



UNCTAD XV CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM UPDATE

Background

The virtual hosting of UNCTAD XV from 3rd – 7th October 2021 by Barbados, a Small Island Developing State, offers a critical opportunity to ground the discussions in the present and future realities and prospects of the most vulnerable countries and their populations. The Theme of the UNCTAD forum *From Inequality and Vulnerability to Prosperity for All*, provides a platform to re-energize and refocus development efforts and commitments. It also presents a unique opportunity for member states to respond strategically by reinforcing the value of multilateralism and providing a renewed mandate for a strengthened UNCTAD.

UNCTAD XV is set to take place against the backdrop of a world economy in crisis, a public health catastrophe, and a global society teetering on the brink of instability, uncertainty and confusion. By the first quarter of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was considered a major global health challenge, the likes of which was not encountered for 100 years.

Widespread lockdowns and temporary cessations of economic activity have characterized this pandemic affecting economic uncertainty from the largest to the smallest nations. In the wake of this a ripple effect of an immediate fall in GDP; reduction in merchandised exports, remittances, and tourism have all featured prominently even as financial market volatility increases in response to widespread asset depreciation, currency devaluations, and credit defaults.

At the same time, it is recognized that while the pandemic has brought with it increasing challenges, emerging and developing economies were already facing constrained circumstances.

Civil Society Participation in UNCTAD XV

While the road to UNCTAD XV has not been a smooth one for civil society, given the importance of these discussions and the role that UNCTAD can play in fulfilling our developmental goals, the importance of the group's voice stands out more than ever. A part of managing the global economic uncertainty is ensuring that there is a strong collective voice to represent the various groups that comprise civil society.

Civil Society participation is an important element of UNCTAD processes. Since its establishment by the General Assembly in 1964, UNCTAD has recognized the important role of civil society in its work. The organisation has established formal and informal engagement mechanisms to facilitate civil society involvement.

In order to ensure effective civil society participation in UNCTAD XV, the International Civil Society Facilitating Group (ICSFG) has been established. The ICSFG will work mainly on the substantive dimensions of civil society engagement in the process leading up to UNCTAD XV and the parallel Civil Society Forum being held on 22nd – 24th September 2021. A major task of the ICSFG will be to promote and catalyze interest by civil society organisations (CSOs) and networks to engage with the UNCTAD XV process and facilitate active engagement and effective participation.



The ICSFG will work in close coordination with the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC), in its capacity as designated Civil Society Lead Organizer and Host in Barbados, to achieve the goal of convening a successful UNCTAD XV Civil Society Forum and also seek to achieve our sector’s desire for a genuinely participatory engagement process in the wider UNCTAD XV policy negotiations.

The ICSFG Comprises of the Following CSOs:

• Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)	• Pacific Network on Globalization (PANG)
• Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC)	• Public Services International
• Friends of the Earth International	• Red Latinoamericana por Justicia Económica y Social (LATINDADD)
• Inter-Agency Group of Development Organisations (IAGDO)	• Regions Refocus
• IT for Change	• Society for International Development (SID)
• Latin America Gender and Trade Network	• Tax Justice Network Africa
• Our World Is Not for Sale (OWINFS)	• Third World Network Africa
• Windward Islands Farmers Association (WINFA)	

Thus far, the ICSFG has been able to identify the following key thematic areas to be raised at UNCTAD XV:

- 1) Reaffirmation and Strengthening of the Original UNCTAD**
- 2) Climate Justice and Sustainability**
- 3) Debt and Development**
- 4) Technology Transfer and the Way Forward**
- 5) International Trade Agreements and Effective Integration**



Civil Society has poised itself to offer a high level of participation in UNCTAD XV over the coming weeks. A number of events are scheduled leading up to the UNCTAD XV Conference, namely, Trade and Development Board on 6th - 8th September 2021 and the Civil Society Forum from 22nd - 24th September 2021. The forum will feature a number of panel discussions, bringing together civil society activists and development practitioners from around the world.

CSOs interested in hosting side events should contact the CPDC before 3rd September 2021, at the following email address - csoforumunctad15@gmail.com.

UNCTAD XV EVENTS REGISTRATION

Separate registration is required for each forum. Please note that registration is mandatory for each event, including the conference itself.

- **Registration with CPDC for Caribbean NGOs & CSOs**

To ensure seamless registration, all Caribbean Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and CSOs interested in participating in the CSO Forum are required to register with the CPDC using the link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6SFHLWT>, after which, kindly proceed to the CSO Forum Registration section below.

Questions can be sent to CPDC at csoforumunctad15@gmail.com.

FORUM REGISTRATION

- **Registration for Unaccredited NGOs and CSOs -**

All NGOs and CSOs without accreditation must apply by completing the application form using the link https://unctad.org/system/files/information-document/U15cso04_HowToRegister_en.pdf. The organisation will receive an automatic email confirmation of approval and can then register for the CSO Forum using the link <https://indico.un.org/event/1000151/>. Please note Caribbean NGOs registering with CPDC, will not be required to upload a letter in which its representative(s) are designated. Each representative must register for the forum.

- **Registration for Accredited NGOs and CSOs -**

If your NGO/CSO is already accredited, you can go directly to the registration page for the CSO forum using the link <https://indico.un.org/event/1000151/>. Please note Caribbean NGOs registering with CPDC, will not be required to upload a letter in which its representative(s) are designated. Each representative must register for the forum.

Inquiries can be addressed by email to UNCTAD's Civil Society Outreach team at cso.unctad15@unctad.org and further information can be found at <https://unctad15.org/civil-society-forum>.