



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See  
to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva  
at the  
Second Session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the  
UNCTAD XV MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE  
Geneva, 11 December 2020

Mr. President,

At the outset, my Delegation would like to thank you for your leadership throughout the preparation process of this session, especially in these challenging times. With the presentation of the *zero draft*, we are formally starting a new phase for the XV UNCTAD Ministerial Conference. The Holy See would like to express particular appreciation to Barbados for confirming its decision to host the Conference amid the pandemic. This sincere commitment to multilateralism offers a strong example to bolster our determination in the coming months. Particular thanks goes to the secretariat for its efforts in the preparation of the document and this virtual session.

During this year's preparatory meetings as well as the sessions of the Trade and Development Board, it has emerged that the pandemic and its fallout have exposed serious deficiencies in the apparatuses of globalization and these will likely have a lasting impact on future efforts as developing countries seek to benefit advantageously from the global economy. From this perspective, UNCTAD 15 will provide the first opportunity for the development community to align the Agenda 2030 with the global "new normal."

UNCTAD 15 presents a unique occasion to coordinate worldwide efforts for a healthier future. We must transform global approaches to trade and development if we hope to chart a sustainable course to a better recovery. Nonetheless, rather than "building back better" as some have called for, we need to re-build some aspects entirely from the ground up. Indeed, for far too many, going back to "business as usual" is no longer a possibility. In short, as outlined in the Holy See's position paper, it is imperative that the Barbados Conference mark the beginning of a new and decisive decade of development, learning from the lessons and missed opportunities of the past ten years.

From its inception, UNCTAD has been the strongest multilateral voice available for the community of developing nations, providing a constant impulse to reform the global economic system to ensure that it would truly benefit all of humanity. UNCTAD, therefore, exists with one simple, yet quite challenging, goal: to make the global economic system work for everyone. Unfortunately, in the current scenario, and with gloomy projections of the potential impact that the Covid-19 epidemic will have on economies around the world for this and the coming year, such a goal seems further away than ever.

Through our work in the coming months, which will culminate with the Conference in Barbados, we need to engage in a constructive approach, bearing in mind UNCTAD's motto: "Prosperity for all". Such a concise yet demanding statement has guided us since the establishment of this Conference. The consequences of the current crisis go far beyond the financial domain, extending to the economic, social, and cultural spheres. For these reasons, the international community cannot let the financial system continue to be a source of global economic instability; it must urgently take measures to prevent the outbreak of other financial crises.

Mr. President,

As highlighted by my Delegation in presenting, for the first time, its position paper for UNCTAD XV "this is not a time for indifference, because the whole world is suffering and needs to be united in facing the pandemic. (...) May these, the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters living in the cities and peripheries of every part of the world, not be abandoned".<sup>1</sup> For this reason, the Delegation of the Holy See would like to request to be included in the Extended Bureau consultation for the negotiation of UNCTAD XV and to provide a concrete contribution in making the upcoming Ministerial document a useful and practical point of reference for the future.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, Urbi et Orbi Message, 12 April 2020.