality, digital divide, and demographic pressures.

In this context, we consider UNCTAD's work on industrial policy, value chain development, digitalization of economic operations and introduction of AI in trade to be highly relevant. Support for SME development, innovation, regional integration, and improved connectivity can make a critical difference in helping countries shift toward more modern, diversified, and sustainable economies. For Ukraine, these are important areas for future cooperation.

We also see a broader role for UNCTAD in contributing to a more inclusive global economic architecture, one that promotes fair and rules-based trade, sustainable investment, effective debt solutions, and access to digital tools and finance.

Ukraine believes that this Conference should renew our shared commitment to shaping a future that is not only possible, but necessary, one that is inclusive, and sustainable for all Members. We have to make a collective effort to level the playing field and make the multilateral trading system fairer, more resilient, responsive and predictable.

But, we shall not forget that there is no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without justice and international solidarity.

Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine continues to constitute a threat to the well-being of every nation, especially the world's most vulnerable. This war has global consequences, and it requires a unified international response. We must not allow wars and coercion to erode decades of development progress. We must act together, decisively, and inclusively.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

In conclusion let me assure you that Ukraine remains deeply committed to a predictable, transparent, and rules-based multilateral trading system and we are ready to engage constructively in efforts to strengthen it.

I thank you.
