



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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Fifteenth session

Virtual Barbados

3–7 October 2021

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Provisional agenda and annotations

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

The theme for the fifteenth session of the Conference, substantive agenda item 8 of the provisional agenda, was approved by the Trade and Development Board at the opening plenary meeting, on 5 February 2020, of its sixty-ninth executive session (TD/B/EX(69)/2, chapter I).

At the closing plenary meeting of its sixty-seventh session, on 2 October 2020, the Trade and Development Board approved the provisional agenda for the fifteenth session of the Conference (TD/B/67/6, annex II).

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.

With regard to organizational matters, the secretariat will issue an addendum to the present document (TD/520/Add.1).



I. Provisional agenda of the fifteenth 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. From inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all.
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. A virtual cultural event will take place on 3 October 2021. The opening ceremony of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development will be held on the afternoon of Monday, 4 October 2021, in a virtual format. A detailed programme will be circulated prior to this event.
2. The rules of procedure of the Conference are contained in document TD/63/Rev.2.
3. The opening plenary meeting of the fifteenth session of the Conference will be held on the afternoon of Monday, 4 October 2021, in a virtual format, as part of the opening ceremony.
4. 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

5. 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.
6. It is customary for the head of the delegation of the host country (Barbados) to be elected as President of the Conference.

Item 3

Establishment of sessional bodies

7. 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.

8. 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. It is customary for the Chair of the Committee of the Whole to be the incumbent President of the Trade and Development Board.

Item 4

Election of Vice-Presidents and the Rapporteur

9. 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.

10. 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. 14 members from List A (seven from Africa and seven from Asia), 7 from List C, 9 from List B, 4 from List 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

11. 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."

12. In keeping with established practice, the Conference may wish to decide that the Credentials Committee shall be composed of the same nine States as those that were members of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly at its most recent (seventy-sixth) session.

(b) Report of the Credentials Committee

13. 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

14. 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 the opening plenary meeting, on 5 February 2020, of its sixty-ninth executive session.

15. Suggestions regarding the organization of work of the Conference will be circulated in an addendum to the present document (TD/520/Add.1).

Item 7

General debate

16. The general debate is expected to open on the morning of Tuesday, 5 October 2021. Modalities for the general debate will be circulated to member States in due course. For remote participants, pre-recorded statements will need to be provided in advance of the start of the Conference. Geneva-based delegates will be invited to make live statements in room XX of the Palais des Nations. Statements will be broadcast on the Internet in accordance with the order in which delegations have been inscribed in 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. Further information on the general debate will be provided on the website of the fifteenth session of the Conference.¹

17. 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 five minutes. Statements made on behalf of regional groups will be limited to seven minutes. To this end, delegations may wish to deliver an abridged version in the general debate and consider making available the full text of their statements for distribution.

Item 8

From inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all

18. Under the agenda 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 sixty-ninth executive session in February 2020 and chaired by the President of the Board. The text will be transmitted to the Conference by the Board meeting in special session, after it is received, in Geneva, from the Preparatory Committee for the Conference.

19. Under the item, the Conference will also hold the three World Leaders Summit Dialogues, one on global vulnerabilities, titled “Call from a vulnerable place”; one on inequality, titled “Is the COVID-19 crisis really a game changer?”; and one on building a more prosperous development path, title “Matching the scale of the moment”. There will also be five ministerial round tables, as follows: (a) scaling up financing for development; (b) reshaping global and regional value chains; (c) regional integration for a resilient, inclusive and sustainable future; (d) Harnessing frontier technologies for shared prosperity; and (e) supporting productive transformation for greater resilience in a post-pandemic world. Ministerial meetings of regional groups (Group of 77 and China; least developed countries; landlocked developing countries; and small island developing States) will be held in the course of September 2021. Leading up to the Conference, five forums will be held,² as well as a series of pre-events, in a virtual format.

¹ See <https://unctad15.org/>.

² The Global Commodities Forum, Gender and Development Forum, Creative Economy and Digitalization Forum, Civil Society Forum and Youth Forum.

20. The Conference will also have before it the report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to the fifteenth session,³ as well as any other submissions to it by member States or groups of member States. More detailed information on documentation will be provided at a later stage.

21. Furthermore, the Conference will have before it submissions from the Civil Society Forum and the Youth Forum, held as pre-events.

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)

22. 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.250.

23. 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 fourteenth session in 2016. The Conference will be apprised of any action to be taken and be informed of changes that have occurred since the fourteenth session.

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

24. 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 fourteenth session of the Conference.

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

(c) Financial implications of the actions of the Conference

26. Estimates of any financial implications of action proposed by the Conference shall be submitted by the secretariat, if required, in pursuance of rule 32 of the rules of procedure of the Conference.

Item 10

Adoption of the report of the Conference to the General Assembly

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

³ UNCTAD, 2020, *Transforming Trade and Development in a Fractured, Post-Pandemic World: Report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to the fifteenth session of the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.20.II.D.39, Geneva).



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Addendum

Organization of the work of the Conference

1. The annotated provisional agenda for the Conference has been circulated in document TD/520.

Opening cultural event

2. The opening cultural event of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XV) will be held on the afternoon of Sunday, 3 October 2021, in Bridgetown, and transmitted globally through a dedicated virtual conference centre, available at <https://unctad15.org/>. This opening cultural event will be followed by the opening plenary and ceremony on 4 October 2021.

Opening plenary and election of the President

3. The 296th plenary meeting will be opened by the head of the delegation from which the President of the previous session was elected (Kenya). The President of the fifteenth session of the Conference will be elected at the opening plenary.

Establishment of a sessional committee

4. 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

5. 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

6. The general debate will start on Tuesday, 5 October 2021, and conclude on Wednesday, 6 October 2021. Statements will be broadcast through the virtual conference



centre 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.

7. Speakers will be requested to limit their pre-recorded interventions to a **maximum of five 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

8. The main task of the Committee of the Whole will be to complete the negotiations on the draft UNCTAD XV negotiated text, as contained in document TD/L.435 and its addenda, 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

9. 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 XV website (<https://unctad15.org>).

Meeting facilities and timetable for the Conference

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

Documentation

11. UNCTAD XV will be conducted as a paper-smart Conference; documentation will therefore be available on the UNCTAD XV website (<https://unctad15.org/>).
