



# United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.: General  
14 July 2025

Original: English

---

## Trade and Development Board

Thirty-fifth special session

Geneva, 23 June 2025

## Report of the Trade and Development Board on its thirty- fifth special session

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 23 June 2025



## **Introduction**

The thirty-fifth special session of the Trade and Development Board was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 23 June 2025. In the course of the session, the Board held one plenary meeting.

### **I. Action by the Trade and Development Board on substantive items on its agenda**

#### **A. Venue and dates for UNCTAD XVI**

##### **Decision 589 (S-XXXV)**

At its meeting, on 23 June 2025, the Trade and Development Board endorsed a change in venue for the sixteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, welcomed the generous offer of the Government of Switzerland to host the Conference in Geneva and decided to transmit to the General Assembly of the United Nations a draft decision on the venue for its consideration.

#### **B. Other action taken by the Board**

##### **Venue and dates for UNCTAD XVI**

1. The Trade and Development Board, at its plenary meeting on 23 June 2025, endorsed a change in host country (decision 589 (S-XXXV)) and approved a draft decision for the consideration of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its seventy-ninth session (see annex II) on the venue for the sixteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XVI), as contained in a non-paper shared with member States.

## **II. President's summary**

##### **Venue and dates for UNCTAD XVI**

(Agenda item 2)

2. At the plenary meeting, the President of the Trade and Development Board summarized a meeting of the extended Bureau of the Board held on 19 June 2025. Viet Nam would not be able to host UNCTAD XVI in 2025 due to unforeseen circumstances. The Government of Switzerland had generously offered to host UNCTAD XVI in Geneva. As member States had first welcomed the generous offer of the Government of Viet Nam at the thirty-third special session of the Board, the current session was necessary to formalize a new venue.

3. The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD expressed deep appreciation for the efforts of the Government of Viet Nam since January 2024 and regretted that the Conference could not be held there. He looked forward to continued and fruitful collaboration, recalling the country's strong commitment to multilateralism. On behalf of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, he further expressed deep gratitude to the Government of Switzerland for the offer to host the Conference, which reflected the country's strong commitment to multilateralism and to UNCTAD.

4. The representative of Viet Nam emphasized that multilateralism, international cooperation and integration were key in his country's approach to international relations and sustainable development. The offer of the Government of Viet Nam to host UNCTAD XVI came with the highest level of political commitment. The UNCTAD secretariat and Viet Nam had engaged in productive and constructive consultations and preparatory work. The technical and legal issues that arose required additional time to address, which was

incompatible with maintaining the four-year cycle for ministerial conferences. He noted the significance of the UNCTAD mission and the Conference, particularly in the current international landscape of geopolitical tensions, economic fragmentation and heightened trade competition. UNCTAD had a vital role in supporting trade investment and development, particularly for developing countries. He expressed sincere thanks to the Government of Switzerland for its offer to host UNCTAD XVI. Viet Nam would continue to be a proactive, responsible partner in promoting an open, inclusive and rules-based multilateral trading system and contributing to sustainable development worldwide and looked forward to working with the membership and the secretariat to ensure that the Conference would advance the goal of sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth for all.

5. The representative of Switzerland expressed appreciation for the readiness of Viet Nam to host UNCTAD XVI, while recognizing the challenges that arose. She thanked member States for the trust shown in considering the offer of the Government of Switzerland to host the Conference, given the limited time available. Switzerland would spare no effort in ensuring the success of UNCTAD XVI, reflecting the spirit of 60 years of cooperation between UNCTAD, its member States and Switzerland. The Conference represented an opportunity to reaffirm multilateralism and the vital role trade could play in advancing development, particularly for countries most affected by the current global context. She looked forward to fruitful cooperation and a successful outcome.

6. Several regional groups and many delegates expressed appreciation for commitment and efforts of the Government of Viet Nam in seeking to host UNCTAD XVI. They acknowledged the extensive preparatory work undertaken and understood the circumstances that ultimately prevented the Conference from being held there in 2025. The strong interest in maintaining the long-standing conference calendar ultimately required a change in strategy, as the efforts of Viet Nam to resolve current legal and technical constraints would have required additional time. They were confident that Viet Nam would continue to play a meaningful role in the process ahead with the same proven commitment and engagement. UNCTAD was unique in its focus on the well-being of developing countries, which was behind the long-established tradition of holding the conference in a developing country. That tradition brought the challenges and priorities of the global South to the forefront. An enduring and highly valued partner of UNCTAD, Switzerland had a deep-rooted tradition of multilateralism, inclusive dialogue and development cooperation. They welcomed the generous offer of the Government of Switzerland to host the Conference, noting current constraints and the urgency of holding UNCTAD XVI in 2025. They expressed confidence that Switzerland would consider the special concerns and priorities of developing countries and help create an enabling environment for the voices of the global South to be heard and respected. Its support for the United Nations system and strong commitment to international development were undeniable assets. They firmly believed in and were committed to contributing to a successful UNCTAD XVI. Under the leadership and stewardship of Switzerland, the Conference would be a success for multilateralism and people in developing countries.

