



**United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development**

Distr.: General
26 August 2024

Original: English

Trade and Development Board
Trade and Development Commission
Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development
Eleventh session
Geneva, 10–12 July 2024

**Report of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services
and Development on its eleventh session**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, 10 to 12 July 2024



Introduction

The eleventh session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development was held from 10 to 12 July 2024 in Geneva.

I. Chair's summary

A. Opening plenary meeting

1. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD opened the session. The following speakers made opening statements: the representative of Cambodia, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; the representative of Bangladesh, on behalf of the Asia–Pacific Group; the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries; the representative of Nepal, on behalf of the least developed countries; the representative of the State of Palestine; and the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

2. In her opening statement, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD highlighted the significance of the creative economy amid challenging economic conditions. She stressed the importance of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development as a platform for discussing the role of trade in services in economic diversification and sustainable development and for promoting international cooperation through the sharing of national and regional experiences. She detailed that the creative economy was experiencing significant growth, with a strong demographic aspect to this trend, allowing even the smallest creators to reach consumers, and providing opportunities for economic development and diversification; and that the importance of digital services in driving creative services growth was increasing. Moreover, she noted that the creative economy had a strong South–South component to it and that South–South trade in creative goods had been increasing in the past decades. Finally, the Secretary-General stated that the digital transformation of the creative economy, driven by artificial intelligence, offered opportunities for growth; however, artificial intelligence had the potential to reshape how creative works were produced, distributed and consumed, and it was therefore critical to address challenges related to maintaining the quality of artificial intelligence-produced services, addressing algorithmic biases, safeguarding cultural diversity and addressing concerns about job displacement, as well as to address the need for clear guidelines on intellectual property rights and the need to reduce inequalities between developed and developing countries when measuring trade in creative services.

3. The Acting Director of the UNCTAD Division on International Trade and Commodities presented the background document titled “Trade in creative services” (TD/B/C.I/MEM.4/32). She stated that digital services were driving growth in creative services, with creative industries growing in developing economies, where younger generations increasingly consumed digital creative content. The Acting Director noted the dual impact of digitalization and artificial intelligence on job markets and the exacerbation of digital divides, highlighting the high market concentration in creative industries, dominated by major platforms; these issues needed to be addressed by policymakers. In addition, she emphasized the uneven landscape of trade in creative services, with a few developed economies leading exports. Finally, the Acting Director noted that developing countries had shown significant growth in 2010–2022, doubling their share from 10 to 20 per cent; challenges included trade barriers and skill and infrastructure deficits.

4. The keynote speaker, Director, Howkins and Associates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, elaborated on the cyclical nature of creativity, emphasizing its origins in individual identities and motivations and its benefits across various sectors. He focused on the trade components with economic value (people, knowledge and finished assets) and their tradability; and highlighted the role of management as a source of competitive advantage. In addition, the speaker addressed the transformative impact of generative artificial intelligence in reducing costs, increasing production speed and attracting new users. Finally, he highlighted the need for countries to address copyright

issues, for both artificial intelligence-generated inputs and outputs, to understand its value addition, and in managing artificial intelligence in the context of computational services.

5. Some delegates emphasized the critical role of the creative economy in achieving sustainable development, noting that the sector not only generated income and jobs but also fostered economic diversification, innovation, inclusion and cultural exchange, along with making significant contributions to international trade. Several delegates noted the disparities between developed and developing countries in benefiting from the creative economy and highlighted challenges such as the lack of data, inadequate infrastructure, digital divides, skill gaps, high trade costs and regulatory barriers that hindered the participation of developing countries in the global market for creative services. Some delegates expressed concern about the digital divide and the challenges posed by rapid digitalization and emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, and stressed the need for developing countries to bridge this divide in order to fully harness the benefits of the digital transformation in the creative economy, including by addressing issues related to algorithmic biases, job displacement and the protection of cultural diversity and intellectual property rights. Some delegates noted the need for enhanced international cooperation, including South–South and North–South and triangular partnerships, to support developing countries in overcoming the digital gap and building the necessary infrastructure and skills, and urged UNCTAD and other international organizations to play a role in facilitating capacity-building, knowledge transfer and technology transfer. Some delegates suggested recommendations for UNCTAD and the international community in addressing the challenges faced in developing countries, including efforts to promote activities in developing countries through trade in services and creative services; capacity-building initiatives to enhance digital infrastructure and skills; preferential market access schemes for creative services from developing countries; international frameworks to address the challenges posed by artificial intelligence; and studies and detailed statistics on trade in services, including creative services.

