

Message from the Festival Director



**Ms Collins Rex
Festival Director**

The Festival that invites the world to the conversation

There's something magical about gathering like-minded people from every corner of the globe—without anyone needing to pack a bag or queue at immigration. Something engaging, a bit defiant, and in the current climate, necessary.

That's the magic at the heart of the Festival of Inclusive Trade.

We're coming back in 2026 not with a shout, but with a steady, strong voice.

After a short pause, the Festival returns online, as it began, stretching over two weeks in March.

It's a quiet kind of revolution: a global conversation unfolding across screens, time zones, languages, and lived experiences.

An act of rebuilding in a time when it's easy to lose faith.

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This year's theme, Reclaiming Inclusion through Global Trade, is more than timely—it's urgent.

The world around us feels fragile. Economies are fragmenting. Trust is thinning. But still we gather. Because inclusive trade, when done right, doesn't just fill coffers—it bridges divides. It gives those often forgotten in the global system – women, youth, First Nations people, diaspora communities – seats at the table, not as guests, but as leaders.

Each session, each work of art, each shared story becomes a thread—knitting together a new kind of trade tapestry. One stitched with respect, equity, and imagination.

In 2026, we invite countries to co-host, not as figureheads, but as co-creators. We ask artists and entrepreneurs, policymakers and students, to join hands across the virtual divide and dream aloud. Week one will dive deep into how trade can bridge, rather than widen the gap. Week two will explore how trust—not profit alone—might be the truest currency of all.

This isn't just a festival. It's a chance to remember how much better we are when we act together. It's an open invitation. Sit with us. Linger in the dialogue. Listen to voices you haven't heard before. Let's shape trade, not just for the strong, but for the many. And let's do it with purpose, and hope for a better future.