



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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World Leaders Summit

Summary prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat

1. At the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIV), world leaders and heads of agencies met to discuss “Paving the way to 2030” and consider the actions needed to create an enabling environment to leave no one behind in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. In his opening statement, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD addressed the challenges to globalization generated by increasing dissatisfaction with high inequality and wealth concentration. Notably, he stated that globalization was not fulfilling the expectations of many, leading to increasing demagoguery and xenophobia in many parts of the world. He noted that many developing countries that had experienced rapid development were showing signs of falling into a middle-income trap, and referred to the challenge of using the set of solutions provided by the Sustainable Development Goals to change the narrative of globalization.
3. The Vice-President of the Comoros detailed the process of dialogue in the Comoros and the positive effect of institutional stability on development. The Vice-President noted the need to open up for trade, while advising that efforts should be stepped up to make development central to trade. He elaborated on the Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy of the Comoros, and on the emergence of the middle class in the country. Finally, he highlighted the need to make development a participatory process, with trade at the centre of a national development strategy.
4. The Vice-President of Uganda noted that the Millennium Development Goals had helped lift millions of people out of poverty, yet acknowledged that much still needed to be done to eradicate poverty. He emphasized the importance of tackling the systemic issues that had prevented the full achievement of the Goals, and referred specifically to health, education, technology and financing as catalysts for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In considering the poor record of graduation from the least developed country category over the past four decades, he requested the international community to work on the structural transformation of the least developed countries to ensure that the

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graduation objectives in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 could be met.

5. The President of Namibia highlighted the current development momentum in Africa. Given the landmark decisions adopted in 2015 and the imperative to move from decisions to actions, 2016 would be the year of implementation, and the President challenged the heads of agencies and delegations to come up with innovative ways to achieve this during their deliberations at UNCTAD XIV. He cautioned that efficiency imperatives should not be overarching considerations that kept the international community from effectively achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In considering the war on poverty in Namibia and the Harambee Prosperity Plan, the President was optimistic that, despite some reversals, Africa was mostly democratic. The President called for the transformation of the economies of developing countries and for a move away from commodities, as well as the reinforcement of vocational training as a means to enhance competitiveness. Finally, the President expressed support for the work of UNCTAD.

6. The President of Kenya highlighted that 2015 had been the year of goals, and emphasized the need to practically translate these objectives into tangible benefits for people. Notions of poverty that involved a lack of accountability and transparency were less relevant, and there was a need for renewed partnerships for development. Regretfully, many developed countries seemed to be closing up to globalization precisely when developing countries were starting to benefit more from it. The President requested the United Nations system and development partners to embrace a new approach based on partnership and empowerment rather than on patronage.

7. The Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi noted that Member States were called upon to lead the agenda of how to change the United Nations. In addition, the Director General of the World Trade Organization stated that simple narratives on development should be avoided, and emphasized the complex nature of most development issues. Finally, the Secretary-General of the Ibero-American General Secretariat considered the importance of regional trade flows and the need to work on the various dimensions of integration, citing experiences in Latin America.

8. The Deputy Director General of the International Labour Organization elaborated on the interdependence and holistic nature of the Sustainable Development Goals and the need to implement them in an integrated manner. In this context, the Assistant Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations noted that social protection and food protection dimensions made the Sustainable Development Goals more complex than the previous Goals.

9. The Deputy Secretary-General of the World Customs Organization elaborated on the importance of efficient customs systems as a make-or-break element in promoting trade and development. In addition, the Assistant Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization considered the role of intellectual property protection in enhancing innovation and development. The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Kenya highlighted the opportunities presented by the empowerment of women and youth. Finally, the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre addressed the importance of achieving results as a paramount consideration in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

10. One delegate detailed the hands-on experience of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in government interconnectivity, and requested UNCTAD and the United Nations to explore cooperation in this area. Another delegate noted the importance of technology and innovation for the competitiveness of business and for development, and announced an intention to explore joint work with UNCTAD to support developing countries in such matters.

11. The World Leaders Summit included additional discussions among the dignitaries and heads of agencies, followed by comments from the heads of agencies. Overall, the dignitaries encouraged delegations and participants at UNCTAD XIV to work on identifying practical approaches and solutions to the challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda, and to harness the expertise of UNCTAD to support this process.
