



Agenda item: 7

General Debate

Statement by:

Norway



Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Let me underline from the outset: Trade remains one of the most powerful drivers of development. When functioning properly, it enables innovation, productivity growth, and job creation. It connects markets, empowers people, and helps countries move up the value chain. To utilize its potential, we must ensure that trade is inclusive, rules-based, and sustainable.

Norway commends Secretary General Grynspan for her inspiring leadership. The Secretary General's vision and commitment to inclusive and sustainable development have ensured that UNCTAD remains a vital platform for advancing the interests of developing economies.

As we gather for UNCTAD 16, we can feel the foundation for inclusive, rules-based and sustainable trade shaking. The global trading system is crumbling. The need for determined multilateral cooperation is urgent.

It is time to come together and safeguard those elements that enable international trade to function properly. Norway firmly believes that a well-designed multilateral trading system is a global public good. The World Trade Organisation is at the heart of this system. And we need to strengthen it.

As we push the UN80 reform agenda forward towards a stronger and more effective UN, let me take the opportunity to underline that there is an even more pressing need to reform the WTO.

Such reform is not just about rules and procedures – it is about restoring trust, predictability, and fairness. It is about ensuring that trade continues to serve as an engine for development. We cannot let the rules-based order on trade unravel while we are unable to reach consensus in the forum at the core of global cooperation. The WTO must become more agile and more capable of making decisions that respond to the challenges of our time. In the weeks and months ahead, we have to double our efforts to find the way forward for decision making in the WTO.

And in these reform efforts, we must ensure that the trading system evolves in a way that enables developing countries to fully benefit from trade. Targeted technical assistance and partnership is needed to help build the skills, standards, and systems that enable real and lasting participation in global value chains. In this relation, providers of *Aid for Trade*, such as the Enhanced Integrated Framework – which focusses its work on Least Developed Countries - are key players.

UNCTAD undoubtedly has a role to play here, as a platform for policy dialogue, research, and capacity building. Its analytical work and technical cooperation can help bridge the gap between aspiration and implementation.

Together, through multilateral efforts, we can ensure that trade works to the benefit of all. That requires us to safeguard the rules-based system we have built, and to cooperate in good faith. Now is our time.

Thank you.