



Agenda item: 7

General Debate

Statement by:

Malta





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MALTA Statement
by H.E. Dr Randolph DE BATTISTA,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of MALTA
at the 16th session of the United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development (UNCTAD16)
during the **General Debate**
Wednesday, 22nd October 2025
Room III, Palais des Nations

Madame Chair,
Distinguished delegates,

It's a real privilege to speak at the 16th United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. This forum has always been a space where we look beyond the immediate. Where we talk honestly about how to shape a fairer and more sustainable global economy.

The theme this year, "*Shaping the Future: Driving Economic Transformation for Equitable, Inclusive and Sustainable Development*," couldn't be more relevant, as we work to reimagine our global economic architecture.

Let me begin by thanking the Government of Switzerland for hosting us here in Geneva — a city that lives and breathes cooperation. Malta stands fully with the European Union in supporting UNCTAD's mission and in commending Secretary-General Grynspan for her leadership in making the organisation more coherent, coordinated and effective.

Dear colleagues, the global economy is at a turning point. The way we trade, invest and innovate will define the kind of future we create — one that must work for people and for the planet.

Technology is changing everything about how trade functions. Artificial intelligence and digital systems are already reshaping supply chains and regional cooperation. Governments and industries need to invest together — in digital infrastructure, green manufacturing and regional networks that make economies stronger and more secure.

For Malta and the EU, the direction is clear: growth must stay anchored in the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. Economic progress cannot come at the cost of environmental collapse. Sustainability is not an add-on — it has to be built in from the start.



Real transformation depends on five things: technology, people, infrastructure, good governance and open trade.

Governments need to provide stability and predictability. Businesses need to trust that the rules are fair and long-term. At the same time, we must unlock finance that drives innovation and supports entrepreneurs who create jobs and opportunity.

Small and medium-sized enterprises sit at the centre of this effort. When they have access to funding, technology and markets, they drive growth from the ground up. They also make economies more resilient.

Urbanisation, if managed well, brings scale and efficiency. But it must be backed by planning and smart regulation. The balance between growth and protecting the planet is what will determine whether transformation lasts.

As a small island state, Malta knows what resilience means. Guided by *Vision 2050*, we're building an economy that combines sustainability, innovation and fairness.

Our journey from a maritime crossroads to a knowledge-based economy shows what's possible with foresight and adaptability. Through initiatives like the **Maritime Innovation Platform** and the **EU's Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership**, we're investing in climate-smart maritime technology and coastal resilience.

Our **Digital Decade Roadmap** focuses on artificial intelligence, digital public services and SME transformation through hubs like *DihubMT*. Through **Malta Enterprise** and **TradeMalta**, we support local companies to modernise, go green and take part in global value chains.

SMEs make up over 99% of our business ecosystem. Yet they often face the biggest hurdles — limited finance, bureaucracy, and a lack of information. Removing those barriers isn't just sound economics; it's how we make sure development benefits everyone.

In Malta, inclusion is at the core of everything we do. Our **Integration Strategy 2025–2030** and **Poverty Reduction Strategy** aim to strengthen social cohesion, improve access to education and housing, and close the digital gap.

We believe that every person deserves a fair chance to contribute and benefit. As a bridge between Europe and the developing and emerging economies, Malta stands with the EU in promoting fair trade, climate justice, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

We also reaffirm our commitment to **South–South and triangular cooperation**, and to UNCTAD's crucial work in helping countries build productive capacity and financial resilience.



THE PERMANENT MISSION
OF MALTA TO THE UN GENEVA

Colleagues, this year's theme — “*Shaping the Future*” — is more than just a title. It's a challenge. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires bold, coordinated and visionary action. It requires us to confront structural barriers, and to make the global financial and trade systems fairer and more responsive.

Digital transformation must lift up every community, not leave people behind. And progress must be something we share.

Let this not just be a call to act, but a call to lead. To lead with purpose, empathy and conviction. To build genuine, trust-based partnerships.

Let's shape a world where **no nation is too small to lead, and no person is left behind**. A future that is not only prosperous, but one that is just.

Thank you!

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