B. Trade in creative services

(Agenda item 3)

6. The Acting Director of the UNCTAD Division on International Trade and Commodities introduced the topic. Under the agenda item, the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development held six round-table discussions.

1. Trends and outlook for creative services

7. The first panellist, Director, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), emphasized the importance of the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development in 2022, highlighting the support expressed for fostering sustainable cultural and creative sectors. Despite the significant growth of creative industries, contributing 3.1 per cent to global gross domestic product (GDP) and 6.2 per cent to employment, she noted that there had been a decline in public investment over the past decade and highlighted disparities between developing and developed countries, with the latter dominating cultural trade. Some developing countries had integrated creative industries into development plans, with support for creative sectors sometimes explicitly linked to export diversification and competitiveness in global markets. The panellist outlined the following main challenges in expanding creative sectors: imbalanced cultural trade flows; market concentration among large international companies; and the lack of preferential treatment for cultural products from developing countries. The increasing role of artificial intelligence technologies exacerbated these issues. Finally, the panellist noted the need for policies to support developing countries, including co-production agreements, training programmes and aid for production, distribution and broadcasting.

8. The second panellist, Head of Section, Economics and Statistics Division, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) discussed the challenges of measuring innovation and creative services, noting the existence of two schools of thought, namely the “old school,” which used classical macroeconomic and trade tools, and the modern

approach, which included various indicators from the WIPO global innovation index, considering factors such as institutional environments, human capital, information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and market sophistication. The former approach relied on trade indicators, which might be outdated and complex. Data on creative services, considered a public good, was no longer collected, leading to a reliance on private data providers, with associated legal risks. The panellist noted the following with regard to the global innovation index: creative services exports were concentrated in volume, but when scaled by GDP or population, some low-income and middle-income countries, for example, Bangladesh, Barbados and Indonesia, showed significant potential and comparative advantages; and figures under the standard creative services indicators of the index showed a sharp drop in trade during the pandemic, with some low-income and middle-income countries demonstrating resilience, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and central and southern Asia. Finally, the panellist stated that improving the measurement of creative industry inputs and outputs required continued collaboration among international organizations such as UNCTAD, UNESCO and WIPO.

2. Sharing country experiences: The role of creative services in development strategies

9. The first panellist, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Culture and Sport, Ethiopia, stated that creative industries generated income by creating jobs and increasing trade. Technological and digital transformations were shifting the creative economy to a knowledge-based economy, which required investment in human skills. Creative industries tested new solutions for addressing economic, environmental and social changes, feeding innovation, and creative services were inputs for manufacturing and tourism, contributing to product development, integrated business solutions and economic diversification. The panellist noted that development should be human-centred and go beyond economic growth, to include culture as part of human development in order to build social capital, preserve cultural heritage and empower local communities. The panellist noted the cultural and linguistic diversity in Ethiopia, increasing the creative economy potential, including with regard to generating income for women and local communities. Challenges in the creative economy included insufficient integration with other sectors, limited access to international markets, poor infrastructure and the shortage of qualified human resources, along with limited financing and the lack of official data with which to measure the creative economy. Finally, the panellist detailed policies to address challenges, including developing the legal and regulatory framework of the sector, building capacity in creative industries, providing physical and digital infrastructure, facilitating access to finance, establishing creative clusters, effectively collecting data and designing trade-oriented business models.

