



**UNCTAD** 15  
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Agenda item: 7

General debate

Statement by:

**Mauritius**



UNITED NATIONS  
UNCTAD

## **Statement of Mauritius**

### **General Debate - UNCTAD XV**

**Mr President,**

**Excellencies Heads of state and Government and Colleague Ministers**

**Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I join all my colleague Ministers to thank the Government and the People of Barbados for hosting this important conference in difficult times, albeit virtually.

At the outset, let me congratulate Ms. Rebeca Grynspan for her appointment to the post of Secretary-General and thank Mrs Isabelle Durant for the leadership she provided in the interim. Ms Grynspan we look forward to working with you.

We are in difficult times and the pandemic, whilst creating chaos, also portrayed, in a clear manner, the systemic deficiencies that were present in our multilateral system, be it in trade and development, international finance, investment, cooperation and technology transfer and our lack of coherence and coordination in combatting the pandemic and other catastrophes, including the effects of climate change.

Our resilience threshold to effectively plan for recovery is significantly different across continents. Whilst the impact has been severe for all of us, we do not have equal resources to effectively fight our way to recovery. We are still arguing at the WTO over a waiver for intellectual property at a time when our focus should be on how to produce the maximum vaccines in the shortest time possible

to get the world working again. The shift of mentality from me to us, from mercantilism to humanitarianism is desperately required.

The facts are clear: for developing countries for last year only -more than 255 million jobs have been wiped out. This excludes Africa. The 220 billion loss in income of developing countries, has meant that with 95 million people havenow entered the ranks of extreme poor and 207 million pushed to the limits of extreme poverty by 2030.

Small economies, like Mauritius, indeed have lesser policy space and deployment scope. In Mauritius, the contribution of the tourism sector to GDP stands at 25%. With the forced closure of borders the sector declined by 90% and the GDP in 2020 contracted by 15%, with a balance of payment deficit for the first time in decades. Government has been quick to the response by providing a wage assistance scheme and providing support to stabilize the cost of basic commodities. However, resources must come in to allow continued support.

This new normal is putting in jeopardy years of development and the likely attainment of SDGs.

Excellencies,

Against this backdrop, the theme of the 15<sup>th</sup>UNCTAD, could not have been more appropriate to take us **‘from inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all.’**

Our much invoked common bonds of global solidarity, fraternity and humanity are being put to unparalleled test. UNCTAD 15should provide us the necessary

occasion to send out a message of renewed hope and solidarity and our commitment to works together as one world.

This year will mark our 60th joint anniversary both for UNCTAD and G77 plus China and, in the eye of such a crisis, I would like to humbly make the following propositions for consideration during the UNCTAD XV:

- Firstly we suggest that UNCTAD, embark in close collaboration with other key International and Regional Institutions on a comprehensive assessment of the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and make concrete recommendations and global solutions to respond to the crisis.
- Secondly in reconsidering the global cooperation architecture, we believe that that International cohesion remains key in transforming multilateralism towards truly development-oriented economic governance. Agenda 2030 has to be reworked in the light of the new challenges and the issue of cohesion between global institutions be addressed upfront within the UN system.
- We also need a rethink towards innovative financing strategies, as the financing gap to achieve SDGs will be exacerbated. Government public financing for developing countries is under extreme pressures. The issue of budget resources for recovery needs to be addressed.
- The UNCTAD must be involved in the current discussions on early warning and emergency whether for pandemics or other disasters having catastrophic incidence on trade and development in developing countries.

We need to revisit the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for vulnerable countries.

- The issue of global supply chains and logistics must also be reconsidered. We welcome the assistance of UNCTAD study our concerns on the escalating maritime freight cost and the irregular services by the big shipping lines. The result is a cascading effect on the cost of international trade and import bill, further exacerbating the economic casualty resulting from COVID-19 for smaller economies. We are proposing that UNCTAD takes the lead in assessing the problem and proposing workable solutions to address the situation
- We seek a trade enabling outcome at MC12 and special and differential treatment for developing countries. We also urge for an agreement on the waiver from the TRIPS agreement to ramp up vaccines production
- We are also proposing that an international COVID-19 solidarity fund, with voluntary contribution be set up to support the recovery in the most affected countries.

I reiterate my best wishes to the new UNCTAD Secretary General

Excellencies, I thank you for your attention.