



Agenda item: 7

General Debate

Statement by:

European Union





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**16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
(UNCTAD16)**

22 October 2025

General Debate

EU Statement

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour to address you on behalf of the European Union.

In a world marked by heightened geopolitical tensions and huge challenges that threaten progress towards sustainable development and the very fabric of international peace and security, multilateralism and open dialogue are crucial.

In times like these, building bridges is not just important - it is imperative and urgent. We view UNCTAD's potential not only as a source of research and technical assistance aimed at fostering equality, inclusivity, and sustainability for all, but also to serve as a forum for dialogue and a platform for strengthening multilateralism.

We live in a period of high needs and decreasing means - a challenge exacerbated by the ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere. The increasing scarcity of resources requires us to be more coherent, more efficient and more effective with the available resources.

Today's reality and challenges call for reform and the EU fully supports the UN Secretary's General UN80 reform initiative to achieve more efficiency and to increase impact to deliver for all our citizens. It will be especially important that UNCTAD in this context continues to prioritise and focuses on its mandate and core functions.

We wholeheartedly support Secretary-General Grynspan's initiatives to realign UNCTAD's focus and strengths, seek synergies and foster stronger interagency coordination and complementarity. By doing so, UNCTAD can maximize its contribution to advancing sustainable and inclusive development worldwide.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In a world facing intensified insecurities in energy, climate, technology, and food supplies, we must emphasize the need for economic growth that is decoupled from environmental degradation and that is inclusive, sustainable, and resilient.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains our universal roadmap. Milestones such as the Summit of the Future, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, and the World Social Summit provide us with critical platforms to drive the actions needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Paris Agreement, as the first universal and legally binding treaty to combat climate change, is integral to our collective efforts.

The economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development are interdependent, and inextricably linked to peace, security and human rights. We must target inequalities, within and between countries, between men and women, as well as between different segments of society. Making trade inclusive requires systematically considering gender equality and ensuring economic empowerment of women and youth. Indeed, this is not only the right thing to do – it is the smart thing to do.

Economic growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship are key drivers of development. We can only achieve this with concrete and realistic orientations, by formalising the economy, improving the business climate through enabling environments, supporting countries to take advantage of their potential and making sure that trade works for all.

UNCTAD has a comparative advantage on supporting countries putting in place evidence based economic domestic policies and practices, with a proven track record of improving their productive capacities, including by increasing their fiscal space.

The EU is committed to contribute to this same agenda.

In 2023, together with our Member States, the EU provided €95.9 billion in development aid, representing 42% of global contributions. Through our Global Gateway investment strategy, we are exceeding our initial targets and are aiming at mobilising €400 billion by 2027 to advance social, digital, and green transitions worldwide, leveraging both private and public investments in transformative projects, all directly supporting the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

Emerging development partners and South-South Cooperation play a crucial role in strengthening global resilience through the exchange of knowledge, technology, and experience. It serves as a powerful complement to North-South and triangular partnerships, helping to bridge divides, tackle global challenges such as climate change and digital transformation, and foster innovation-driven, sustainable growth.

Ladies and gentleman,

The EU remains steadfast in its commitment to advance multilateralism with the UN at the core, global solidarity and to continue our support to the UN system. We are committed to reinforce the importance of multilateralism as a tool not just to face the current challenges, but to thrive in overcoming them. Only by working together, can we effectively address climate change, combat poverty, and tackle inequalities, paving the way for lasting peace.