

BAPA+40 -Pre -Event

Concept Note

South-South Cooperation for Building Digital Capacities for Industrialization in Africa

4th October 2018
(13.15-15.00)
Room- XXII
Venue: UNCTAD

Background and Context

The establishment of the UNCTAD by the Group of 77 in 1964 and the launch of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) in 1978 have been two major steps towards institutionalization of economic cooperation among developing countries. In 2009, UNCTAD set up a unit on Economic Cooperation and Integration among Developing countries (ECIDC) to reinforce UNCTAD's work on South-South cooperation, which is increasingly reshaping the global economic development architecture. To celebrate forty years of BAPA and to strengthen UNCTAD's commitment to South-South development cooperation, this Event is being organized by the Unit on Economic Cooperation and Integration among Developing countries (ECIDC) in the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies (GDS) and the Africa Section of the Division for Africa, LDCs and Special Programmes, UNCTAD in partnership with the UN Office on South-South Cooperation-Africa to discuss the ways in which south-south cooperation can help Africa build digital capacities to face the challenges and avail the opportunities posed by Industry 4.0.

Organisers: ECIDC-GDS and Africa Section -ALDC, UNCTAD in partnership with UNOSSC-Africa.

Objectives:

The main objective of this session is to discuss how south-south cooperation can help African countries to build their digital capacities and what can be the ways to finance this cooperation.

The panel will discuss the opportunities and challenges posed by Industry 4.0 for African countries. It will further discuss how digital cooperation at the regional level can be initiated within the existing regional integration and industrialization agendas in Africa. What kind of digital cooperation framework can be developed which promotes digital development in African countries and what kind of regional support can be provided to build digital infrastructures? The discussions will focus on the regional strategies that are needed to promote digital capacities for industrialization. The session will also highlight the ways to finance south-south cooperation for building digital capacities in Africa.

Issues of Discussion:

The session will bring together high-level policymakers and international experts to address the following issues:

1. What are the opportunities and challenges faced by African countries in Industry 4.0?
2. How can South-South cooperation at the regional level help African countries prepare for Industry 4.0?
3. What kind of policies and strategies are needed at the national and regional level to promote industrialization in the digital era?
4. How can South-South cooperation for building digital capacities be financed?
5. What can Africa learn from other developing countries in building its digital capacities?

The Proposed Panel:

1. Mr. Ajay Kumar Bramdeo, Permanent Delegation of the African Union to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva (Chair).
2. Mr. Victor Harison, Commissioner for Economic Affairs of the Africa Union Commission, AU Headquarters, Addis Ababa.
3. Mr. François Ekoko, Regional Coordinator for Africa, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.
4. Mr. Hany Gamil Besada, Senior Research Coordinator of the Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), New York
5. Mr. Ricardo Gottschalk, Economic Affairs Officer, ECIDC, GDS, UNCTAD
6. Ms Bineswaree Bolaky, Economic Affairs Officer, Africa section, ALDC, UNCTAD