



Agenda item: 7

General Debate

Statement by:

Ethiopia



**PERMANENT MISSION OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN SWITZERLAND**

**Statement at 16th Session of the United Nations
Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XVI)
General Debate**

Tuesday, 21 October 2025, 03:00-6:00 p.m.

Room III, Palais des Nations

Geneva, Switzerland

- **Your Excellency, Guy Parmelin, President of the Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,**
- **Your Excellency, Madam Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of UNCTAD**
- **Distinguished dignitaries,**
- **Excellencies,**
- **Distinguished delegates,**
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**

At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the Government and people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, to express our profound appreciation to the Government and people of Switzerland for their generous hospitality and the impeccable arrangements made to host this important Ministerial Conference of UNCTAD XVI. We further extend our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Madam Rebeca Grynspan, and her dedicated team for their steadfast commitment and unwavering support. For six decades, UNCTAD has rightfully been recognized as a trusted partner of developing countries offering rigorous policy insight, fostering consensus across diverse interests, and delivering essential technical assistance to advance our shared aspirations for inclusive and sustainable development.

Mr. President,

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statements delivered by Peru on behalf of Group 77 and China, Egypt on behalf of Africa Group and Nepal on behalf of LDC Group.

Over the past years, Ethiopia has embarked upon a bold journey of transformation under its Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda, marked by cascading waves of market-oriented reforms. These reforms have sought to stabilize the macro-economy, liberalize key sectors, modernize the financial system, enhance private sector participation, and strengthen the structural foundations for broad-based, competitive, and sustainable growth.

Despite global economic headwinds and domestic challenges, Ethiopia has made encouraging progress. Our economy has continued to grow at a steady pace and our financial sector is opening new opportunities for investment and private-sector participation. We have expanded our industrial capacity, invested in trade and logistics infrastructure, and created new avenues for regional integration.

In parallel, Ethiopia's accession to the World Trade Organization has now reached a decisive and advanced stage. The Government has deployed dedicated diplomatic resources and technical capacity and is engaging with renewed seriousness and transparency to bring the process to a successful conclusion at the 14th Ministerial Conference in March 2026. For Ethiopia, WTO accession is not a procedural exercise but a strategic instrument for anchoring reforms, attracting investment, improving predictability, and ensuring that our integration into the global economy is rules-based, gradual, and development-oriented. We count on the continued understanding and constructive support of Members and of UNCTAD in this critical final stretch.

Equally, Ethiopia is actively advancing the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. We view the AFCFTA not only as a trade instrument but as a strategic pillar for industrialization, value-addition, and market expansion across Africa. By aligning our domestic reforms with AFCFTA protocols on trade in goods, services, investment, competition, and digital trade, we are positioning Ethiopia to play a more dynamic role in regional value chains and to leverage the continent's emerging single market as a launchpad for global competitiveness.

We recognize that important challenges remain, including the need to diversify our economy to tackle commodity dependence, manage debt sustainably, and accelerate infrastructural and technological transformation. Yet we view these not

as obstacles but as opportunities to leapfrog towards economic reform, strengthen resilience, and chart a path toward long-term prosperity.

Mr. President,

We believe that UNCTAD is uniquely positioned to accompany us on this journey. Its mandate to serve as the focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of trade, finance, investment, technology, and sustainable development remains as vital today as ever. As reflected in the UNCTAD XVI outcome document granting a new mandate to the organization for the coming four years, we look to UNCTAD to strengthen its role in shaping global economic governance, supporting developing countries in integrating more effectively into the global economy, and promoting fair and inclusive trade and investment systems. We also call on development partners to reinforce and expand their support to UNCTAD, enabling it to better deliver its mandate and respond to the evolving priorities of Member States — particularly those in special economic situations, such as Africa, Least Developed Countries, and Land-Locked Developing Countries.

Ethiopia has already benefited from UNCTAD's support in areas such as trade facilitation, investment promotion, productive capacity development, and debt management. We value this partnership and call for its expansion into new priority domains including the digital economy, e-commerce readiness, green and climate-resilient development, and stronger integration into regional and global value chains.

Mr. President,

The challenges facing developing countries today are complex and interconnected. The accelerating impacts of climate change, the growing burden of unsustainable debt, the widening digital divide, and the uncertainty of

international trade all threaten to erode hard-earned development gains of recent decades. These global challenges call not for less but for far greater cooperation, solidarity, and collective action.

Ethiopia therefore calls upon the international community to honour their commitments in development finance, climate support, and technology transfer. The time has come to translate pledges into concrete action and measurable results. Strengthened South-South cooperation and regional integration must be placed at the heart of our collective efforts to build resilience and foster inclusive and sustainable growth.

At the same time, we must work collectively to accelerate much-needed reforms of international institutions and the international financial architecture to make them more inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the needs and priorities of countries in vulnerable situations. A fair and representative international system is indispensable for achieving sustainable development.

We must redouble our collective efforts to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Yet even as we pursue these goals, we must also look beyond 2030 preparing for the emerging challenges and opportunities that will define the next era of global development.

Mr. President,

Ethiopia remains fully committed to this global agenda. We will continue to strengthen our institutions, expand economic opportunities for our people, and deepen regional integration through the African Continental Free Trade Area. We will also continue to work closely with UNCTAD and our partners, confident that trade and development can serve as engines of prosperity, dignity, and peace.

In conclusion, I reaffirm Ethiopia's conviction that our shared future must be built on fairness, solidarity, and partnership. Together, we can build a renewed multilateral system based on trust and mutual respect one that ensures no one is left behind in our collective pursuit of a just and sustainable world.

I thank you.