

UNCTAD XII, Accra, Ghana

General Debate

Statement by Dr. Hans Winkler,

**State Secretary in the Federal Ministry for European and
International Affairs of the Republic of Austria**

22 April 2008, 10.40 a.m.

Mr. Chairman,

It is my honour to speak on behalf of Austria today. While, as a EU member state fully aligning itself with the statement made earlier by the Slovenian Presidency of the European Union, Austria would like to bring up, in its national capacity, some additional comments on points which are particularly relevant to us.

The very timely theme of the 12th Ministerial Conference of UNCTAD is “Addressing the opportunities and challenges of globalisation for development”. Globalisation has deeply affected all countries and societies in the world, rich and poor alike. It has brought economic development and prosperity to millions of people in the world, but it has also posed new challenges especially for the poorest and most vulnerable societies. Different international organizations and agencies have different tasks and competences which they can bring together to ensure that the best strategies are being used to fight the negative effects of globalization. UNCTAD, with its long-standing experience and expertise in particular with regard to the Least Developed Countries, can and must contribute

to help the world's poorest experience globalisation as beneficial for all. Therefore, it must be our firm commitment to take the right decisions to facilitate and support the future work of UNCTAD by adopting the Draft UNCTAD XII Negotiated Text before us. There are still a few issues to be dealt with, but I am convinced that, in the spirit of compromise shown by our negotiators on expert level in the up-run to this Conference, it will be possible to reach consensus.

The Conference will also work on four different sub-themes which are of equal importance and which highlight different aspects of UNCTAD's valuable work. Allow me, however to focus, for reasons of time constraints, on just one of them which seems to me to be a long-standing issue of particular importance for UNCTAD's future, namely Sub-theme 4 on "Strengthening UNCTAD: enhancing its development role, impact and institutional effectiveness". I am very confident that a streamlining of the intergovernmental process as well as an improvement of the functioning of the Secretariat in line with the UN system-wide coherence process and a reinforced cooperation with other international organisations may be achieved. Finding consensus in this field will be of utmost importance in order to enable UNCTAD to satisfactorily fulfil its mandate in the future.

Let me, on this occasion, also express my sincere personal gratitude to the government and the people of Ghana for hosting this Conference. We appreciate very much your hospitality and will take back to our capitals fond memories of this stay in Accra. It is for us a welcome signal that, after Nairobi 1976 and Midrand 1996,

UNCTAD is returning to Africa, the continent which deserves most UNCTAD's attention. UNCTAD, by its trade analysis, by its capacity building programmes and by its technical assistance projects, helps in particular Least Developed Countries, most of them African, to meet their needs to achieve sustainable development for all, men and women alike, and to promote good governance.

In this context, I welcome the close cooperation between UNCTAD, UNIDO and the International Trade Centre (ITC) on the joint training programme on industrial, investment and trade policy management which was launched in March last year. This programme which is aimed at training policymakers, academics and representatives of the private sector and civil society in developing countries on formulating policies that can enhance development is a textbook example of the fruitful cooperation for the benefit of developing and transition economies.

We have listened with great attention to the statements at yesterday's opening of the high level panel. We have heard many concerns but also expressions of optimism. Today, there is a lot of hope for Africa. The EU has strengthened its relationship with the African continent by adopting a Joint EU-Africa Strategy at the Summit of Heads of State and Government from the EU and Africa held in Lisbon last December. In the run-up to this Summit, Austria and Burkina Faso initiated a high-level conference on « Peace and Security in Western Africa - What is the role of the EU-Africa Common Strategy? » which was held in Ouagadougou on 12 November 2007, because we realize that peace and security and development are two sides of the same coin. As a first tangible

result of this conference, Austria agreed to assist with the development of a Centre of Excellence for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency for the ECOWAS region.

The Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria, Mrs. Ursula Plassnik, also initiated a meeting of female foreign ministers from Europe and Africa on enhancing the participation of women in politics and business which took place on the margins of the Lisbon summit.

However, in the field of technical cooperation for development, bilateral initiatives by individual countries are necessarily limited in funding, scope and reach. The work of multilateral institutions with a global mandate reaching all countries in need and with the necessary oversight, such as UNCTAD, is therefore indispensable, and Austria is very grateful to contribute to UNCTAD's work. I am glad to say that, as for previous UNCTAD meetings in the last years, Austria could again assist in the participation of representatives from Least Developed Countries in this Conference. Furthermore, Austria supported a pre-event held earlier this month in Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania on "Pro-poor sustainable development opportunities created by production and export of organic products in Africa". This meeting contributed significantly to raising awareness and enhancing understanding of organic agriculture as an important tool for poverty alleviation and environmental protection in Africa.

Let me announce a follow-up, a side-event on the same subject today at lunchtime and I am very happy to assist in this event

together with ministers from Ghana, the host country, and from Uganda. I cordially invite you to participate in the event where we will analyze the impact of sustainability standards on small-scale farmers and present the key findings and recommendations of the pre-event in Arusha. Today I will also sign a Memorandum of Understanding with UNCTAD on further cooperation in this field, namely on a two-year project on organic production which will be implemented in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania

Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, by wishing you – and us all – a successful Ministerial Conference.

Thank you very much for your attention!