7. One regional group and many delegates expressed deep appreciation to the Government of Viet Nam for its generous offer and commitment to host UNCTAD XVI and acknowledged the close collaboration and constructive engagement of Viet Nam and the UNCTAD secretariat to organize a meaningful and impactful Conference. As with all processes under UNCTAD, the Conference should continue to be firmly member-driven, with the meaningful participation of developing countries. Nonetheless, they appreciated the readiness of Government of Switzerland to host and preside over UNCTAD XVI. They expected that the Conference would be conducted in a manner that reflected the long-standing commitment of UNCTAD to inclusivity, transparency and a strong development focus. While understanding the practical considerations behind the decision to hold UNCTAD XVI in Geneva, they noted that, for the Asia-Pacific region, it was a missed opportunity to serve as host. The Asia-Pacific region reaffirmed its interest in hosting the seventeenth session of the Conference and readiness to engage with interested members and the secretariat. They remained committed to supporting a successful and inclusive Conference in Geneva and engaging constructively in the preparatory process, including through negotiations on the outcome document, with full support for the work of the Board. They stood ready to work with all partners on concrete, action-oriented

outcomes that responded to the evolving needs, aspirations and priorities of developing States.

8. Another regional group stated that discussion among member States on the location of the seventeenth session of the Conference should be official, open and timely, through formal channels, for consideration by capitals and member States, while respecting the order of hosting among continents.

9. Some regional groups and one group of countries expressed particular appreciation to Viet Nam, and the UNCTAD secretariat, for the efforts towards organizing the Conference. The offer of the Government of Switzerland was welcome and noteworthy with limited time for preparations, though Switzerland had extensive experience in such matters. The group of countries emphasized the dedication of Viet Nam to multilateralism, solidarity and inclusive dialogue and trusted that the global South would host the event in the future. The Conference should enable addressing the challenges faced by developing countries and the least developed countries and be a turning point to bolster South–South cooperation as fundamental for reducing systemic inequalities and ending external interference. The global financial architecture should be democratized and equitable access to markets and technologies, ensured.

10. One delegate stressed that UNCTAD had been a vital political and economic platform for developing countries since 1964, promoting their interests across trade, finance, technology, investment and other interrelated areas of development. Convening the Conference in a developing country had long been a meaningful practice that ensured the priorities and challenges of the global South remained at the heart of deliberations. Another delegate said the Conference should offer a forward-looking vision and tangible guidance on how to realign trade, finance, technology and investment flows with the priorities of sustainable development, as well as address current crises and set an agenda for inclusive economic transformation beyond the next four years.

11. One regional group stressed the need to begin intensive work on the outcome document, based on mutual respect and taking into account the interests of all. One delegate recalled the war in Gaza and the complex situation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He restated his country's position of keeping previously agreed language, as seen in two paragraphs proposed for the Conference outcome.

### **III. Procedural and related matters**

#### **A. Adoption of the agenda**

(Agenda item 1)

12. The Board adopted the provisional agenda, as contained in document TD/B(S-XXXV)/1 (see annex I).

#### **B. Adoption of the report of the Trade and Development Board**

(Agenda item 3)

13. At its plenary meeting, on 23 June 2025, the Trade and Development Board adopted its report, which would contain the decisions on the venue for UNCTAD XVI and include procedural and related matters. The Board further authorized the Rapporteur, under the authority of the President, to finalize the report to the General Assembly as appropriate, taking into account the proceedings of the meeting.

## **Annex I**

### **Agenda of the thirty-fifth special session of the Trade and Development Board**

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Venue and dates for UNCTAD XVI.
3. Adoption of the report of the Trade and Development Board.

## **Annex II**

### **Draft decision for the consideration of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its seventy-ninth session**

#### **Venue and dates for UNCTAD XVI**

The General Assembly takes note of decision 589 (S-XXXV) of the Trade and Development Board approved at its thirty-fifth special session, which was held in Geneva on 23 June 2025, and welcomes the generous offer of the Government of Switzerland to host the sixteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in October 2025 in Geneva.

## Annex III

### Attendance\*

1. Representatives of the following members of the Trade and Development Board attended the session:

Angola	Lebanon
Armenia	Libya
Bangladesh	Mexico
Barbados	Morocco
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)
Brazil	Niger
Brunei Darussalam	Nigeria
Cameroon	Pakistan
Chile	Portugal
China	Republic of Korea
Croatia	Romania
Cyprus	Spain
Dominican Republic	Sri Lanka
Ecuador	State of Palestine
Egypt	Switzerland
Ethiopia	Thailand
Germany	Trinidad and Tobago
Greece	Türkiye
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Uruguay
Iraq	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Jamaica	Viet Nam
Japan	Zimbabwe
Jordan	

2. The following members of the Conference not members of the Board attended the session:

Bahamas  
Fiji  
Holy See

3. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

Eurasian Economic Commission  
European Union  
League of Arab States

---

\* This attendance list contains registered participants. For the list of participants, see TD/B(S-XXXV)/INF.1.