



CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM AT UNCTAD15

15th Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
under the theme *From Inequality and Vulnerability to Prosperity for All*

September 22- 24 2021

BACKGROUND AND AGENDA

UNCTAD15 is set to take place against the backdrop of a world economy in crisis, a public health catastrophe, and a global society teetering on the brink of instability, uncertainty and confusion. Just shy of 18 months ago, in the first quarter of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was considered as a major global health challenge, the likes of which was not encountered for 100 years. The call by the UN Secretary General in 2019 for a decade of action to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was a recognition that progress on the Goals was lagging in both speed and scale¹ (United Nations, 2020).

The need for international cooperation to effectively respond to the new environment has been acknowledged (OECD, 2020).² In these circumstances, there is strong motivation, for the upcoming UNCTAD15 Conference to be a ‘game changer’. The Conference is the highest decision-making body of UNCTAD at which member states assess current trade and development issues and formulate global policy responses.

The hosting of UNCTAD15 in October of 2021, in Barbados, a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) offers a critical opportunity to ground the discussions in the present and future realities and prospects of the most vulnerable countries and their populations. The theme of UNCTAD15, *From Inequality and Vulnerability to Prosperity for All*, provides a platform to re-energize and refocus development efforts and commitments. It also presents a unique opportunity for member states to respond strategically by reinforcing the value of multilateralism and providing a renewed mandate for a strengthened UNCTAD.

This civil society forum is intended to contribute to the transformative discourse that needs to take place to address some of the systemic and structural inequalities in the trade and development space.

Objectives

- To facilitate robust and substantive dialogue amongst civil society, Member States and United Nations institutions that advances concrete recommendations on the thematic areas identified;
- To facilitate an inclusive space which is representative of the diversity of civil society which contributes to a comprehensive agenda for action;
- To advance a clear set of actionable proposals which builds upon previous civil society declarations and is reflective of the current and future context of trade and development concerns;
- To agree on future actions to accelerate progress and monitor the implementation of agreed actions;
- To identify specific challenges and concerns of Small Island Developing States and countries of the Global South that impact the achievement of sustainable development

¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action/>

² OECD Policy Response to Coronavirus in Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional socio-economic implications and policy priorities. Key Messages (<http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-regional-socio-economic-implications-and-policy-priorities-93a64fde/#boxsection-d1e31>)

Agenda

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY, 22 September 2021: 08:30 – 11:35 AST - Atlantic Standard Time UTC/GMT -4 hours		
Time	Item	Objectives and Notes
08:30 - 08:55	Session 1: Welcome and Opening Remarks <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados (8 min) 2. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of UNCTAD (8 min) 3. Honourable Colin E. Jordan, Minister of Labour, Social Partnership Relations and the Third Sector of Barbados (8 min) 	Pre-recorded on [date/time]
09:00 – 09:15	Session 2: Introductions and Workshop Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Civil Society Forum Agenda, Objectives and Protocols, Representative of International Civil Society Facilitation Group 	Richard Jones
09:20 – 11:35	Session 3: First Plenary Session on “The Crisis of Multilateralism–Whither UNCTAD Rediscovering its original mandate to confront key challenges of the Global South” Moderator – Stephen Fletcher Introduction of session and speakers (10 mins) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tetteh Hormeku-Ajei, Third World Network-Africa (10 mins) 2. Diyana Yahaya, Gender and Trade Coalition (10 mins) 3. Alvin Mosioma, Tax Justice Africa (10 mins) 4. Kai-Ann Skeete, The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus (10 mins) 5. Anita Gurumurthy, IT for Change (10 mins) 6. Daniel Bertossa, Public Services International (PSI) (10 mins) <p>Discussion (1 hr)</p>	This session will seek to discuss UNCTAD’s mandate and role in the context of today’s conjuncture and its ability to confront current challenges, particularly those facing the global South, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for re-balancing of the current global division of labor and advancing socio-economic transformation; • Advancing the climate/ecological transition • Advancing the transition towards a feminist care economy; and • Confronting the techno-structural

