9th World Investment Forum 2026

High-Level International Investment Agreements Conference

UNCTAD's Guiding Principles for IIA Reform

Sunday, 25 October 2026, 15:45 – 18:00 · Doha time

Room: Lusail Tent

Opening remarks by Mr. Hamed El Kady, Chief, International Investment Agreements Section, Division on Investment and Enterprise, UNCTAD

Excellencies,

Distinguished experts,

Thank you very much for joining us today for the annual High-Level IIA Conference.

Since 2012, momentum has been building to reform the international investment regime. Yet, despite these efforts, the core of the system remains largely unchanged, with thousands of old-generation international investment agreements still shaping the investment policy landscape. Many of these agreements do not fully reflect today's priorities.

Newer agreements fare better in reflecting sustainable development considerations. Recent treaties place a stronger emphasis on investment cooperation, promotion and facilitation. Many have refined investment protection standards and investment dispute settlement mechanisms.

Against this backdrop, we are pleased to launch the **UN Trade and Development Guiding Principles for International Investment Agreements Reform**, which aim to support policymakers in advancing meaningful and coordinated reform efforts. The Guiding Principles are designed to address reform challenges head-on. Building on the diverse reform practices we have seen around the world, we now have a strong foundation for renewed efforts to build a more sustainable, coherent and future-oriented international investment regime.

UNCTAD has been at the forefront of efforts to reform international investment agreements for more than a decade. In 2012, here in Doha, UNCTAD launched the Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development, which set out ten Guiding Principles for Investment Policymaking. It provided the first comprehensive road map for aligning investment treaty making with sustainable development objectives.

Since then, we have continued to develop comprehensive toolkits as well as targeted policy guidance on specific IIA reform issues, helping countries respond to evolving global developments and support their efforts to modernize the international investment regime.

Building on this work, the Guiding Principles provide a practical reference point for policymakers seeking to align international investment agreements with sustainable development objectives while maintaining an enabling environment for investment.

The **Guiding Principles for IIA Reform** are the result of a truly collective effort. They draw on the expertise of the global investment and development community, including government policymakers, international organizations, think tanks, academics and practitioners. The development of the Guiding Principles has been informed by expert inputs, including contributions through **UNCTAD's Multi-stakeholder Platform on IIA Reform**.

Excellencies, distinguised experts,

Today, it is our honour to hear from you. We look forward to drawing on your expertise, experiences and perspectives to identify the most effective pathways for reform. Your contributions will be instrumental in shaping the next phase of IIA reform.