**UNITED NATIONS**
**UNCTAD**

## Webinar co-organized by Policy Studies Institute (PSI) Ethiopia and UNCTAD

## South-South Integration – Sharing of Policy Experiences:
## Digital Transformation of Ethiopia: Lessons from other Countries

## 4 February 2022

## Concept Note and Programme

**Background**

It is widely recognized that meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is inextricably linked with the process of structural transformation. The UNCTAD project "South-South Integration and the SDGs: Enhancing Structural Transformation in Key Partner Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative" identifies key policy areas in which limitations exist in government capacity in many countries, to effectively design, manage, coordinate, implement, and evaluate strategic economic interventions that are the policy levers of structural transformation. To address this shortcoming, the project aims to draw lessons from the experiences of partner countries, with a view to assisting national capacity-building.

The outbreak of the pandemic has exposed the existing global digital divide and highlighted the importance of building the digital economy, especially in the global south. Many developing countries and most of the LDCs lag in terms of even the basic ICT infrastructure, which is the internet access to their population. There is a need for developing countries to design a comprehensive national digital policy for building their digital economy with targeted strategies at the sub-national and sectoral levels. Both demand and supply side constraints need to be addressed. Many developing countries have started the process of designing their digital policies, particularly focusing on building their digital infrastructure.

While developing countries are facing common challenges for digital transformation in terms of lack of adequate digital infrastructure, digital skills and capacities, some developing countries have been able to successfully design digital policies for their structural transformation. While it may not be possible for developing countries to replicate other countries' experiences, there are many policy lessons which can

help in rapid digital transformation and assist developing countries to recover better from the pandemic with more sustainable and inclusive growth.

**Purpose and objectives of the webinar**

This event launches the country-case studies on digital policies and launches the paper prepared for Ethiopia under the UNCTAD-project and discusses their findings. It brings together policy makers and researchers from various developing countries and addresses a wide audience. The objective is to stimulate domestic debate on the policy agenda and the key priorities for the 2022.

The key objectives and expected outcomes of the event are the following:

- To assess the experience of Ethiopia regarding digital transformation and identify the key policy lessons that can assist Ethiopia's structural transformation.
- To discuss how the COVID-19 crisis has changed the scenario and the key challenges and opportunities faced by the country.
- To create an open dialogue in which member States can gain a better understanding of the key challenges that developing countries are facing for digital transformation in the current global economic environment.

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**Programme**

**(Central European Time)**

February 4, 2022

**Moderator:** Dr. Rashmi Banga, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD

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14:00–14:05    **Welcome address** UNCTAD

14:05–14:15    **Keynote address: – Professor Beyene Peteros**, Executive Director of PSI

14:15–15.00    **Panel discussion**

Tsegay Gebrekidan Tekleselassie, Senior Researcher, PSI Ethiopia (15 mins)

Chanuka Wattegama, Director of Policy, ICTA, Sri Lanka (10 mins)

Safdar Sohail, Dean, NIPP and Member Prime Minister's Task Force on IT, Pakistan (10 mins)

Esther Sri Astuti Agustin, Program Director of the Institute for Development. of Economics and Finance (INDEF), Indonesia (10 mins)

15:00–15:25    **Open discussion** (20 mins)

15:25–15:30    **Concluding remarks**, UNCTAD and PSI (5 mins)

The event will take place through zoom. **Online registration is required.**

**Registration for the webinar:**

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUqcumtqzsoHdDmMJsOPf34C1CbIV2VUqen