

5th UNCTAD Youth Forum

20-23 October 2025 
Geneva, Switzerland



20–23 October 2024

Monday, 20 October

10 – 11.30 a.m. UNCTAD16 Opening plenary and ceremony

Assembly Hall

11.30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Lunch and Networking opportunity
Meeting point at 1 p.m. in front of the H building.

1.15 – 1.30 p.m. UNCTAD Youth Forum Opening

H building,
H.200

Opening of the fifth UNCTAD Youth Forum and setting the tone for the week's discussions.

1.30 – 2.30 p.m. Deep dive - Green rising: Young adults shaping a sustainable future

H building,
H.200

Reflections on the multifaceted impact of environmental challenges, followed by table discussions.

2.30 – 2.40 p.m. Youth talks – South Africa Youth Trade Association (SAYTA)

H building,
H.200

A presentation showcasing a youth initiative.

2.40 – 3 p.m. Break

PROGRAMME



PROGRAMME

3 – 3.30 p.m. **Pitch in progress: Building a business plan in 30 minutes**

H building,
H.200

A practical, hands-on learning session where participants will learn how to structure and present a business plan, personal project, or idea.

3.30 – 4.30 p.m. **Deep dive - Economic instability: Reimagining livelihoods in a changing world**

H building,
H.200

Explore how economic instability affects individuals and communities across generations, followed by table discussions.

4.30 – 4.40 p.m. **Youth talks – University group (ASEZ)**

H building,
H.200

A presentation showcasing a youth initiative.

4.40 – 5 p.m. **Shuffle and connect**

H building,
H.200

An interactive session designed to connect participants, and exchange ideas.

5 – 6 p.m. **Deep Dive - Future-proofing careers: Navigating uncertainty in the modern job market (Co-organized with AIESEC Switzerland)**

H building,
H.200

Explore the evolving landscape of employment. From automation and AI to the rise of gig work and underemployment, followed by table discussions.

Tuesday, 21 October

10 – 11.30 a.m. **UNCTAD16 Ministerial roundtable: Harnessing artificial intelligence for inclusive and sustainable development**

Assembly Hall

The roundtable will examine how AI can drive sustainable development while addressing risks of inequality and exclusion. Drawing on the Technology and Innovation Report 2025, discussions will focus on national AI strategies and global cooperation to ensure AI is governed in the public interest and accessible to all.

11.30 a.m. – 1 p.m. **UNCTAD16 ministerial roundtable: Making the digital economy inclusive and sustainable through cooperation**

Assembly Hall

The roundtable will explore how to make the digital economy a driver of inclusiveness and sustainability. Discussions will examine policy options and cooperation mechanisms, and how UNCTAD and partners can support resilient digital ecosystems that bridge divides, strengthen data governance, promote innovation and foster greater circularity.





1 – 2 p.m. Lunch and Networking opportunity

Meeting at 2 p.m. at UN flags alley.

2.30 – 5.30 p.m. Empowering Youth Entrepreneurship through IP at World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

WIPO

- Opening remarks
- What is WIPO - Lightning talk
- Innovation through IP - Interactive storytelling game
- IP and Business: Turning ideas into sustainable ventures
- Innovation, entrepreneurship and the future we want - Youth panel and dialogue
- Closing reflections

Wednesday, 22 October

9 – 10 a.m. Youth o'Clock

Room IX

Meeting with the Secretary-General of UN Trade and Development.

10 – 11.30 a.m. UNCTAD16 Parallel event: Igniting entrepreneurial potential — UNCTAD Empretec in the age of transformation.

Concordia 1

Entrepreneurship drives innovation, job creation, and sustainable growth. This session will showcase UNCTAD's work through the Empretec programme and explore how it is fostering more inclusive, digital, and future-ready entrepreneurship.

11.30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Lunch and Networking opportunity

1 – 1.45 p.m. Deep Dive - Rethinking trade and development: a pluralistic approach (Co-organized with Rethinking Economics Switzerland)

H building,
H.200

This session invites participants to explore diverse perspectives on trade and development by diving into different economic approaches and policy options. Through open discussion, youth will reflect on how alternative ideas can shape more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient pathways for global trade and development.

1.45 – 2.15 p.m. Skill Sprint: Discover, Share, Grow

H building,
H.200

A practical, hands-on learning session where young adults identify key skills for professional growth, exchange experiences and resources, and commit to one actionable step toward skill development.

3 – 4.30 p.m. Plenary session with the UN Secretary-General

Assembly Hall



4.30 – 6 p.m.

Assembly Hall

Business leaders' dialogue: Investing in the future

The discussion will bring together leaders from Governments, international organizations and the private sector, to identify the policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks needed to mobilize cross-border capital at scale. Discussions will explore actionable solutions to redirect finance towards global public goods and long-term resilience, helping to shape the agenda of World Investment Forum 2026

Thursday, 23 October

9 – 10 a.m.

H building,
H.200

Deep Dive - Building innovation ecosystems: Opportunities for the next generation (Co-organized with Junior Enterprises Global)

Explore what makes an innovative ecosystem thrive, youth-led contributions to innovation ecosystems and how institutions, communities, and policies can better support young innovators, followed by table discussions.

10 – 10.15 a.m.

H building,
H.200

Youth Declaration presentation

Presentation to youth on the status of the Youth Declaration.

10.15 – 11.15 a.m.

H building,
H.200

Deep Dive - Financing the future: Young voices in sustainable investment

How to engage with sustainable finance, and to discuss the challenges and opportunities in mobilizing capital for climate action, social equity, and long-term resilience, followed by table discussions.

11.30 a.m. – 12.15 p.m.

Assembly Hall

Harnessing Youth Innovation: Technology as a Driver of Economic Transformation in Logistics and Beyond

- How is AI reshaping logistics, and what are the opportunities for youth?
- What barriers do young innovators face in entering the logistics tech space?
- What skills are most critical for youth to thrive in this evolving sector?
- How can education and industry better collaborate to support youth-led innovation?

Announcement of collaboration with LEARN Logistics

12.15 – 12.55 p.m.

Assembly Hall

Shaping Inclusive Economies: Financing Opportunities for Youth and Innovation

- How can finance be better directed towards sectors that create meaningful opportunities for youth?
- What role can innovative instruments like blended finance and youth focused investment vehicles play in mobilizing capital for youth-inclusive and green transformation?
- How can policymakers and financial institutions



ensure that finance systems are aligned with the aspirations of younger generations and responsive to future development needs?

PROGRAMME

12.55 – 1 p.m. UNCTAD Youth Action Hubs (YAH)

Assembly Hall

Launched in 2018 under the motto *“for youth, by youth”*, the Youth Action Hubs empower young people worldwide to lead SDG-related projects, engage in policy dialogue, and connect local action with UNCTAD’s global work on trade and development.

1 – 2 p.m. Lunch Break

2 – 2.30 p.m. Get to know the YAH initiative

H building,
H.200

Introduce how Youth Action Hubs operate around the world, showcasing their activities, impact, and opportunities for young people to get involved and collaborate across borders.

2.30 – 3. p.m. Youth Talks – Turning your story into your strategy.

H building,
H.200

Rewriting the narrative of who you are and what you lead.

3 – 3.30 p.m. The negotiation lab

H building,
H.200

An interactive learning session offering participants insights into foundational negotiation skills.

4 – 6 p.m. Closing

Assembly Hall

UNCTAD16 Closing plenary and closing ceremony.

