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NOTIFICATION

Civil Society Forum 22–24 September 2021

The Civil Society Forum will be held with remote participation from 22 to 24 September 2021. It will commence at 2.30 p.m. (CEST) and 8.30 a.m. (AST) on Wednesday, 22 September 2021.

This session of the Civil Society Forum is organized by the international civil society facilitation committee, under the leadership of the Caribbean Policy Development Centre, the designated host country civil society organization, with the support of UNCTAD and the Government of Barbados. It is held in the lead up to the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XV), hosted by Barbados, to be held with remote participation from 3 to 7 October 2021 and the theme of which is “From inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all”.

UNCTAD XV is set to take place against the backdrop of a world economy in crisis, a public health emergency and a global society on the brink of instability, uncertainty and confusion. Since the first quarter of 2020, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has been considered a major global health challenge, the likes of which has not been encountered in a century. In 2019, as progress on the Sustainable Development Goals was lagging in both speed and scale, the Secretary-General of the United Nations issued a global call for a decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The need for international cooperation to effectively respond to the new environment has been acknowledged. In these circumstances, there is strong motivation for UNCTAD XV 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 UNCTAD XV by a small island developing State offers a critical opportunity to ground discussions in the present and future realities and prospects of the most vulnerable countries and their populations. The Conference, in line with its theme, provides a platform to re-energize and refocus development efforts and commitments. It 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.

The 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. On the first day, a high-level opening session will be followed by a plenary session titled “The crisis of multilateralism: UNCTAD rediscovering its original mandate to confront key challenges of the global south”. On the second day, two plenary sessions will be held, titled “Trade, technology and development reframing the discourse” and “Systemic reforms for fiscal space”. On the third day, the closing session will be followed by four side events.

The Civil Society Forum is the main venue at UNCTAD XV at which civil society representatives can make their voices heard. By bringing new perspectives and ideas to the Conference debates, civil society can help shape the new work priorities of UNCTAD, which will be defined in the outcome document of the Conference. The primary responsibility for defining the mandate of UNCTAD rests with member States. However, civil society organizations can play an important role in advocating the decisions made and will be key partners in delivering on the new programme of work.

The participation of civil society can help make sure that UNCTAD XV is an inclusive and multi-stakeholder event. This will not only ensure that the process takes into account the views of all UNCTAD development partners, but also promote a greater sense of ownership of the outcomes.

The Civil Society Forum is open to the public and accessible at <https://wtvglobal.6connex.eu/event/UNCTAD15-Barbados>.

For enquiries, please contact Ms. Arlette Verploegh, Chief, Communications and External Relations, email: csso.unctad15@unctad.org. Additional information on the Civil Society Forum is available at <https://unctad15.org/civil-society-forum>.



Rebeca Grynspan
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

21 September 2021