10. The second panellist, Deputy Chair, Art and Culture Development Foundation, Uzbekistan, stated that the creative economy was part of the national economic diversification strategy in Uzbekistan, aimed at creating an inclusive environment in cultural institutions and developing cultural patronage and professional training. Uzbekistan would host the fourth World Conference on Creative Economy in October 2024, jointly organized with Indonesia, UNCTAD and WIPO. The panellist stated that, since 2016, Uzbekistan had adopted over 120 programmes and degrees to develop particular creative industries, and the digital sector was expanding, with start-ups and entrepreneurs exploring game development and animation. Finally, the panellist stated that Government initiatives included establishing creative industry parks, expected to be centres for communications between young entrepreneurs, science and business; and preparing a law on creative industries, to consolidate various initiatives.

11. The third panellist, President, College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts, Trinidad and Tobago, addressed the role of cultural industries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, the Trinidad and Tobago Carnival accounted for 12–15 per cent of annual tourism arrivals and expenditures and the festival strategy was used in the Caribbean to expand markets by generating destination-related and intellectual property branding. The panellist noted that challenges remained, in particular since small island developing States did not have large domestic markets, limiting content creativity. Government silos impeded synergies and the understanding of the needs of the creative industry and, in this regard, institutional capacity-building was needed; for example, many developing countries had one organization assisting creative people with copyright

administration, while one developed country had over 30 sector-specific organizations. Finally, the panellist emphasized that information-sharing was needed and that this should be considered in discussions on digitalization and data localization.

12. During the ensuing discussion, some delegates noted that the creative economy contributed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by integrating people socially, developing human potential, creating jobs and contributing to services exports; however, exports faced trade costs and regulatory restrictions, and supporting the creative economy required appropriate regulatory and institutional frameworks and its governance could benefit from specialized institutes and domestic subnational centres, with clusters bringing creators together, to foster dialogue and facilitate access to public policies. A few experts noted that multi-stakeholder collaboration was important in promoting innovation, to add value from other sectors in creative industries and to blend creative industries in other sectors. One delegate noted that liberalizing trade could address trade restrictions with regard to creative economy exports. One panellist stressed that the priority in this regard was to improve regulations through audits; this required a multi-stakeholder approach in order for Governments to incorporate specialized and practical views from creatives and to receive support in determining cross-sectoral regulatory impacts. One delegate stated that digitalization and the use of artificial intelligence could help overcome technical issues. A few panellists stated that the creative economy could benefit from the greater availability and use of digital and connectivity infrastructure. One expert noted that this required the development of skills and content, as well as affordability. A few experts stated that there was a virtuous circle, whereby content generated demand for connectivity and higher connectivity allowed for more content. One panellist stressed that developing the skills to use digital technology and monetize digital content was important in moving towards digital entrepreneurship and should include training and incubating entrepreneurship initiatives; developing countries needed to build human skills to produce rather than merely consume digital creative content. Some experts discussed policies to help the creative economy, including protecting intellectual property rights, investing in research and development and data availability, developing human skills, providing research and market intelligence, promoting investment and trade and providing financial support. One delegate stated that UNCTAD could assist with timely and forward-looking research. Some experts noted that the creative economy needed transport infrastructure and financial services, including through banks and angel investors, as well as credit guarantee schemes from development banks, as done for example in West Africa, that allowed flexible repayments in line with the reality of many creative activities that did not generate stable monthly incomes; financial literacy and training were important for creators to be able to improve access to and the use of financial services. Finally, a few panellists noted that the creative economy could benefit from preserving the language and culture of minorities, for example by making them available in educational curricula, media content and cultural centres.

3. Digitalization and artificial intelligence in creative services

13. The Chief of the UNCTAD Trade and Creative Economy Section launched *Creative Economy Outlook 2024*, which provided an update on trends in selected creative industries and international trade in creative goods and services, with chapters dedicated to digitalization and artificial intelligence, market concentration and competition policy and sustainability; and included input from 36 member States that had participated in an UNCTAD survey on the creative economy.

14. The first panellist, Director, Creative Economy, British Council, stated that the British Council fostered cultural relations globally through interdisciplinary collaborations and that work on the creative economy included digital innovation and artificial intelligence, particularly in sectors intersecting with arts and technology. Initiatives included the conduct of sector-mapping and research in Asia, the exploration of cultural heritage protection using artificial intelligence, leadership training, policy development and strategic partnerships aimed at nurturing young creative talents and driving sustainable growth in the creative sector, as well as collaborations on climate and sustainability projects, integrating sustainable practices from the outset for creative entrepreneurs. Finally, the panellist noted that, in the United Kingdom, creative industries were a significant economic force, growing faster than the wider economy, and initiatives such as

the creative industries sector vision aimed to further boost innovation, job creation and international collaboration by 2030.

