Assessment by participants and their supervisors

Post-course evaluations of regional editions of the programme illustrate its broad, and positive, impact on participants. For example, participants have indicated an improved understanding of the complexities of international economic issues; enhanced skills for economic policymaking processes; and a strengthened ability to provide advisory services and draft position papers on economic negotiations at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels. The rigorous assessment methods utilized in evaluating the course, for both short- and long-term impact, are also highly appreciated.

The programme conducted a survey of its alumni on their careers and perspectives during the pandemic, and how Covid-19 impacted their professions. Of significance to report is that all survey respondents in early 2021 indicated that the knowledge they have gained from previous UNCTAD regional courses was useful to them in formulating policies in response to the global pandemic; such areas included, policies on trade in the post and during the pandemic era, improving analysis and statistics sources, trade negotiations, trade facilitation and logistics, among other related areas.

Module I
Development, development policies and the role of international trade and finance in a globalized world

Module II
Harnessing benefits from trade: Changing dynamics in the multilateral trading system, trade logistics, regional trade agreements and digital economy

Module III
Enhancing productive capacities through enterprise development, foreign direct investment and science, technology and innovation
Regional courses

These courses provide an opportunity for trade policy officials and academics to examine various approaches to economic development and assess external and internal factors that can slow down or speed up this process.

Regional courses are hosted and supported by member States in five regions. One regional course is delivered in a developing region every other year. For example, during the recent biennium and at the multi-year venues, the following institutions partnered with UNCTAD to deliver and host the programme: Saints Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje (North Macedonia 2021-2022); the Institute for Diplomatic Studies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Egypt 2018-2023); University of Nairobi (Kenya 2019-2024); University of Buenos Aires (Argentina 2022-2026); and the Foreign Service Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Pakistan 2022-2026).

Since 2001, the UNCTAD secretariat has delivered dozens of regional courses for the least developed countries and developing economies in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa.

Regional courses contain three modules dealing with various aspects of economic development, including theories on the various themes, as well as on trade and trade agreements, foreign direct investment, and trade facilitation. With the global pandemic that struck the world, the programme further integrated the economic, environmental, and social consequences of COVID-19 global pandemic across its curricula, reflecting resilience and response.

The modules provide an overview of the various themes, discuss case studies and best practices, and analyze policy options, building the knowledge needed for participating in simulation exercises, which allow participants to take on roles in relevant negotiations and policy formulation. The curriculum uses the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals as a basis for designing national and international development policies and strategies. The programme is particularly attentive to gender balance.

Regional courses are held in:
- Africa
- Asia and the Pacific
- Eastern Europe
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Middle East and North Africa

The Paragraph 166 (P166) programme addresses the challenges developing countries and the least developed countries face in an increasingly globalized economy through regional and short courses on key issues on the international economic agenda.

These courses offer Geneva-based delegates a wide palette of topics, ranging from trade facilitation and lessons learned, to development, cutting-edge technology and the gender nexus. The programme aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of delegates so they can be better prepared to meet the challenges of economic development.

The UNCTAD secretariat has offered more than 120 short courses for Geneva-based diplomats. These are a series of regular three half-day courses per semester on the most recent research relevant to UNCTAD areas of work. The courses are held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

The 2018-2019 edition of the P166 programme in the Bridgetown Covenant, noting that the activities under paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action have proven to be of great importance and utility and should be continued. As the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, I am proud of this programme, its effective partnerships across developing regions and with various UN Economic Commissions, and UNCTAD Divisions. We are currently at the heart of capitals, working closely with public and governmental institutions, from Buenos Aires, Cairo, Islamabad and Skopje. We deliver as one, with UN partners, and with our national and regional stakeholders.

Mr. Rebecca Grynspan,
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

The activities under paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action have proven to be of great importance and utility and should be continued.