

Position Paper for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

The issues discussed in the UNCTAD are: The Promotion of Gender Equality in Development; Poverty Eradication and Considering a Code of Conduct for TNC'S. Being a new member of the European Union the Republic of Slovenia supports the idea of the continual improvement through sustainable development. Slovenia in its own history has reached a broad benefit after declaring its independence in 1991 and gained the possibility of international trade without restrictions. The enhancement of the living conditions is unique in Eastern Europe. As an example, we would like to emphasize that Slovenia has reached two out of three Maastricht criteria, making Slovenia eligible to membership in the European Monetary Union. Bearing in mind its own profit of the international community Slovenia fully supports the efforts of the UN to improve the living and working standards in other developing countries. The Republic of Slovenia recognizes the interconnection of the European Union, the United Nations, international community and the domestic main values regarding public and private security and welfare, peaceful dispute settlement as well as respect for human rights issues.

1. The Promotion of Gender Equality in Development

The Republic of Slovenia believes that human rights including the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex are necessary for the development of countries. The lack of representation of women especially in political life leads to an irreparable loss of experience and as a consequence thereof to a loss of opportunities to develop. In that regard, Slovenia emphasizes the necessity of empowerment of women and the implementation of gender equality.

Facing the actual situation the long-time goal of gender equality isn't realized yet. The Republic of Slovenia has to admit that measures taken in the past ten years are still in the need of time to achieve success by changing the people's attitude towards the classic role allocation. Slovenia wants to accentuate the need for political intervention exceptionally in the education of women and in unacceptable working conditions of the informal sector where the majority lacks of job security not to mention medical care and basic human rights.

Because obstacles to be overcome are numerous, arrangements taken by national governments to alert women to their rights require the cooperation as well as combination of knowledge and experience of the international community. Although not having signed the structural adjustment programs drawn up by the IMF and the World Bank, Slovenia has developed national programs for women's professional promotion, reconciliation of professional and family life and gender equality in general. The programs are especially focused on lowly or inadequately educated women to support the entering of or the return to the labour market, bearing in mind that the absence of education possibilities is one of the root causes of gender inequality.

2. Poverty Eradication

The Republic of Slovenia believes that full integration in the international trade system is one of the most important and challenging goals of the international community leading to the chance of poverty reduction. Therefore it is necessary to increase incomes and production by liberating trade restrictions such as high tariffs and taxes and by access to more goods and services. Slovenia regards the solution, in particular in the transaction of measures related with problems that are far

beyond being sophisticated but as a kind of “integrated framework” one of the best alternatives for developing countries in the long hand. The cooperation of domestic policy and regulatory issues reveals a basic phenomenon of the complexity in trade affairs by showing the difference between the opening of the world market and the preparation of the citizens for the new economic situations. Having suffered from trade restrictions during the last century, Slovenia knows about the benefit and the necessity free and liberated trade can be during the development process resulting in one of the most successful transformations into a distinctive international trade orientated economy. Being part of the European Union which is the largest donor of development assistance and the largest market for developing countries, Slovenia as the first Eastern European state is a donor country. Slovenia welcomes the increased international support for trade liberalisation and encourages all states to discuss the poverty related problems and to join specific programs like the “everything but arms” initiative.

3. Considering a Code of Conduct for TNCs

The Republic of Slovenia is concerned about the particulate exploitation of people in developing countries by trans-national-corporations. Having in mind the ideal of globalisation as sustainable development the truth reveals the discrepancy between requirement and reality. The global community has the duty and the opportunity to draft and establish a code of conduct for TNCs but only as soft law with “social” punishment by the consumer. There is no possible enforcement mechanism and TNCs could abuse the gloriolate of being a company that respects all human rights in the host countries including the same regulations as domestic companies concerning environmental, health, security, and labour or tax issues. In regard of the European Code of Conduct, the Republic of Slovenia emphasizes that there is a need for the encouragement of corporations and countries to assume responsibility for their behaviour in their own and in other countries.

Slovenia welcomes the strengthened global awareness of abusive companies using their economic power to interfere in political matters or taking advantage of the miserable situation of people and the languorousness and human rights violations the global community is fighting against.