



Partnering with CIVIL SOCIETY

The Civil Society Outreach Unit is part of the Intergovernmental Outreach and Support Service of UNCTAD

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is the focal point in the United Nations for the integrated treatment of trade and development, and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. Through its three pillars, UNCTAD works to maximize development opportunities for developing countries and deliver meaningful results, while enhancing synergies and promoting complementarities with the work of other international organizations.

Three pillars of work

- Consensus-building
- Research and analysis
- Technical cooperation

Five areas of work

- International trade in goods and services and commodities
- Investment and enterprise
- Africa, least developed countries and special programmes
- Globalization and development strategies
- Technology and logistics



Secretary-General
Rebeca Grynszan

Civil society is a strong partner of UNCTAD - key for the implementation of our mandate and an active contributor to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

If we want new solutions, we need new voices that include civil society voices... International responses, without these voices, will be incomplete, insufficient, and unfair.

I look forward to your collective contribution to UNCTAD

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How does your organization become an observer?

- First, decide whether your organization would benefit from observer status with UNCTAD. Do you work on areas related to trade, finance, investment, technology and economic sustainable development?
- Next, complete the application form, in either English or French. You will be requested to provide key information about your organization.
- Once your application is complete, a report will be finalized providing information about your organization.
- A formal request will be presented to the next Trade and Development Board meeting for consideration by member States.
- The Trade and Development Board meets in annual session in September, and in executive session up to three times during the year.
- Member States make the final decision to grant observer status to an organization.
- The Civil Society Outreach team will communicate the decision to you.

How do civil society organizations work with UNCTAD?

- **Setting the agenda** by taking a leading role as contributors and speakers at UNCTAD events.
- **Engaging stakeholders** by strengthening partnerships with civil society and academic/research networks and engaging with the private sector.
- **Networking and coordinating** with civil society organizations, policymakers and UNCTAD experts.
- **Staying informed** through regular updates on cutting-edge research and analysis carried out by UNCTAD.
- **Building expertise** through training opportunities and exchanges with UNCTAD researchers and experts.
- **Sharing knowledge** by taking part in UNCTAD events, such as forums, seminars and intergovernmental meetings throughout the year.

Observer status with UNCTAD

Organizations that enjoy observer status with UNCTAD have unique opportunities to meaningfully contribute to debates and exchanges in the UNCTAD the key issues on the global development agenda.

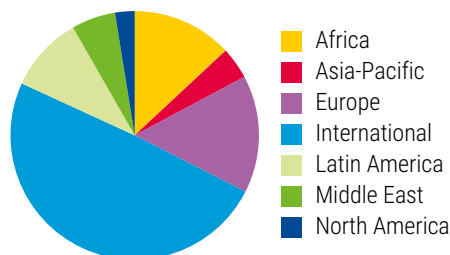
The benefits of observer status include the following:

- **Observer role in meetings** of the quadrennial conference, the Trade and Development Board, expert meetings and commissions: You will receive an official notification and invitation to make an oral or written statement, speak on a panel or organize a side event.
- **Close working relationship** with UNCTAD: You will have the opportunity to collaborate on research and projects, and contribute to the policy dialogue with members of the secretariat.
- **Consultative role:** As an observer, you will be part of a United Nations-wide network of civil society organizations that bring valuable expertise to consultations on critical issues.
- **Access to United Nations grounds in Geneva:** Representatives of your organization will be entitled to a ground pass, which allows them to attend all public meetings and events.

As of 2023, 242 civil society organizations have observer status with UNCTAD. Of these, 50 per cent have global reach; the remaining 50 per cent focus on specific regions and countries.

Over half of these have an interest in several areas of the work of UNCTAD, while the rest focus on one or two specific areas.

**Non-governmental organizations
holding observer status with UNCTAD,
by regions covered**



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