



High-Level Panel Discussion on South-South Digital Cooperation for Industrialization

Pre- Event for Celebrating 40 years after the Buenos Aires Plan of Action

**1st October 2018;
(13.00-15.00)
Venue: Room VII, UNCTAD**

Background and Context

The establishment of the UNCTAD by the Group of 77 in 1964 and the launch of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) in 1978 have been two major steps towards institutionalization of economic cooperation among developing countries. In 2009, UNCTAD set up a unit on Economic Cooperation and Integration among Developing countries (ECIDC) to reinforce UNCTAD's work on South-South cooperation, which is increasingly reshaping the global economic development architecture. To celebrate forty years of BAPA and strengthen UNCTAD's commitment to South-South development cooperation, this high-level Event is being organized by Unit on Economic Cooperation and Integration among Developing countries (ECIDC) in the Division on Globalisation and Development Strategies (GDS), UNCTAD in partnership with South Centre, Geneva, to discuss the ways in which south-south digital cooperation can help developing countries avail the opportunities and face the challenges posed by Industry 4.0.

Overall objectives

The main purpose of the high-level event is to provide a platform to raise awareness on the implications of Industry 4.0 on industrialization and trade competitiveness of developing countries. The panel will discuss how South-South digital cooperation can provide a way forward for developing countries, which have low digital capacities and lack digital infrastructure. These countries, especially small developing countries and least developed countries, are in danger of being left behind in the digital industrial revolution, thereby making it difficult for global economy to achieve its sustainable development goals. The panel will discuss the ways of promoting regional digital infrastructure, for example- regional cloud computing infrastructure and regional e-commerce platforms. The discussions will also focus on the regional strategies and regulations that are needed to promote digital capacities, boost intra-regional trade and discourage anti-competitive practices, especially of global digital platforms. Experiences of developing countries with to respect their digital initiatives will be shared.

Issues of Discussion:

The session will bring together high-level policymakers and international experts to address the following issues:

1. How does digitalisation impact industrialization and trade competitiveness of the South?
2. How can challenges posed by the digital economy be faced through a regional integration agenda?
3. What can be the main components of a Regional Digital Cooperation Agenda?
4. What policy space is required to develop such an Agenda at the regional level?
5. Should the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement include digital cooperation?
6. What digital regulations are needed at the national and regional levels to promote regional integration and inclusive trading system?
7. What role can UNCTAD play in designing the digital cooperation framework?

The Panel:

1. H.E. Mr. Xavier Carim, Ambassador, South Africa Permanent Mission to the WTO, Geneva.
2. H.E. Mr. J.S. Deepak, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the WTO.
3. H.E. Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail Elamin, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Republic of Sudan to the UN office and other International organisations in Geneva.
4. H.E. Mr. Diego Aulestia Valencia, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the WTO and other Economic Organizations based in Geneva
5. Mr. Carlos Correa, Executive Director, South Centre, Geneva
6. Mr. Richard Kozul-Wright, Director, GDS, UNCTAD (Moderator).