15. The second panellist, Private Services Specialist, International Labour Organization, stressed that digitalization led to several transformations, including the expansion of the creative economy through the growth of creative digital platforms, the shift of business models from selling product ownership to providing content access services and the use of technology leading to contract work. These transformations created opportunities by enhancing creativity, optimizing production processes, allowing for new avenues for monetization and increasing work flexibility and productivity. However, they also entailed challenges with regard to job displacement, skill gaps and work protection. The use of artificial intelligence allowed for efficient consumption but reshaped labour markets, challenging compensation models and revenue systems, and wage inequalities could arise depending on adaptability. The panellist stated that ways of addressing such challenges differed based on the development level in a country, whereby developed economies invested in innovation and regulatory frameworks in order to reap benefits and developing economies focused on building digital infrastructure and skills. Finally, the panellist stated that, at all levels, technological transformations required a harmonized governance framework to regulate creative services, safeguard human-created work and ensure informed consent and adequate remuneration; and that governance frameworks needed to protect labour in a context of job shifts, skill gaps and reskilling needs.

16. The third panellist, Lead, Artificial Intelligence and Quantum Technology, World Economic Forum, discussed the critical role of technology in unlocking the potential of creative services, by driving innovation, efficiency and personalization, while inherent risks, cybersecurity threats and ethical concerns needed to be addressed. Creative services encompassed creativity and service delivery, whereby technology served as a catalyst for inspiration, enhancing user experiences and building trust. However, technology also posed challenges, particularly in digital and ICT infrastructure, ethical considerations, intellectual property rights, security, trust and workforce adaptation. The panellist emphasized the need to adopt a human-centric innovation framework, to harness opportunities while mitigating risks, involving a focus on ethical and social aspects, to avoid bias and discrimination; technological and operational aspects, to ensure safe, transparent and culturally diverse systems; and security and legal aspects, to mitigate cybersecurity risks. Public-private partnerships were essential in infrastructure development, standard-setting and workforce reskilling, and an effective incentive framework needed to reward creators and stakeholders throughout value chains. Finally, the panellist stated that by fostering international trade in creative services, countries could attract investment, facilitate technology transfer and promote international collaboration, to develop harmonized regulatory frameworks, thereby leading to a thriving creative services economy that benefited everyone.

17. During the ensuing discussion, the representative of one regional group highlighted that the export growth trends of creative services showed resilience and adaptability despite pandemic-related challenges and that digitalization and artificial intelligence were critical in transforming creative content production, distribution and consumption, offering opportunities for innovation and market expansion. The representative of one regional group and one panellist noted that digital tools could enhance creativity and efficiency; the use of artificial intelligence in the creative economy had the potential to enable connections, intercultural understanding and the sharing of cultural heritage. The representative of one regional group and another panellist noted that the use of digital tools and artificial intelligence could pose ethical concerns, displace jobs, increase the risk of digital and economic inequalities and require labour protection. A few experts noted that mechanisms were needed to mitigate risks and distribute benefits evenly. A few panellists noted that institutional support was important and that artificial intelligence governance required social dialogue among various actors in a multi-stakeholder ecosystem. With regard to the impact of artificial intelligence technology on the creative economy, one delegate noted the global artificial intelligence governance initiative launched by China and the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on enhancing international cooperation on

capacity-building of artificial intelligence.¹ A few panellists stated that artificial intelligence governance should ensure a just, fair transition and adaptability, leaving no one behind, that regulatory frameworks should address economic compensation for creation and that education systems should prepare future generations to address ethical considerations and ensure diversity in artificial intelligence representation. The representative of one regional group and one delegate noted that UNCTAD had a significant role in helping developing countries unleash the potential of the creative economy for inclusive and sustainable development through capacity-building, international collaboration and in-depth research. Finally, the representative of one regional group expressed hope for increased participation in future surveys on the creative economy, to enhance understanding.

