

# Dialogue on Inequality, Poverty and Trade in Africa and the Least Developed Countries

## Concept Note and Agenda

Preliminary Draft

**Date:** 23 September 2025

**Venue:** Palais des Nations, Geneva Room VII



## Background

At the dawn of the new Millennium, developing countries achieved rapid economic growth, supporting progress on economic and social development at the national level and a reduction in income gap between developed and developing countries. However, in many African countries and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the commodities-driven growth was not accompanied by commensurate poverty reduction, while domestic income inequality remains high.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine exacerbated these trends. Progress in poverty reduction has stalled and even reversed. In 2020, the global extreme poverty rate increased for the first time, and – on current trends – less than a third of countries are expected to halve their national poverty rates by 2030. At the same time, income inequality is increasing in several African countries and LDCs. High levels of inequality lower economic growth, while also reducing the power of growth to achieve poverty reduction. They further reduce fiscal space, lowering welfare spending and public investment. Beyond its economic impact, income inequality can also have corrosive effects on social cohesion, health outcomes, educational achievement as well as social mobility.

Against this backdrop, UNCTAD and the Geneva Office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) are planning to organize a dialogue on inequality, poverty and trade in Africa and the LDCs with a view to identifying actionable policy measures to tackle inequality and poverty at the national level. The event will be attended by government officials, delegates of permanent missions based in Geneva, representatives of international organizations, and development experts.

## Objectives of meeting

- To discuss challenges facing African countries and LDCs in their quest to reduce poverty and inequality, identify policy options to address them, and share experiences in the design and implementation of policies to foster inclusive development.



# Programme

23 September 2025, 9.15 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. (CET)

Room VII

9.15–9.45 **Registration**

9.45–10.25 **Opening Session**

Opening Remarks

Remarks by *Paul Akiwumi*, Director, ALDC, UNCTAD

Remarks by *Renate Tenbusch*, Director, FES Geneva

Statement by *H.E. Mr. Alaa HEGAZY*, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations Office and Chair of the African Group

Statement by *H.E. Mr. Ram Prasad Subedi*, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations and Chair of the LDC Group (tbc)

Statement by *Representative*, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (tbc)

## PART I Inequality, Poverty and Development

Moderator *Prof. Franklyn Lisk*, University of Warwick, UK

10.25–10.40 Regional integration and the challenge of poverty reduction in Africa  
*Aissatou Diallo*, Chief, Office for Africa, ITC, Geneva

10.40–10.55 Development cooperation, poverty and inequality reduction in LDCs  
*Julie Seghers*, Team Leader, Poverty and Inequalities, Development Co-operation Directorate, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Paris

10.55–11.10 **Interactive discussion**

11.10–11.25 Sustaining poverty and inequality reduction in Africa and LDCs: the missing link  
*Patrick Osakwe*, Head, Trade, Poverty and Inequalities Branch, UNCTAD

11.25–11.40 Combatting inequality and poverty: lessons learned from UNCTAD studies  
*Moritz Meier-Ewert*, UNCTAD, Geneva

11.40–12.10 **Interactive discussion**

## PART II Case Studies and National Perspectives

Moderator *Dr Donald Mmari*, Executive Director, REPOA, Tanzania

12.10–12.25 Recent initiatives to address poverty and inequality in Uganda  
*Ramathan Ggoobi*, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda



12.25-12.40	Recent initiatives to address poverty and inequality in Tanzania <i>Ellykedo Ngonyani</i> , Director of Policy Planning Ministry of Planning and Investment, Tanzania
12.40-12.55	Recent initiatives to address poverty and inequality in Cambodia <i>Kong Sokheng</i> , Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Cambodia to WTO and IGOs in Geneva
12.55-13.20	<b>Interaction discussion</b>
13.20-14.30	<b>Lunch Break</b>
<b>PART III Policy Action Areas for Inequality and Poverty Reduction</b>	
<b>Moderator</b>	<i>H.E. Mr. Ram Prasad Subedi</i> , Chair of the LDC Group at UNCTAD
14.30-14.45	Coherent strategies for reducing poverty and inequality in LDCs <i>Katja Hujo</i> , Senior Research Coordinator and Head of the Bonn Office, UNRISD
14.45-15.00	Labour market issues in inequality and poverty reduction <i>Helmut Schwarzer</i> , ILO, Geneva (tbc)
15.00-15.20	<b>Interactive discussion</b>
15.20-15.35	The Human Rights dimension of poverty and inequality in LDCs <i>Maria Andrea Aguero</i> , Human Rights Officer, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
15.35-15.50	Making rural development work for poverty reduction <i>Dominique Burgeon</i> , Director, FAO Liaison Office in Geneva
15.50-16.10	<b>Interactive discussion</b>
16.10-16.25	Fiscal policies to foster inclusive development <i>Chennai Mukumba</i> , Executive Director, Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA) Nairobi, Kenya
16.25-16.40	<b>Interactive discussion</b>
16.40-17.00	<b>Closing remarks</b>

