



Agenda item: 7

General Debate

Statement by:

Greece



UNCTAD 16 Intervention Greece

Secretary General Grynszpan,
Mr. President Ambassador Bekkers, Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great honor for me to take the floor on behalf of Greece at this Sixteenth Session of UNCTAD. Allow me, at the outset, to reaffirm the importance that my country attaches to this Conference — not only as a global forum for dialogue, but also due to UNCTAD's role as the focal point for the integrated treatment of trade and development and the interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development.

We are meeting at a moment of profound global uncertainty. Multiple crises — geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, food and energy insecurity, and the accelerating climate emergency — are converging. They threaten to widen the divides between North and South, developed and developing, opportunity and exclusion.

In this context, UNCTAD 16 must rise to the challenge of renewing our collective commitment to a fairer, more inclusive multilateralism and to assist Member States to navigate today's deeply interconnected challenges.

Greece knows, from its own experience, what it means to endure and eventually to overcome a profound economic crisis. For more than a decade, our country faced severe fiscal and social pressures, unprecedented in the post-war era. The road to recovery was difficult and painful. But through perseverance, solidarity, and, once we regained control of our financial destiny, policies that combined fiscal discipline with measures to support the more vulnerable segments of society, we managed to restore stability and regain confidence, both among our citizens and the international financial system.

This national experience shapes the way we view international cooperation today. First of all, it emphasizes that all countries must be empowered to shape their own national strategies, to shape their future and achieve equitable and sustainable development on their own terms and in accordance with their particular specificities, needs and comparative advantages.

In Greece we turned the situation around — the debt to GDP ratio is expected to fall to 137,6% in 2026 from 209% in 2020 — by developing a national recovery and resilience plan that focused 60% of public investment in the green energy transformation and digitalization. Together with fiscal, tax and other reforms that increased revenue, made public spending much more efficient; while reinvigorating demand and investment, Greece has achieved sustained and significant development and debt reduction over the past six years.

In Greece, the development of a national, domestic renewable energy industry, reduced our imports of expensive imported hydrocarbons, created tens of thousands of jobs, providing low-cost and

dependable energy to consumers, businesses and industry. At the same time, we have made significant progress in reducing emissions and we will surpass the EU goal of reducing GHG emissions by 55% by 2030.

Digitalization contributed to economies of scale, reduced waste and inefficiencies in public spending but also increased public revenue by reducing tax evasion and increasing revenues from value added tax. This allowed us in turn to reduce direct taxation on the lower and middle-income groups and increase consumer demand.

Coupled with significant initiatives in the field of health, housing and education, Greece has created a framework that allows solid growth, greater support to the more vulnerable segments of society and rapid debt reduction.

Digitalization is also a powerful vehicle for reducing the potential for corruption and facilitating the interface between citizens and the state and particularly in ensuring greater equity in their dealings with the state.

This policy mix is a win-win formula for our citizens and economy and for the planet.

This is a model that can readily be copied by other countries that are struggling with the heavy burden of debt, the constraints of limited fiscal space, or the vulnerabilities of climate shocks.

At the same time UNCTAD and the multilateral system more generally must find innovative ways to facilitate the access of developing countries to funding, particularly funding for renewable energy production and digitalization, which will kick-start development, alleviate the pressure on low-income households and enhance revenue.

We would like the UN80 process to have a more strategic direction in this regard. For the moment it is centered on reducing costs due to the short-term pressure of the economic crisis facing the UN system.

We need to be more strategic.

In his progress report published in September, Secretary General Guterres underlined the fragmentation of the sustainable development nexus within the UN and the need for consolidation and change that will ensure greater accessibility for all UN member-states at all levels: national, local administration, business and individuals for SDG related projects. This should be a major priority of the UN80 process.

Distinguished delegates,

More generally, Greece sees four priorities as particularly urgent:

First, to strengthen global cooperation on trade and development policies that promote sustainable, resilient, and inclusive growth. Trade must be an engine of opportunity, not of divergence.

Second, to ensure that developing countries have better access to finance, investment, and technology. Without closing the gap in digital infrastructure, financial resources, and climate resilience, the promise of the 2030 Agenda will remain elusive.

Third, to promote a just and fair transition towards green economies.

Fourth we need to enhance global connectivity. It is the backbone of global trade, and maritime transport and ports are at its heart. The EU's global Gateway initiative is important in this regard.

Regarding particularly the last point on connectivity, at a national level, Greece has invested significantly in the digital and green transition of its major ports, such as Piraeus and Thessaloniki. Smart logistics systems, renewable energy integration and advanced data management tools are being deployed to enhance efficiency, cut emissions and strengthen resilience.

UNCTAD's long-standing work on trade logistics and sustainable transport provides an excellent framework for advancing these shared goals. Greece strongly supports the Organization's efforts, including through the Train-for-Trade Program and the forthcoming discussions at this Conference on future-ready ports. We stand ready to share our national experience, to build partnerships with developing countries, and to contribute to shaping a global agenda where maritime connectivity serves as a true engine of sustainable and inclusive development.

Distinguished delegates,

Greece will continue to support an ambitious role for UNCTAD.

Our conviction is simple: no country should be left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development. Solidarity, partnership and shared responsibility are not abstract principles. They are practical necessities in a world where the prosperity of one is increasingly tied to the stability and well-being of all and where we need to bridge divides and build common ground for a future of shared prosperity.

Thank you.