

World Leaders Summit

5 October 2021, 2–3.30 p.m. (CEST); 8–9.30 a.m. (AST)



OVERVIEW

Dialogue on inequality: Is the COVID-19 crisis really a game changer?



Description

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is a global crisis, yet there are substantial asymmetries in how it impacts people and economies and the ability to respond. In short, everyone does not experience it in the same way, nor do they recover in the same way. It is mainly developed countries that have the fiscal space for support and recovery measures, as well as the finance and power to access vaccines for their populations. Many developing countries cannot afford large-scale support measures, nor vaccines. This has increased a sense of injustice and threatens global development aspirations.

This dialogue will highlight the reality in developing countries, many of which are commodity dependent, and the unique challenges in small island developing States. It aims to emphasize that support instruments are often not adequate for the particular challenges faced in developing countries. The dialogue is targeted at national and regional policymakers, to discuss critical inequalities and whether the COVID-19 crisis has led to changes in policy, to build resilient economies for a world of shared prosperity. The discussion will focus on adapting production systems and public finance, as well as addressing inequalities related to gender, income and access to technology.

Key issues

- 1. Asymmetrical impact of the crisis and ability to respond.** Which inequalities have been exacerbated by the crisis that urgently need to be addressed?
- 2. The reality in developing countries in responding to the crisis.** What are the specific challenges in developing countries, many of which are commodity dependent? What are the unique challenges in small island developing States?

UNCTAD(XV)/CN/WLD/2



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- 3. Building a more equal world.** Has the crisis been sufficiently disruptive to lead to real changes in policy, to reduce inequality? Are existing and new policies sufficient for real change? How can the digital revolution be a game changer for development rather than fostering divides? What are the national and regional policies and instruments needed for recovery, resilience and a more equal world, looking ahead to the next session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development? How can national and regional concerns feed into global discussions and multilateral processes?

Participants

Introductory remarks:

Ms. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General, UNCTAD

Speakers:

Mr. Felix Tshisekedi, President, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Chair, African Union

Ms. Mia Mottley, Prime Minister, Barbados

Ms. Carla Barnett, Secretary-General, Caribbean Community

Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Ms. Gabriela Bucher, Executive Director, Oxfam International

Mr. Werner Hoyer, President, European Investment Bank

Moderators:

Mr. Peter Okwoche, Senior Broadcast Journalist, BBC

Ms. Sharon Marshall, Senior Broadcast Journalist and Communications Specialist

Contacts

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