



Technical Session on South-South Digital Cooperation to Boost Trade Competitiveness

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

5th October 2018

(10.00-13.00)

Venue: Room XXII, 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 technical session is being organized by ECIDC-DGDS in partnership with the South Centre, to discuss the policies and regulations that developing countries need to adopt in order to boost their trade competitiveness in the fourth digital industrial revolution and how can south-south digital cooperation help developing countries prepare for Industry 4.0.

Overall objectives

The main objective of this technical session is to discuss ways to boost trade competitiveness of developing countries in Industry 4.0 and ensure that the south-south digital cooperation agenda makes global trade more inclusive. This session will provide a platform to stakeholders from diverse regions to discuss the policies/strategies and regulations that developing countries need to consider for boosting their trade competitiveness in the digital era and how digital cooperation can help developing countries in building their digital infrastructures and digital capacities with regional support. This technical session will discuss the policy space that is needed to design policies at the national and regional levels for addressing the digital challenges.

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Issues of Discussion:

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

1. What are the implications of Industry 4.0 on trade competitiveness of developing countries?
2. What are targeted policies/strategies that countries in the South need to consider in order to avail the opportunities and face the challenges of Industry 4.0?
3. How can South-South digital cooperation and sharing of experiences help South to boost its trade competitiveness?
4. What are the ways to facilitate North-South digital technology transfers to boost trade competitiveness?
5. Do the developing countries have the policy space to design national and regional policies for developing their digital capacities?

The Panel:

1. **Ms. Rashmi Banga**, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ECIDC-GDS, UNCTAD
2. **Ms. Aileen Kwa**, Coordinator, Trade for Development Programme, South Centre, Geneva
3. **Mr. Abhijit Das**, Head and Professor, Centre for WTO Studies, India.
4. **Ms. Burcu Kilic**, Research and Policy Director, Access to Medicines, Innovation and Information, Public Citizen.
5. **Mr. François Xavier Ngarambe**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Rwanda to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva (Moderator)