4. Sharing country experiences: Digitalization and artificial intelligence in creative services

18. The first panellist, Professor and Executive Dean, National Institute of Cultural Development, Beijing International Studies University, discussed digital and artificial intelligence technologies in creative services in China, highlighting the impact on cultural industries. Such technologies were integral to content creation, distribution platforms and operational management, reflecting global trends in innovation. In 2022, the creative service industry in China had contributed significantly to the cultural sector and the growth of the industry was supported by a diverse market landscape, including private enterprises. The panellist detailed how digital technology was being applied in China, noting that the integration of digital tools not only facilitated cultural heritage preservation, but also expanded market access and created new opportunities for creative producers, and that digital platforms had a critical role in enhancing product visibility and global reach. In traditional sectors such as the performing arts, the integration of digital and artificial intelligence technologies had revitalized industries, fostered international collaboration and innovative production and facilitated efficient resource utilization. Finally, the panellist stated that China aimed to sustain leadership in digital and artificial intelligence integration into creative services, to foster cultural expression and contribute to economic expansion.

19. The second panellist, Associate Researcher, South African Cultural Observatory, presented research on the impact of artificial intelligence on creative industries and practitioners in South Africa, highlighting the critical role of digitalization and artificial intelligence in enhancing competitiveness on a global scale in the creative economy. The panellist, stressing areas of concern with regard to artificial intelligence, suggested that there was a need for policymaking that balanced such considerations and socioeconomic impacts on the creative community. At present, in South Africa, there was a lack of policies dedicated to artificial intelligence, and the panellist noted the need for robust frameworks to navigate the artificial intelligence era responsibly and for nuanced approaches involving education, skill development and policy advocacy, to mitigate potential socioeconomic inequalities exacerbated by the use of artificial intelligence. Finally, the panellist noted recommendations such as regional collaborations and policies ensuring fair compensation and the protection of the rights of creative workers in the artificial intelligence era; policy recommendations made by the South African Cultural Observatory were aimed at fostering an artificial intelligence-ready creative economy in South Africa.

20. The third panellist, Founder and Director, Centre for Analysis for Research in Innovation, Mexico, addressed the impact of artificial intelligence on the creative economy in developing countries. Its use presented challenges, such as job displacement in creative sectors, but also created opportunities for new creative classes and resilient economic sectors, as shown in Mexico, for example, during the pandemic, when there had been fewer job automation risks in creative industries compared with in non-creative sectors. The panellist emphasized the need for developing countries to tailor policy frameworks to their contexts rather than replicating models from developed countries, focusing on diagnostics of sectoral conditions and capacities, an approach aimed at enhancing competitiveness and adaptability with regard to artificial intelligence technologies while ensuring equitable benefits across the workforce. In addition, with regard to the role of trade in services, the

¹ A/RES/78/311.

panellist underscored the potential for developing countries to leverage Internet connectivity in order to offer young talent in international markets, particularly in artificial intelligence -related fields, an exchange that not only provided training and experience for local professionals but also strengthened local capabilities and fostered entrepreneurial opportunities. The panellist stressed, however, that the effective use of artificial intelligence in trade required comprehensive public policies and regulations tailored to local conditions, to maximize benefits and effectively mitigate challenges. Finally, the panellist noted the need for strategic development and the implementation of policies that supported and promoted the creative economy in the artificial intelligence era, emphasizing the importance of seizing opportunities while addressing the associated risks.

21. The fourth panellist, Research Director, Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, University of Newcastle, United Kingdom, detailed findings from a recent study of United Kingdom trade and the global creative economy that analysed macro-level and micro-level trends in creative exports, highlighting the significant growth in creative services compared with in goods exports and the concentration of services exports, primarily to Europe and North America, with varying levels of presence in other global regions. The panellist discussed the challenges and opportunities in creative trade and emphasized the need for continued research, to refine measurement methodologies for digital exports, which were critical in understanding trends in creative and non-creative digital trade., as well as in identifying areas of comparative advantage. Finally, the panellist noted the need for further engagement with such findings, to inform policies that supported sustained growth and competitiveness in the evolving global creative landscape.

