



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

Second semester 2025

Palais des Nations, Geneva

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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 will be held in the second semester of 2025. Given the fiscal financial crises facing the United Nation in general, UNCTAD will offer additional short courses, on an annual basis, for Geneva-based delegates.

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 UNCTAD. Course descriptions are provided below.

Four courses will be held at the Palais des Nations, as follows: Friday, 10 October 2025; Thursday, 16 October 2025; Monday, 10 November 2025; and Thursday, 11 December 2025.

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, second 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebeca Grynspan".

Rebeca Grynspan
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

10 September 2025



UNCTAD lens: Supporting SIDS in building new development models

10 October 2025, room VII

Delivered by the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, Division on Technology and Logistics and Division on International Trade and Commodities

The short course will provide an overview of the UNCTAD strategy to support small island developing States (SIDS), which recognizes the deep-rooted structural challenges facing them, including their small size, geographic isolation, limited economic diversification and vulnerability to climate shocks. In response, the UNCTAD strategy focuses on strengthening productive capacities, promoting innovation and green industries, improving resilience to external shocks and enhancing access to quality data for decision-making. It is built on consensus that these countries deserve both the policy space to manoeuvre and the necessary support to bolster their economic trajectories. The strategy aligns with international frameworks, such as the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS and United Nations resolutions that call for tailored development assistance, better financing options and access to technology for SIDS.

Against this backdrop, the short course will also focus on how UNCTAD supports SIDS in leveraging electronic commerce (e-commerce) and the digital economy to overcome structural constraints and remoteness in SIDS, by doing research, assessing their e-trade ecosystem through assessments and strategy development, providing monitoring tools such as the e-trade reform tracker and assistance in the area of measuring of e-commerce and the digital economy. This part of the course will draw on the extensive UNCTAD experience of working with SIDS in the Pacific, Caribbean and Africa.

Simultaneously, UNCTAD also supports SIDS in addressing trade-related regulations such as technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary measures, by enhancing transparency in and understanding and design of non-tariff measures. The integrated UNCTAD approach is holistic in terms of SIDS, not only adapting to the digital era but also reducing trade costs and regulatory hurdles, reinforcing their economic resilience and sustainable development.

At the end of this course, delegates will have gained knowledge of:

- The UNCTAD strategy for SIDS and the deep-rooted structural challenges facing them.
- Requirements for tackling geographic isolation and limited economic diversification through policies based on their economic trajectories and needs.
- Leveraging e-commerce and the digital economy to overcome structural constraints and contributing to economic development and regional and international integration.
- Deeper understanding of non-tariff measures and non-tariff barriers in the context of SIDS and their role in addressing challenges that lead to national regional and international integration.

Market access in times of geopolitical tensions

16 October 2025, Room XI

Delivered by the Division on International Trade and Commodities

Is trade, as an enabler for sustainable development, at risk? Unilateral policy measures and uncertainty regarding the rules based multilateral trading system have a potential impact on the ability for developing countries to use trade for sustainable development. This session recalls how important trade and market access in particular have been for recent development success stories and provides an overview of trade policy measures that have recently been used and that may prevent such development success stories in future. The focus is on tariffs and non-tariff barriers and measures, as well as voluntary standards, which form the major parts of market access.

At the end of this course, delegates will have gained knowledge of:

- What is at stake for sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals in the current period with increased use of nationalistic trade policies.

- Trade policy instruments mostly related to market access, their current use and concrete and systemic implications.

Forecast on the global economy and its trends: Uncertainty and the global trade–finance nexus 10 November 2025, room XVI

Delivered by the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies

The short course will draw on insights from this year's *Trade and Development Report 2025*, which examines the global economic landscape of 2025. It highlights how system-wide uncertainty in trade rules, integration strategies and geoeconomic confrontations, particularly affecting developing economies, have evolved. Longer-term structural shifts and lowered growth expectations in the global South are also explored, as external shocks, rising debt-service costs and entrenched inequalities continue to constrain development prospects. A central theme is that the trade–finance nexus: international trade – across commodities, manufactured goods and services – is inseparable from financial mechanisms such as credit, banking, securitization, insurance and capital markets. The report shows how monetary policy shocks and policy uncertainty feed into asset-price volatility, tighter financing conditions and weaker investment, disproportionately affecting developing countries.

The analysis emphasizes the growing asymmetry between trade and finance. While the geography of merchandise trade has diversified with the rise of the global South, global finance remains concentrated around dollar-based payment systems and private standards. This divergence increases systemic vulnerability and magnifies the risks of financial disturbances, spilling over into trade. In response, the report calls for integrated policy approaches, expansion of development-safe trade finance, ensuring transparency in trade documentation, recalibration of financial integration to reduce currency and liquidity premiums and strengthening of regional and South–South cooperation to address common shocks. It also highlights related risks and opportunities, arguing that targeted public investment and improved access to climate and blended finance will help. Overall, the report frames today's pivot in globalization as an opportunity to recalibrate trade and financial governance to align with 21st-century development goals, ensuring that systems remain resilient under persistent uncertainty.

By the end of the course, delegates will have deepened their knowledge on:

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

Where is the LDC group heading in the future?

11 December 2025, room XVI

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

The international community has placed strong emphasis on accelerating the process of graduation from the least developed countries (LDC) category, i.e. the process through which countries that are LDCs eventually stop receiving special LDC treatment from its development partners thanks to their steady development. The international community has repeatedly set targets for the number of LDCs that graduate in the near future. However, the international economic and geopolitical context has become increasingly challenging for LDCs, and therefore the path towards eventually achieving graduation has become more difficult for LDCs to tread. This has led several countries that could potentially graduate to ask for deferral (postponement) of their graduation. Development partners have reacted on an ad hoc basis, as there are no clear rules of how to process these requests and react to them.

This increasingly challenging context for LDCs and lack of clear rules on how to react to reluctance to graduation have led to two parallel types of questioning on the side of the international community concerning LDCs. First, how should the process of graduation and requests for deferral of graduation be dealt with by the development partners of the LDCs? Second, what will the LDC group look like after the current wave of graduation takes place? In other words, how will the main development

challenges of the remaining LDCs change and how should the international community respond to them?

At the end of this course, delegates will have gained knowledge of:

- Provide participants with updated information on the present situation of the graduation process and on existing proposals to reform the process.
- Share analysis on the likely future development challenges of the LDC group.
- Show how UNCTAD can help LDCs to better tread their path towards graduation.
- Provide bases for the future positioning of countries (both LDCs and their development partners) on policies, programmes and initiatives specifically targeted for the LDCs.
- Latest discussions and policymaking initiatives on the graduation process.
- The likely future shape of the LDC group.
- The outlook for the international treatment of the LDCs group over the medium term.