



Theme:
From Inequality and Vulnerability to Prosperity for All

Bridgetown–Geneva
(Virtual meetings)



The fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development – UNCTAD 15 – presents an opportunity for the development community to align the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development with the global “new normal” created by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a major United Nations conference of the “decade for action” for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the ministerial conference must address the massive unmet trade, finance, investment and technology needs of developing countries struggling in the face of the COVID-19 challenge.

The pandemic led to an economic standstill, closed borders and a severe retrenchment in cross-border economic activity – this has effectively paralysed trade as an engine for sustainable prosperity. Compounded by the “pre-existing” lack of trust in multilateralism, the global trading system was woefully unprepared for this global health crisis.

The most vulnerable countries continue to be the hardest hit by the pandemic, at a time when they were already not doing well. The pandemic and its fallout have exposed existential challenges to the very tenets of globalization and will have a lasting impact on future efforts by developing countries to gainfully benefit from the global economy.

In addition, COVID-19 revealed the urgency of the need to transform global approaches to trade and development if we are to chart a sustainable course to a better recovery. UNCTAD 15 gives us a window of opportunity to build the political will to effect the systemic changes needed to ensure a better recovery, as countries have realized the devastating limits of current development practices. From a trade and development perspective, a better recovery must be green, resilient, just and digital – but it must also be for all peoples and all countries, not just those who can afford it.

In the past, UNCTAD ministerial conferences generated ambitious solutions and rebuilt goodwill among nations. UNCTAD 15, hosted by Barbados, must be such a conference. It must offer hope to vulnerable small island developing States facing lost tourism and travel revenues; it must offer feasible instruments to African countries and least developed countries looking to develop their productive capacities; and it must offer a path forward on debt forgiveness and digital cooperation, especially for middle-income countries.

As part of the programme of the Conference, to be regularly updated, a series of online pre-events and forums are being organized between May and September 2021 to pave the way for UNCTAD 15. More information on Conference pre-events and forums is available at unctad15.org.

Together with Barbados, as the host country, and with the resolute commitment of the entire UNCTAD membership, we can achieve a sustainable path forward under the Conference theme “From inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all”.

unctad15.org 



#UNCTAD15 #ProsperityForAll



Preliminary Programme

as of 26 May 2021



PRE-EVENTS

INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS

	21 June–2 July 2021	Sixty-eighth session of the Trade and Development Board
	6–8 September 2021	Thirty-second special session of the Trade and Development Board

REGIONAL GROUP MEETINGS

	2 September 2021	Landlocked developing countries, ministerial meeting
	Date to be announced	Least developed countries, ministerial meeting
	Date to be announced	Small island developing States, ministerial meeting
	1 October 2021	Group of 77 and China, senior official meeting
	1 October 2021	Group of 77 and China, ministerial meeting

FORUMS

	13–15 September 2021	Global Commodities Forum and related national activities
	16–18 September 2021	Youth Forum
	22–24 September 2021	Civil Society Forum
	26–28 September 2021	Gender and Development Forum, and related national activities
	29 September–1 October 2021	Creative Economy and Digitalization Forum, and related national activities

CONFERENCE DAYS

	2–3 October 2021	National events: Concert
	4 October 2021	Official opening ceremony and Plenary Presidential Summit
		Opening press conference (UNCTAD and Host Country)
	5 October 2021	High-level segments I and II
	5–6 October 2021	General debate: Pre-recorded statements
	5–7 October 2021	Finalization of ministerial declaration for UNCTAD 15
	6 October 2021	Ministerial round tables I, II and III
	7 October 2021	Ministerial round tables IV and V
		Closing plenary and closing ceremony of UNCTAD 15
		Press briefing
		National events: Concerts and session on spirituality and tolerance with distinguished multi-faith participants