22. During the ensuing discussion, one delegate underscored the relevance of the discussion on the climate crisis and sustainable livelihoods, particularly for small island developing States; the role of technology and artificial intelligence in addressing these challenges; efforts in digitizing archival documents and preserving heritage amid climate-related impacts; and the importance of the simultaneous scaling up of both creatives and policymakers, of international cooperation in sharing best practices and of inclusive policies. One expert emphasized the shift from ownership to access in digital services and the related challenges in protecting intellectual property in the creative industry, including with regard to developing effective business models for monetizing digital products amid the accessibility of non-excludable content. One delegate noted concerns about the impact of artificial intelligence on job security in the creative sector and the need for strategies to balance job creation with potential displacement, highlighting concerns about market concentration and non-tariff barriers in international trade due to developments in artificial intelligence, as well as the need for global collaboration and robust regulatory frameworks to address such challenges.

5. Development potential of international trade in creative services

23. The first panellist, Director, Intellectual Property Division, World Trade Organization, emphasized the transformative impact of the digital disruption on trade, particularly in intellectual property and cultural works. The panellist highlighted how digital technology had impacted the sharing and trading of cultural works, challenging traditional intellectual property norms, with digital platforms influencing social and economic development, and emphasized that creators in developing countries often lacked fair access to global markets dominated by a few major digital platforms. The panellist stressed the need for comprehensive data on digital content trade, to inform policy decisions and adapt current intellectual property systems to the digital age. Finally, the panellist highlighted the need for enhanced international cooperation and coherent regulatory frameworks, to ensure a sustainable and equitable digital economy, providing fair access for creators worldwide.

24. The second panellist, International Trade Consultant, Division of Culture, Prime Minister's Office, Barbados, stressed the importance of the creative sector in small island developing States and that creative services addressed structural economic issues, with intellectual property as a key component. Unlike other industries, the creative sector had fewer barriers to entry and was less impacted by natural disasters. Given the small local market in Barbados, international trade was critical for the viability of the creative sector,

relying on tourism, collaboration and performances. The panellist noted regulatory barriers, such as local content policies and visa restrictions, and the need for improved market access for cultural practitioners in developing countries, in line with the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). Finally, the panellist emphasized the need to revise the global trade infrastructure, to increase the share of small island developing States in creative services trade, and to address concentration in digital distribution through international organization platforms.

25. The third panellist, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Culture and Sport, Ethiopia, discussed the experience of Ethiopia in trade in creative services, emphasizing their role in economic development and job creation, especially among youth. The panellist provided an overview of creative industries in Ethiopia, noting their market size and main products, and emphasized their potential in improving livelihoods, generating income, promoting human development and increasing export earnings. However, local creators often lacked formal education, skills and resources. Finally, the panellist noted the need to improve market access, strengthen skills, reduce trade restrictions and enhance intellectual property rights protection and enforcement, to foster growth in creative industries in Ethiopia.

26. The fourth panellist, Director, Trade, Industry, Commodity and Intellectual Property, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia, detailed creative industries in Indonesia, highlighting their role in national policy and Golden Indonesia 2045 Vision, aimed at establishing Indonesia as a high-level centre of digital and creative economy by 2045. The panellist outlined initiatives for improving access to finance for creative entrepreneurs, enhancing intellectual property management, strengthening networks of creators, improving data availability and supporting innovation and skills development; and detailed efforts in Indonesia to expand global market access, enhance the value and competitiveness of the creative economy and advocate for supportive norms and rules in multilateral forums. The panellist highlighted international initiatives such as the World Conference on Creative Economy and the adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution on promoting creative economy for sustainable development.² Finally, the panellist noted that Indonesia aimed to enhance sector capacity and competitiveness, facilitate access to global value chains and markets for creative products and strengthen cooperation with international organizations.

