



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.: General
12 September 2025

Original: English

Sixteenth session

Geneva

20–23 October 2025

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Provisional agenda and annotations*

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

The theme of the sixteenth session of the Conference, substantive agenda item 8, was approved by the Trade and Development Board at the closing plenary meeting, on 1 November 2024, of its seventy-sixth executive session (TD/B/EX(76)/3, chapter I, decision 583 (EX-LXXVI)).

At the closing plenary meeting of its seventy-seventh executive session, on 5 February 2025, the Trade and Development Board also approved the provisional agenda of the sixteenth session of the Conference (TD/B/EX(77)/2, annex I).

The provisional agenda is contained in chapter I of the present document. The annotations have been prepared by the secretariat in accordance with the usual practice and are contained in chapter II.

* Agreement was reached to publish the present document after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



I. Provisional agenda of the sixteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

1. Opening of the Conference.
2. Election of the President.
3. Establishment of sessional bodies.
4. Election of Vice-Presidents and the Rapporteur.
5. Credentials of representatives to the Conference:
 - (a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee;
 - (b) Report of the Credentials Committee.
6. Adoption of the agenda.
7. General debate.
8. Shaping the future: Driving economic transformation for equitable, inclusive and sustainable development.
9. Other business:
 - (a) Periodic review by the Conference of the lists of States contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX);
 - (b) Report of the Trade and Development Board to the Conference;
 - (c) Financial implications of the actions of the Conference.
10. Adoption of the report of the Conference to the General Assembly.

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

Item 1

Opening of the Conference

1. The rules of procedure of the Conference are contained in document TD/63/Rev.2.
2. The opening plenary meeting of the sixteenth session of the Conference will be held on the morning of Monday, 20 October 2025, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.
3. Rule 16 of the rules of procedure of the Conference provides as follows: “At the opening of each session of the Conference, the head of that delegation from which the President of the previous session was elected shall preside until the Conference has elected a President for the session.”

Item 2

Election of the President

4. Rule 17 of the rules of procedure of the Conference provides, among other things, that the Conference shall elect a President from among its members.
5. It is customary for the head of the delegation of the host country (Switzerland) to be elected as President of the Conference.

Item 3

Establishment of sessional bodies

6. In accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, the Conference may wish to establish a main committee (Committee of the Whole) to consider and report on the specific substantive items referred to it by the plenary. In line with rule 63, the main committee may set up such subsidiary bodies as may be required to carry out its functions.

7. Pursuant to rule 65 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, the main committee shall elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair and a Rapporteur. Under rule 17, the Chair of the main committee shall be elected before the election of the Vice-Presidents of the Conference and, in accordance with rule 22, shall be a member of the Bureau of the Conference.

Item 4

Election of Vice-Presidents and the Rapporteur

8. In accordance with rule 22 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, the Bureau of the Conference shall consist of 35 members, comprising the President and Vice-Presidents of the Conference, the Chair of the Committee of the Whole and the Rapporteur of the Conference. The Conference will need, therefore, to elect 32 Vice-Presidents.

9. The Conference may wish to decide that the composition of the Bureau of the Conference should be such as to ensure equitable geographical distribution, i.e. seven members from Africa, seven from Asia, seven from Latin America, nine from Group B, four from Group D, and China. In accordance with past practice, the regional coordinators and chairs of subsidiary bodies should be fully associated with the work of the Bureau.

Item 5

Credentials of representatives to the Conference

(a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee

10. Rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the Conference provides as follows: "A Credentials Committee shall be appointed at the beginning of each session. It shall consist of nine members, who shall be appointed by the Conference upon the proposal of the President. The Committee shall elect its own officers. It shall examine the credentials of representatives and report to the Conference."

11. In keeping with past practice, the Conference may wish to decide that the Credentials Committee shall be composed of the same nine States as were members of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly at its most recent (eightieth) session.

(b) Report of the Credentials Committee

12. In accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, the Credentials Committee shall examine the credentials of representatives and report to the Conference. Rule 13 provides that the credentials of representatives and the names of alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the Secretary-General of the Conference, if possible not less than one week before the date fixed for the opening of the session. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Item 6

Adoption of the agenda

13. As indicated in the introductory note to the present document, the substantive item of the provisional agenda (item 8) was approved by the Trade and Development Board at its seventy-sixth executive session, held on 31 October and 1 November 2024.

14. Suggestions regarding the organization of work of the Conference are included in the annex to the present document.

Item 7

General debate

15. The general debate is expected to open on the afternoon of Monday, 20 October 2025, and to conclude on the morning of Thursday, 23 October 2025. Statements will be broadcast on the Internet in accordance with the order in which delegations have been included on the list of speakers. The texts of statements that are provided electronically to the secretariat will be uploaded on the Conference website in the language version(s) in which they are received by the secretariat.¹ Information on the list of speakers will be provided in a separate note.

