UNCTAD 16 GENEVA
20–23 OCTOBER 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

Ministerial round table

21 October 2025
Assembly Hall
11.30 a.m.–1 p.m.

Making the digital economy inclusive and sustainable through cooperation

Description

Digitalization is evolving at a high speed, reshaping economies, trade and development paths. Digitalization offers significant opportunities related to innovation, efficiency and new business models, yet is also deepening existing divides in access to digital technologies and data and in digital capabilities. At the same time, the environmental footprint of digital growth is coming under increased scrutiny. UNCTAD is influencing related policy debates. Its work on data governance contributed to the decision by Member States to establish a dedicated working group under the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. UNCTAD is also co-leading the implementation of the Global Digital Compact in the areas of inclusive digital economy and data governance. In addition, in 2025, UNCTAD is the chair of the United Nations Group on the Information Society.

Discussions at this round table will explore how to ensure that the evolving digital economy becomes a driver of both inclusiveness and sustainability. Critical policy options and cooperation mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels will be examined. In addition, discussions will consider how UNCTAD and partners can support countries in building resilient digital ecosystems that bridge divides, improve data governance, promote innovation and foster greater circularity.

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Programme

Opening remarks: Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General, UNCTAD

Panel 1, with participation of ministers and heads of international organizations

Digitalization challenges and harnessing benefits from digital trade

Questions

- What are the pressing challenges of rapid digitalization with regard to inclusion and sustainable outcomes that need to be addressed?
- What should be done to enable developing countries to benefit more from data, electronic commerce and digital trade?

Panel 2, with participation of ministers and heads of international organizations

Global support and digital cooperation

Questions

- What kind of international support is needed to ensure that digitalization brings benefits for all and contributes to protecting the planet?
- How can the implementation of the Global Digital Compact, as well as the 20-year review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, advance global digital cooperation?

Moderator: To be determined

Format: Davos-style

Interpretation

Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish, Russian

Contact

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