27. During the ensuing discussion, with regard to a query from the representative of one regional group on the role of the World Trade Organization in addressing challenges in developing countries, one panellist stated that the Organization focused on capacity-building and partnerships, both multilaterally and regionally, including workshops. With regard to a query from one delegate on the regional cooperation experience in Barbados and the Caribbean, one panellist stated that in the single market of the Caribbean Community, there was freedom of movement for cultural workers and the right to establish businesses, highlighting the importance of finding international mechanisms for the movement of cultural workers (mode 4) and international cooperation efforts. In addition, with regard to a query from one delegate on initiatives in Indonesia, one panellist detailed a trademark project to promote goods and services in Bali, targeting small and medium-sized enterprises and aimed at helping them commercialize and manage intellectual property and develop brand design. With regard to a query from one expert on increasing restrictions on cross-border data flows in developed countries and addressing the safety of data flows, one panellist noted that protectionism that created obstacles needed to be avoided and stressed the need for open dialogue about practical experiences. In addition, with regard to a query from one expert on challenges in capturing data on the creative sector, one panellist underscored the need to strengthen domestic capacity, to capture data and consider gaps, in particular with regard to global digital platforms. Finally, the UNCTAD secretariat noted a recent UNCTAD study that addressed intellectual property reforms that had contributed to the global success of creative content from the Republic of Korea.

² A/RES/78/133.

6. Follow up to the ninth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development: Data for services trade and development policies

28. The UNCTAD secretariat shared findings and recommendations from an informal working group on data for services trade and development policies, as contained in the report of the working group, which had been established following the ninth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development in 2022. The group brought together producers and users of services trade statistics to identify data gaps, share best practices and innovate data usage. At its most recent meeting, the group had discussed the insufficiency of granular data on services trade by sector, trading partner and mode of supply, particularly in developing countries, as well as challenges in recording the activities of multinational firms through commercial presence (mode 3) and the impact of digitalization on trade data. The members of the group encouraged UNCTAD to further develop this initiative and proposed a way forward, including adding an item on data for services trade and development policies on the agenda of future sessions of the Multi-year Expert Meeting; developing a knowledge-sharing hub, including a primer on trading services data for policymakers in developing countries and a repository showcasing innovative data use; securing resources to support critical services trade data; and encouraging Governments to financially support services trade statistics, strengthen legal and institutional arrangements for official statistics and use administrative data for evidence-based policymaking.

29. The first panellist, Director, External Trade, Caribbean Community, noted that services made a significant direct contribution to economies of the Caribbean Community and detailed efforts in the Caribbean Community to enhance services and facilitate professional services trade, including by harmonizing requirements and procedures on registering and licencing professionals, with a view to pursuing their free movement through a single registration system, as well as initiatives on diversifying the tourism sector into fast-growing knowledge-intensive and digitally deliverable services. A challenge with regard to diversification was the lack of sufficient disaggregated data on services output and trade, and the panellist detailed efforts in the Caribbean Community in this regard, including in the context of a multi-year UNCTAD project on strengthening capacity for evidence-based services trade policymaking, to help diversification and to increase economic resilience, which she considered timely to address data-related challenges, including through the UNCTAD Trade-in-Services Statistics Information System. Finally, the panellist detailed a digital tool that facilitated the collection and processing of services trade statistics, helped produce disaggregated statistics on bilateral services trade and contributed to implementing regional services strategies in the Caribbean Community.

30. The second panellist, Reader in Economics, University of Sussex, United Kingdom, emphasized challenges in bilateral and subsectoral trade statistics and domestic trade and sectoral output statistics. The panellist noted how services trade policies impacted the import of agricultural goods in Africa and that policies on foreign communications and transport services could negatively impact the intra-African trade of agricultural goods. Bilateral goods trade could not happen without services trade and manufacturing firms were branching into services, for example in India, including as part of addressing intensified external competition. Finally, the panellist noted that understanding why and how firms switched to services required firm-level data, which might be available in public registries, and that synchronizing existing data collections with the extended balance of payments services classification could improve data in services trade.