Closing – ICSFG, Kozel Fraser (5 mins)		aspects of digitalization.
DAY 2: THURSDAY, 23rd September 2021: 07:30 – 12:20 AST - Atlantic Standard Time UTC/GMT -4 hours		
Time	Item	Objectives and Notes
07:30 – 9:45	<p><u>Session 4: Second plenary session on “Trade, Technology & Development: Reframing the Discourse”</u></p> <p>Moderator – Deborah James, OWINFS: Introduction to session and speakers (10 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Susana Barria PSI (10 mins) 2. Parminder Jeet Singh IT for Change (10 mins) 3. Sanya Reid Smith Third World Network (10 mins) 4. Adam Wolfenden, PANG (10 mins) 5. Sofia Scasserra, Transnational Institute (10mins) 6. Jane Nalunga, SEATINI (10 mins) <p>Discussion (1 hr)</p> <p>Closing – ICSFG, Sandra Massiah (5 mins)</p>	<p>This session will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role that UNCTAD could play in exploring strategies that could shift the barycenter of economic activities of Southern countries towards the national and regional; • Reframing trade agreements and international cooperation to advance economic structural transformation; and • Building local economic resilience through technology justice.
9:45 – 10:00	BREAK	
10:00 – 12:20	<p><u>Session 5 Third plenary session on “Systemic Reforms for Fiscal Space”</u></p> <p>Moderator – Shantal Munro-Knight: Introduction to session and speakers (10 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ambassador Khalil Hashmi – United Nations Permanent Representative of Pakistan (12 mins) 2. Dereje Alemayehu – Global Tax Justice (10 mins) 3. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury - PSI (10 mins) 4. Christopher Sinckler – Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) (10 mins) 	<p>This session will focus on systemic reforms (including economic governance reforms) that can ensure adequate fiscal space for Southern countries to pursue their development pathways, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global acceptance of vulnerability as a key trigger for accessing debt relief, concessional finance, ODA, and special facilities in trade and financial agreements;

<p>5. Lidy Nacpil - Asia Pacific Movement on Debt and Development (10 mins)</p> <p>6. Mandkhaitsetsen Urantulkhuur - Centre for Human Rights Development (10 mins)</p> <p>Discussion (1 hr)</p> <p>Closing, ICSFG, Stefano Prato (5 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt & Human Rights, debt sustainability, and reform of the international financial architecture and governance systems; • Achieving equity and transparency in international tax governance/regulation, while protecting against illicit flows; and • Fostering South-South cooperation by harnessing financial and investment opportunities between developing countries.
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DAY 3: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2021 8:45 – 13:40

AST - Atlantic Standard Time UTC/GMT -4 hours

Time	Item	Objectives and Notes
8:45 - 9:00	<p>Session 6: Civil Society Forum Closing Remarks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kozel Fraser, Chair, Caribbean Policy Development Centre and host country civil society coordinating organization (5 mins) 2. Arlette Verploegh, Chief, Communications and External Relations Office of the Secretary-General (5 mins) 3. Shantal Munro-Knight, Lead Organiser for the Civil Society Forum (5 mins) 	<p>This session will conclude the UNCTAD15 Civil Society Forum.</p>
09:05 – 10:20	<p>Side Event Sessions Self-Organised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law, and Development (APWLD) – Solidarity and system change are the only way forward to overcome the global economic, health, and human rights crisis: feminist perspectives from Asia and the Pacific 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA) - Exploring the divide between the Global North and South 	
10:25 - 11:40	<p>Side Event Sessions Self-Organised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Policy Forum - Sustainable Solutions to Debt crisis, The Role of UNCTAD. • Friends of the Earth International – How do we build a Just Recovery from the COVID crisis 	
11:40–13:40	<p>Session 7: Discussion on the Civil Society Declaration</p> <p>Facilitator: Drafting Group Member</p> <p>Closing, International Civil Society Facilitation Group Chair</p>	<p>This session will provide for discussion and confirmation of the civil society declaration</p>