Regenerative futures:

- Exploring policy pathways to economic diversification in the digital paradigm

Concept Note

28th CSTD side event

13:20 - 14:50 hrs Room XXII, Building E, Palais des Nations

Organized by - IT for Change and Global Digital Justice Forum

Digital technologies represent an important building block for economic diversification and value chain optimization. The UN SG Report to the CSTD, 'Diversifying Economies in a World of Accelerated Digitalisation', highlights how successful diversification is associated with complex products. That is, much depends on how productive capabilities in the economy are directed and shaped to harness diversification opportunities. The twenty first century challenge also lies in the ability of countries to anchor the vision and action for knowledge-intensive development in values of equity, inclusion and ecological sustainability.

This normative focus on "regenerative futures" – going beyond the hype on AI solutionisms – is the focus of the proposed session. Successful economic diversification in the data and AI paradigm is predicated on appropriate techno-social ecosystems for flourishing societies and vibrant economies.

The rise of the platform economy is ushering in a key change – the utilization, productization, and assetization of data for value realization. Developing countries face a unique set of challenges in improving and transforming their industrial processes. Automation is impacting labour market trends, with corporations from developed countries resorting to re-shoring strategies. Anachronistic taxation frameworks, IP regimes, and still-fledgling governance arrangements for data and AI put developing countries at a disadvantage in the global digital economy. Digital trade rules act as a barrier to domestic regulation, shrinking the policy space for developing countries.

Against this background, a stocktaking of current trends and emerging evidence is necessary to situate the policy discourse in relation to the right to development and a vision of regenerative local economies.

The proposed session will address the following questions:

1. What are emerging insights on digital optimization and productivity gains in manufacturing value chains?
2. It is often said that developing countries should expand their basket of data-driven services for global markets in order to benefit from the platform economy. What considerations in the policy ecosystem,including, appropriate skilling, digital public infrastructures, energy strategy, and localised AI models, may be significant in this regard?
3. What is the role for national policy and governance in creating the enabling conditions for technological innovation that promotes social and public good?