31. The third panellist, Senior Associate, Council on Economic Policies, Switzerland, discussed how digitalizing services impacted their trade and measurement, focusing on the music sector. The panellist noted that the share of digitally deliverable services in total services exports was increasing and had not lessened during the pandemic; international bandwidth use had increased significantly, pointing to the increased export of digitally delivered services; and content providers dominated international data traffic, shifting the digital economy from traditional telecommunications to major digital platforms. The panellist stressed that policymakers needed to verify whether small and medium-sized enterprises could access and use such platforms. The shift in the music industry from physical to digital media and to streaming highlighted the need to understand how some

industries successfully shifted to digital, to inform digitalization strategies in other sectors. The panellist noted, for example, that the music industry managed copyright issues despite the global nature of digital distribution and the territorial nature of intellectual property rights. Finally, the panellist stated that data collection required understanding the realities on the ground of digital trade, whereby existing classification systems and trade rules might not adequately capture the nuances of digital trade.

32. During the ensuing discussion, the representative of one regional group and a few delegates stated that creative services were important for developing countries and that accurate and comprehensive data were necessary, to inform policymaking and negotiations in services, including creative services. The representative of one regional group and some delegates noted that the collection of data on services was a challenge in some developing countries, particularly the least developed countries and small island developing States, and that collecting data, particularly on creative services, required an integrated approach, commitment and human, technological and financial resources. A few delegates noted that “brain drain” was an issue with regard to human resources and that barriers to remittance transfers were relevant with regard to financial resources. One delegate stated that support from international organizations could help national stakeholders recognize data collection challenges and implement appropriate responses, and detailed the following barriers: the governance of data collection, involving insufficient human resources and lack of policy coherence between agencies, meaning that addressing these issues required resources and commitment from decision-makers; and insufficient engagement by creatives, which required raising awareness and building rapport, as well as resources. A few delegates noted that developing countries also needed additional cooperation and capacity-building, to improve data collection and analysis. One panellist stated that, in some cases, a cost-effective solution was to ensure legal access to already-available data. The representative of one regional group and some delegates noted that the informal working group helped advance understanding of services trade data and provide pragmatic policy options. They welcomed the draft report of the group, and its findings and suggestions, including the proposal to include a permanent item on data for services trade and development policies on the agenda of future sessions of the Multi-year Expert Meeting, to provide a forum to exchange good practice experiences in data collection, identify gaps and share innovative practices in data use, particularly in assessing the impact of trade policies on gender, youth, indigenous populations and other groups; and to allow for deep dives into data issues related to particular sectors such as the creative economy. In addition, they welcomed the suggestion to develop a knowledge-sharing hub for services trade data; and to mobilize funding support for developing countries to better collect data and link existing data.

II. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

33. At its opening plenary meeting on 10 July 2024, the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development elected Ms. Shanchita Haque (Bangladesh) as its Chair and Ms. Jackie Hetungamena Ndombasi Mboyo (Angola) as its Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

34. Also at its opening plenary meeting on 10 July 2024, the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development adopted the provisional agenda of the session (TD/B/C.I/MEM.4/31). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

3. Trade in creative services.
4. Adoption of the report of the meeting.

C. Adoption of the report of the meeting

(Agenda item 4)

35. At its closing plenary meeting on 12 July 2024, the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development authorized the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chair, to finalize the report after the conclusion of the session.

Annex

Attendance*

1. Representatives of the following States members of the Conference attended the session:

Angola	Jamaica
Azerbaijan	Kuwait
Barbados	Libya
Cabo Verde	Nigeria
Cambodia	Russian Federation
Cameroon	Seychelles
China	Spain
Ethiopia	Sri Lanka
Finland	Thailand
Gambia	Togo
Greece	Tunisia
Honduras	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Indonesia	Uzbekistan
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	
Iraq	

2. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

Caribbean Community
Organization of Islamic Cooperation
Southern African Customs Union

3. The following United Nations organs, bodies and programmes were represented at the session:

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
International Trade Centre
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

4. The following specialized agencies and related organizations were represented at the session:

International Labour Organization
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
World Intellectual Property Organization
World Trade Organization

5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the session:

General category

International Network for Standardization of Higher Education Degrees

* This attendance list contains registered participants. For the list of participants, see TD/B/C.I/MEM.4/INF.11.