16. In accordance with rule 39 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, and with guidelines approved by the General Assembly, speakers will be requested to limit their interventions to a maximum of seven minutes. To this end, delegations might consider making available the full text of their statements and concentrating on salient features during interventions in the general debate.

Item 8

Shaping the future: Driving economic transformation for equitable, inclusive and sustainable development

17. Under the item, the Conference is expected to have before it a pre-Conference text prepared by the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, which was established by the Trade and Development Board at its seventy-first session in September 2024 and chaired by the President of the Board. The text is expected to be transmitted to the Conference by the Board, meeting in special session, after it is received from the Preparatory Committee for the Conference in Geneva.

18. Also under the item, the Conference will hold a Leaders Dialogue and ministerial round tables as well as side events. A full programme will be published on the Conference website.

19. The Conference will also have before it the report submitted by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD (UNCTAD/OSG/2025/1),² as well as any other submissions by member States or groups of member States. More detailed information on documentation will be provided at a later stage.

Item 9

Other business

(a) Periodic review by the Conference of the lists of States contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX)

20. The membership of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and of the Trade and Development Board is listed in document TD/B/INF.260.

¹ See <https://unctad.org/unctad16>.

² UNCTAD, 2025, *Shaping the Future: Driving Economic Transformation for Equitable, Inclusive and Sustainable Development* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.25.II.D.14, Geneva).

21. Paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX), as amended, states that the lists of States contained in the annex to that resolution “shall be reviewed periodically by the Conference in the light of changes in the membership of the Conference and other factors”. The list was last reviewed by the Conference at its fifteenth session in 2021. The Conference will be apprised of any action to be taken.

(b) Report of the Trade and Development Board to the Conference

22. Pursuant to paragraph 22 of General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX), the attention of the Conference shall be drawn to the reports of the Trade and Development Board submitted to the General Assembly since the fifteenth session of the Conference.

23. The Conference may wish to take note of the reports of the sessions of the Trade and Development Board since the fifteenth session of the Conference.

(c) Financial implications of the actions of the Conference

24. Estimates of any financial implications of action proposed by the Conference shall be submitted by the secretariat, if required, pursuant to rule 32 of the rules of procedure of the Conference.

Item 10

Adoption of the report of the Conference to the General Assembly

25. In accordance with past practice, the report of the Conference will be submitted to the General Assembly.

Annex

Organization of the work of the Conference

Opening plenary and election of the President

1. The 308th plenary meeting will be opened by the head of the delegation from which the President of the previous session was elected (Barbados). The President of the sixteenth session of the Conference will be elected at the opening plenary.

Establishment of a sessional committee

2. In accordance with rule 62, the Conference may establish a main committee (Committee of the Whole) to consider and report on the specific substantive items referred to it by the plenary, and to establish other bodies such as drafting groups, should this be called for.

Plenary

3. It is understood that the plenary will accommodate the high-level events and all other matters requiring action by the Conference, in addition to the adoption of the outcome of the Committee of the Whole.

General debate

4. The general debate will start at 3 p.m. on Monday, 20 October 2025, in room III of the Palais des Nations and conclude on Thursday, 23 October 2025. Statements will be broadcast on the Internet in accordance with the order in which delegations have been included on the list of speakers. The texts of statements that are provided electronically to the secretariat will be uploaded on the Conference website in the language version(s) in which they are received.

5. Speakers will be requested to limit their interventions to a **maximum of seven minutes**. To this end, delegations might consider making available the full text of their statements and concentrating on salient features during interventions in the general debate.

Committee of the Whole

6. The main task of the Committee of the Whole will be to complete the negotiations on the draft UNCTAD XVI negotiated text and to transmit the outcome to the Conference for adoption. In discharging its functions, the Committee of the Whole may wish to follow working methods similar to those followed by the Trade and Development Board. The Committee may, as necessary, establish drafting groups in order to finalize its work.

Other events

7. A number of high-level events and ministerial round tables are scheduled to take place in conjunction with the Conference. Details about each event can be found on the UNCTAD XVI website (<https://unctad.org/unctad16.org>).

Meeting facilities and timetable for the Conference

8. A proposed timetable for the Conference is contained in the programme of events and is also available on the UNCTAD XVI website.

Documentation

9. UNCTAD XVI will be conducted as a paper-smart Conference, with documentation available on the UNCTAD XVI website (<https://unctad.org/unctad16.org/>).