



UNCTAD 15 High-level segment 4–5 October 2021

CONCEPT NOTE

Opening Ceremony and World Leaders Summit



The high-level segment of UNCTAD 15 will consist of the Opening Ceremony and the World Leaders Summit.

Opening Ceremony

Monday, 4 October

3 to 4.30 p.m. (CET) 9 to 10.30 a.m. (AST)

The ceremony will mark the official opening of the UNCTAD 15 Conference with the presence of President Kenyatta of Kenya, Prime Minister Mottley of Barbados and UNCTAD Secretary-General Grynspan. They will each give a welcome address.

The ceremony will include the official hand-over from the UNCTAD 14 Host Country, Kenya, to the UNCTAD 15 Host Country, Barbados.

The Opening Ceremony will include a keynote address by UN Secretary-General Guterres on our global development aspirations and the Decade of Action which is more needed than ever.



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World Leaders Summit

The UNCTAD 15 World Leaders Summit will highlight the critical issues of this unique moment in time in which the world is challenged with an unprecedented crisis and has the opportunity to build a more prosperous future. As Prime Minister Mottley rightly said: “We have a moment in time, that comes very rarely, let’s seize it and do something about it”.

The Summit is anchored in development in motion, aiming at connecting the dots between challenges, aspirations and actions. It will consist of three thematic dialogues in which world Leaders share their vision on the scale of the challenges, priorities and actions needed in the coming months and years. The dialogues will address the vulnerabilities that we collectively face, the asymmetries in which we are embedded and translate into uneven means to respond to the current crisis, and actions that are needed at the international and multilateral level to address these challenges and build a more inclusive and sustainable world. UNCTAD 15’s World Leaders Summit will thus discuss the urgency for a fairer world.

The three dialogues reflect and follow the theme that UNCTAD’s member States decided for the Conference: *“From inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all”*. UNCTAD is ideally placed to convene these dialogues with World Leaders owing to its expertise, mandate and global reach.

World Leaders Summit dialogue on global vulnerabilities: Call from a vulnerable place

Monday, 4 October

4.30 to 6 p.m. (CET) 10.30 to 12 noon (AST)

The COVID-19 crisis has made evident how interconnected and vulnerable we are. The first dialogue will address the two vulnerabilities that mark the current period and our future: health and climate change. These are global vulnerabilities which cannot be solved without solidarity and global action. The recovery from the current health and economic crisis critically depends on the production and distribution of vaccines, which remain highly uneven, while our future on the capacity to find solutions to the climate crisis. In this dialogue, World Leaders share their vision on the scale of the problem and the solutions that are required, bringing in the role of trade.

Key questions:

- What role must trade play to ensure global health?
- What role must trade play to deal with the climate crisis?
- Are we willing and able to change development paths?

Speakers:

Heads of State and Heads of International Agencies to be confirmed shortly

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World Leaders Summit dialogue on inequality: Is the COVID-19 crisis really a game changer?

Tuesday, 5 October

2 to 3.30 p.m. (CET) 8 to 9.30 a.m. (AST)

While COVID-19 is a global crisis, there are substantial asymmetries in how the crisis impacts people and economies and the ability to respond to it, in short: we do not all suffer in the same way and neither do we recover in the same way. Developed countries mainly have the fiscal space for support and recovery measures and the finance and power to get full access to vaccines for their populations, but many developing countries cannot afford neither large scale support measures nor vaccines. This has increased our sense of injustice, and it threatens our development aspirations.

This dialogue will highlight the reality of developing countries, many of which are afflicted by commodity dependence, and the unique challenges of small island developing states. It will emphasize that the support instruments are often not adequate for the particularly challenges they face.

It is targeted at national and regional policymakers to discuss key inequalities and if or how the COVID-19 crisis has led to change in policy to build resilient economies for a world of shared prosperity. Discussions will focus on adapting production systems and public finance, and addressing inequalities related to income, access to technology and gender.

Key questions:

- Has this crisis been sufficiently disruptive to lead to real change in policy to reduce inequality?
- Are the existing and new policies sufficient for real change?
- What national and regional policies and instruments are needed to recover and build resilience and a more equal world from here to UNCTAD 16?

Speakers:

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World Leaders Summit dialogue on building a more prosperous development path: Matching the scale of the moment

Tuesday, 5 October

4 to 5.30 p.m. (CET) 10 to 11.30 a.m. (AST)

Building a more prosperous developing path requires broad and bold actions. The current SDG Agenda is the only global call for solidarity that we have but it is under scrutiny.

Many, including the younger generation, have questioned the deliverables of international institutions and their ability to reshape the system and address current and future challenges. The international community largely agrees on the need for more and better cooperation and solidarity to build a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future. This has been emphasized in many areas, such as producing and distributing vaccines, cooperating on and regulating science, technology and innovation, reforming the international financial system, granting debt suspension and relief, combatting illicit financial flows, rebuilding trust in the multilateral trading system and enhancing it with safety net measures for vulnerable countries, or decoupling growth from CO₂ emissions, to name a few.

But while agreeing on the need for cooperation is essential, actual deepening of cooperation is vital. This session is targeted at key players in international cooperation, especially at the multilateral level, to discuss how cooperation and multilateralism should look like and be transformed to rebuild trust, be at the service of development in motion and reflective of new power balances and actors.

Key questions:

- What has hindered further cooperation in the area of trade and development?
- How can we ensure that we live up to the promise to deepen international cooperation and promote cooperation that delivers better on the ground?
- How should a multilateralism at the service of development look like and how can it be transformed? What role should networks and coalitions play, and which new forms of dialogue and tools are required to support a more holistic development?

Speakers:

Heads of State and Heads of International Agencies to be confirmed shortly