

Concept Note & Agenda

COMMODITIES &
DEVELOPMENT
REPORT 2023

Inclusive Diversification and Energy Transition

UNCTAD-UWS Webinar

15 April 2024

| 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. (Geneva time)

| 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. (U.K. time)

Background

In October 2023, UNCTAD launched a new Commodities and Development Report titled “Inclusive Diversification and Energy Transition.” This report highlights that most developing countries depend heavily on exporting commodities, and they are often very vulnerable to various shocks such as fluctuations in exchange rates, drop in commodity prices, pandemics, and conflicts. As a result, these so-called commodity-dependent developing countries (CDDCs) have volatile incomes and slow growth in productivity. Their limited range of commodities exported also affects public revenue and the potential for investing in sustainable development.

If CDDCs are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the deadline of 2030 in this increasingly uncertain global economic and political environment, they will need to become more resilient. Resilience implies that they have to move along value chains and diversify production to generate a greater variety of exports. Diversification not only insures against future market shocks, but also fosters economic growth and drives structural transformation. Economic diversification can either be horizontal or vertical. Horizontal diversification typically broadens the range of production and exports. Vertical diversification can involve greater variety in a sector’s value chain, such as refining crude oil to produce gasoline or petrochemicals.

However, CDDCs now have to diversify through low carbon paths in the context of climate change and energy transition. Historically, economic diversification has relied on the extensive use of fossil fuels. From 1995 to 2019, on average, diversification of one new export is associated with adding 3.1 tons of CO₂ equivalent of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. CDDCs need to make growth less carbon-intensive without compromising their economic development.

While diversification brings long-term economic benefits, producing a wider range of more sophisticated products can increase inequalities within countries if not accompanied by inclusiveness policies. From 1998 to 2018, on average, a one per cent increase in the number of products exported by a country was associated with an increase of almost half a point in the ratio of the shares of income of the 10% richest and the 40% poorest in an economy. Thus, CDDCs, while moving along value chains and increasing the range of products, need to take active redistribution measures.

CDDCs should leverage untapped potential in renewable energy sources to explore new energy markets and green products that can help create new jobs, boost incomes and reduce inequalities. The global community needs to play a more active role in providing the support needed for green industrial policies in commodity-dependent developing countries to succeed. Commodity-dependent developing countries need access to affordable and sufficient investment financial services and technologies to implement active productive policies and mitigate the climate-related risks associated with climate change towards making their economic structures more diversified, resilient and prepared for a low-carbon future.

Objective

The main objective of this webinar is to inform participants about the key findings and messages of the UNCTAD's Commodities and Development Report 2023. This dissemination activity is also an opportunity to receive feedback on the report and seek for guidance of the issues that could be explored in the forthcoming UCDRs.

This webinar is being organised with students because they are major actor for shaping today and tomorrow's future. Therefore, they can contribute to a better world in many ways such as setting up a start-up in the area of renewable energy, or campaigning for a just energy transition. They can also in the near future hold public offices in charge of official development aid or they can even be policy makers. Furthermore, universities through their faculty members can also help in their advisory roles to policy makers at the national as well as the international level. They can also nurture projects with significant impact on green industrial policies. Modern society relies on universities for innovation therefore faculty members and students are the core of innovation activities particularly in the area of green technologies to contribute both to sustainable diversification and climate change mitigation activities.

Commodities and Development Report 2023

UNCTAD's Commodities and development report 2023 critically examines various issues including inclusive diversification, energy transition and green industrial policies. Regarding the University of the West of Scotland, several topics such as commodity exchanges, entrepreneurship, renewable energy are of interest.

Guiding questions for discussion

- What policy recommendations in this UNCTAD Commodities and Development Report 2023 do find particularly pertinent for developing countries?
- What role can a university in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda especially the energy transition and green industrial policies?
- What kind of policy recommendations can target both gender inequality and green technologies so that nobody is left behind?
- What kind of policy recommendations can target the promotion of green technologies ?

Format

This webinar will be conducted in English (without translation) online via the Zoom platform. Participation includes students and faculty members.

Registration

All participants are required to register [here](#).

Programme

The detailed programme is available [here](#).

Geneva Time	U.K. Time	Content
1:00 – 1:15 p.m.	12:00 – 12:15 p.m.	<p>Opening remarks</p> <p>Ms. Miho Shirotori, Acting Director, Division on International Trade and Commodities (DITC), UNCTAD</p> <p>Professor Kasim N Sheikh, Dean of the School of Business and Creative Industries, University of the West of Scotland (UWS)</p>
1:15 – 1:30 p.m.	12:15 – 12:30 p.m.	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Commodities and Development Report 2023</p> <p>Mr. Clovis Freire, Chief, Commodity Research and Analysis Section, DITC, UNCTAD</p>
1:30 – 2:15 p.m.	12:30 – 1:15 p.m.	<p>Panel discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Taro Boel, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD</p> <p>Panellists</p> <p>Mr. King Omeihe, Senior Lecturer in Economics, University of the West of Scotland</p> <p>Ms. Charlotte Eba Bla, Senior Lecturer in Economics, University of the West of Scotland</p> <p>Mr. Kristian Schach Moller, CEO of the Agricultural Commodity Exchange for Africa (ACE)</p>
2:15 – 2:30 p.m.	1:15 – 1:30 p.m.	<p>Questions & Answers</p>

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