

Eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

São Paulo, Brazil 13-18 June 2004

GENERAL DEBATE

Belarus

Delivered on 16 June 2004

Eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

São Paulo, Brazil 13-18 June 2004

GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT

by H.E. Mr. Sergei ALEINIK,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Belarus
to the UN Office and other International Organizations at Geneva
at the Eleven Session of the United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development
(*São Paulo, 16 June 2004*)

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, allow me to express my appreciation to the Government of Brazil for excellent organization of UNCTAD XI and hospitality extended to its delegates. I would also like to seize this opportunity to thank the UNCTAD Secretary-General Mr. Rubens Ricuperro and the UNCTAD Secretariat for the work done during preparatory process.

Mr. President,

The current situation in the world with regard to achieving the Development Goals adopted at the Millennium Summit insistently demands better coordination between national strategies and global processes for economic growth and development, especially in the case of developing countries.

In this regard, the role of the UN Conference on Trade and Development as a forum, which over four decades has been dealing with issues of trade and development in their interdependence, has necessary competence and comparative advantage to make a tangible contribution to solving current world economic issues, has taken on increasing importance.

This statement is reproduced in the form and language in which it was received.

Eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

São Paulo, Brazil 13-18 June 2004

GENERAL DEBATE

We share the opinion on the necessity to strengthen all three pillars of UNCTAD activities (research and analysis work, consensus building and technical cooperation), as well as to make a significant contribution to the practical implementation of the outcome of recent global conferences in the sphere of development and trade.

Mr. President,

Nobody will deny that benefits from globalization are distributed unevenly, many LDCs do not have access to them at all. Putting blame for this only on those countries in a globalized economy would be unfair and contrary to the very concept of globalization. In globalization, key role belongs to international factors, primarily in the sphere of trade, finances and investment.

Today, it has become evident that trade liberalization alone without appropriate measures on the international level does not lead to a substantive economic growth of developing countries. Likewise, it is evident that foreign direct investments on the conditions of TNCs do not secure sustainable development. If we do not take into account specific features and needs of hosting countries, the effectiveness of foreign direct investments in terms of providing sustainable development will not be great. National development strategies cannot guarantee expected results if they are based only on the market forces. The experience of a few developing countries that have achieved economic breakthrough as well as the practices of developed countries show that State still has its role to play. Moreover, it is precisely in difficult periods that State plays a key role in overcoming crisis. We believe that this reality should be duly reflected in the final documents of UNCTAD XI.

This statement is reproduced in the form and language in which it was received.

GENERAL DEBATE

In this regard, we note with satisfaction the determination of UNCTAD reflected in the final documents to use its potential to carry out researches on macroeconomic policy, finance, debt and poverty in their interdependence with a view to assisting developing countries and countries with economies in transition to overcome challenges of the globalization.

Mr. President,

Today, it is evident that the development of productive capacities and enhancement of competitiveness should constitute the essential part of a national strategy of development. Developed countries, specialized agencies talk a lot about the necessity of supporting and promoting small and medium-sized enterprises and forget completely about the necessity to support existing large national production units. We do not deny the important role played by small and medium-sized enterprises in the economy of every country. At the same time, the experience of certain Asian countries that have achieved significant success in the economic development shows that they had chosen to create large production units in different spheres of economy. We are of the view that developing countries and countries with economies in transition should also take care about large enterprises, especially the existing ones. The substantial and stable economic growth of the Republic of Belarus amounting on average to 6,5% in the period 1997-2003, was due to a great extent to the fact that the Government has created necessary conditions for activities of large enterprises. It is evident that they have greater capacity for absorbing investments, introducing new technologies and increasing competitiveness in the international markets. We believe that the time has come to pay due attention to this category of national enterprises and to find the possibility to include the study of their

GENERAL DEBATE

role in securing sustainable development of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in UNCTAD's Plan of Action with the view of elaborating appropriate recommendations.

Mr. President,

The creation of national industrial potential will not give expected results when there is no possibility to sell produced goods in the international markets or when this possibility is limited. Everyone agrees that international trade is one of the important driving forces of economic development. And if we really want that developing countries and countries with economies in transition achieve substantive progress in their economic development, it is necessary to create conditions enabling this driving force to fully contribute to realizing development strategies of those countries.

Wishing to contribute to facilitating access for developing and least developed countries to the international markets, the Republic of Belarus has decided to grant unilateral trade preferences to a wide range of such countries.

Belarus has been and remains a country with open economy in which external trade turnover exceeds the GDP. In this regard, the accession of the Republic of Belarus to the World Trade Organization (WTO) constitutes a part of sustainable development strategy and is a priority of the foreign economic policy. In the process of negotiations, we seek to assure that acceding countries are requested to take on obligations corresponding to their economic potential now, not in 10-20 years. It can be done applying individual approach to every

GENERAL DEBATE

acceding country and rejecting to use pattern that exceeds the WTO provisions in force as well as the obligations of the Member-States themselves.

UNCTAD has necessary competence and adequate experience to help developing countries and countries with economies in transition to integrate into the world trade system on acceptable terms considering their national peculiarities and development needs. Especially since this is a part of its mandate.

In this connection, the Republic of Belarus supports the inclusion in the final document of the provisions requesting UNCTAD to provide enhanced technical support and cooperation to developing countries and countries with economies in transition before, during and after WTO accession.

The Republic of Belarus highly appreciates the expansion of the cooperation between UNCTAD and WTO, including the provision of joint technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. One of the positive examples of cooperation between UNCTAD and WTO was the creation of the International Trade Center that also celebrated its 40th anniversary this year. It is necessary to note that the potential of this Center is far from being exhausted, however it needs additional resources for further development. We believe that it is necessary to widen by all means such cooperation between the two organizations.

GENERAL DEBATE

The Belarusian side welcomes the deepening of cooperation between UNCTAD and the World Bank, UNIDO, and other world organizations and European structures for the benefit of the UNCTAD aid-recipient countries.

The widening and enhancement of UNCTAD's activities in the Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the other regions of the world, increasing role of the Conference in contributing to economic growth and development require the consolidation of its resources and strengthening of coordination with other international institutions. Countries need more financial and technical support, compensation for social losses arising from reforms, and eradication of poverty. Such large-scale and focused assistance to them can be assured by UNCTAD in cooperation with the United Nations, European Union, other international financial institutions and donor-countries. Only by consolidating resources, it will be possible to achieve the main objective that the financial and other resources of UNCTAD and its members are to secure—stable and sustainable development of every country in the European, Asian, African and Latin American regions.

Mr. President,

Regarding UNCTAD's role in the development of partnership programmes in different spheres of civil society, including in the light of the experience and results of the Monterrey and Johannesburg Conferences, we share the opinion that UNCTAD Secretariat should be guided by criteria and principles agreed upon by Member-States in the process of preparation for and implementation of the World Forum on Sustainable Development. The new partnership programmes established in the framework of UNCTAD XI should not replace, but rather supplement the intergovernmental decisions, including those proclaimed in the Millennium Declaration. At the same time, those programmes should be based on the resources and capabilities of its participants and do not affect programmes financed from the regular budget.

Eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

São Paulo, Brazil 13-18 June 2004

GENERAL DEBATE

In conclusion, I would like to underline that UNCTAD, as a key organization in the UN system for addressing issues of trade and development in their interdependence, plays and should continue to play an important role in the integration of developing countries and countries with economies in transition into the world economy.

New challenges of the Millenium put even more difficult goals before the mankind and I hope that UNCTAD will live up to its high predestination of promoting development of international trade with a view to accelerating the economic growth and development of countries and consequently to assure adequate living standards of people.

Thank you for attention.