

NOTIFICATION

Short courses on key international economic and development issues for delegates from permanent missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva and the World Trade Organization

First semester, 2026
Palais des Nations, Geneva

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(26/11GD)

The UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) secretariat is pleased to announce that another series of short courses on key international economic and development issues for delegates from permanent missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva and the World Trade Organization will be held in the first semester of 2026.

The aim of the courses is to give delegates from permanent missions an opportunity to become better acquainted with topical issues and developments on the international economic agenda as they are reflected in the work of UN Trade and Development. Course descriptions are provided below.

Four courses will be held at the Palais des Nations on Friday, 20 February, Thursday, 26 March, Tuesday, 14 April, and Friday, 15 May 2026.

The courses will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and will be delivered in English, with simultaneous interpretation into Arabic, French and Spanish. Courses will begin promptly at 10 a.m. to allow sufficient time for debate after the presentations.

The secretariat invites permanent missions to nominate delegates who follow matters pertaining to the mandate of UNCTAD in the areas of international trade and development and related aspects of finance, investment and technology. Course applications may be completed online at [short courses, first semester](#).

Queries concerning the courses should be addressed to Ms. Randa Jamal, Chief, Policy Capacity-Building Section, Technology, Innovation and Knowledge Development Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD; tel.: 41 22 917 2718; email: randajamal@un.org.



Rebeca Grynspan
Secretary-General of UN Trade and Development

19 January 2026



Short courses on key international economic and development issues for delegates from permanent missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva and the World Trade Organization

First semester, 2026, course descriptions

Trade and gender through the lens of UNCTAD

20 February 2026, Room XII

Delivered by the Division on International Trade and Commodities

This course provides an introduction to the key links between trade, gender and development, with a focus on international trade and gender-responsive trade policies that support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goals 5, 8, 9, 10 and 17, and enhance societal resilience in times of crisis. Drawing on analytical work by UNCTAD, empirical evidence and policy examples, the course is aimed at demonstrating how trade can both reduce and reinforce gender inequalities and how policy tools can deliver more inclusive outcomes. At the end of the course, delegates will have gained knowledge of the following:

- Why the economy is inherently gendered and why gender considerations are essential for sustainable development
- Links between trade, gender and development; and why there is no such thing as a gender-neutral economic policy
- The identification of key gender gaps in trade across employment, entrepreneurship, digital access, value chains and access to productive resources; and their implications for growth and sustainable development
- The roles of major international organizations and non-governmental organizations in trade and gender; and the distinct analytical and policy approach of UNCTAD
- Capacity to engage in negotiations and intergovernmental processes through a gender lens

Understanding poverty in developing countries

26 March 2026, Room XII

Delivered by the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes

Poverty remains one of the most pressing challenges. Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, as the first of the Sustainable Development Goals, reflects the central role of poverty eradication in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Progress on poverty reduction is foundational to advancing on the other Goals and ensuring dignity, rights and shared prosperity for all. Given the continued importance of this issue for member States and the urgent need to accelerate poverty eradication prior to 2030, there is a critical need to deepen understanding of the underlying causes of poverty and of the policies and tools required to address it effectively. This course is aimed at providing a policy-oriented understanding of how poverty is defined, measured and experienced across developing regions and of the key economic, social and institutional drivers shaping poverty outcomes; and practical insights into how policies can effectively contribute to poverty reduction in diverse contexts. At the end of the course, delegates will have gained knowledge of the following:

- Concepts and measurement of poverty
- Regional trends in poverty
- Socioeconomic characteristics of people living in poverty
- Key drivers and structural determinants of poverty
- Linkages between poverty, inequality and economic growth
- Policies and tools for poverty reduction, illustrated through selected case studies

UNCTAD trade and development foresights 2026

14 April 2026, Room XII

Delivered by the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies

This course addresses some of the recent changes in the global economic landscape and an updated assessment of UNCTAD expectations of the evolution of the world economy in 2026 and beyond, taking into account the challenges faced in developing economies in this period of high levels of uncertainty of all kinds. As the global economy entered 2026, with subdued growth expectations and heightened policy uncertainty in major markets, many developing countries appeared increasingly vulnerable to the risks of a deteriorating external environment, significant debt burdens and weakened domestic growth prospects. Ongoing shifts also include a more conservative spending structure in the public finances of major economies, with reduced official development assistance, lower levels of social spending and higher levels of defence spending. This is likely to further affect, in particular, the most vulnerable groups of people. The course will also provide an opportunity to discuss current policy challenges and further strengthen the dialogue between delegates and UNCTAD. At the end of the course, delegates will have gained knowledge of the following:

- The current global macroeconomic landscape
- Strategies to address the trade and finance nexus, debt sustainability and fiscal challenges
- Opportunities and challenges presented by the current economic landscape
- Innovative financing mechanisms and how debt can be addressed and managed

Trade Preferences Outlook

15 May 2026, Room XII

Delivered by the Division on International Trade and Commodities

In this biennial publication, UNCTAD provides an analysis of the state of non-reciprocal trade preferences, such as the generalized system of preferences, offered to developing countries. By offering duty-free or duty-light access to advanced markets, such schemes have contributed to developing countries' export expansion and integration into global value chains. Recently, there has been a threat to the stability and predictability of preferential schemes, as such schemes have expired and economic fragmentation and protectionism have undermined trade predictability. This course is aimed at addressing the effects of global uncertainty and the increasing use of unilateral tariffs on beneficiary countries of non-reciprocal trade preferences, particularly the least developed countries and other vulnerable economies; and policy options for shaping the future of non-reciprocal trade preferences in order that preference-receiving developing countries and the least developed countries can foster sustained and inclusive growth and economic diversification. The course is relevant to Sustainable Development Goal 17 on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. At the end of the course, delegates will have gained knowledge of the following:

- Historical evolution and current state of non-reciprocal trade preferences
- Trade impacts of changes and uncertainty in preferential market access on preference-receiving developing countries, particularly the least developed countries
- Factors that influence the impact of trade preferences on beneficiary countries
- Ways to improve existing non-reciprocal preferential market access