

Veronica Mwangangi IBVM on

UNCTAD 14.

The two-day pre-conference civil society forum was very intense as we deliberated on the civil society declaration to be presented to the negotiation committee at the main UNCTAD 14 meeting. The discussions were an eye opener to me on the economic situation of the world and especially of developing countries. **Gender issues, inequalities within and among nations, illicit financial flows out of developing countries, stagnation in global trade, multilateralism and green finance are some of the issues that interested me.** A few issues

bothered me: that developing countries are on the verge of debt distress that they are dependent on commodities trade which is highly affected by the ever changing global prices and demand, the high level of illicit trade, and that the developing countries found trade with developed nations difficult because of the non-tariff measures imposed by the latter. Conversations during the side-events of the civil society forum left me thinking that the developing countries would need to seal off all the avenues that allow illicit financial flows out of the countries, move up the value chain by investing this finance in manufacturing and processing industries so as to minimize commodities exports, and perhaps consider south – south trade in order to realize the SDGs. I found the conversations at the civil society forum honest. **A strong civil society movement is necessary in a country.....** no wonder the Secretary General of UNCTAD referred to the official opening of the civil society forum as actually the opening of UNCTAD 14.

As a teacher of business studies, attending UNCTAD 14 provided me with information and statistics to quantify what I teach.

Tax havens were discussed by civil society, so as a patron of a tax club whose aim is to inculcate a tax paying culture among young people, I made contact with Tax Justice Network, Africa and I intend to depend

on them to expand the horizon of my students and staff on tax matters.

I hope to use the contacts established with NGOs that promote care of the environment and the empowerment of women to help me further our IBVM General congregation Calls on the same.

