Ministerial Round Table
7 October 2021, 11.30 a.m.–1 p.m. (CEST)

Harnessing frontier technologies for shared prosperity

Description

The leaders participating at this ministerial round table will help create a common vision of the role of policy in ensuring that digital transformation delivers economic change and development outcomes that leave no one behind. In view of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, leaders will reflect on policy and political messages that should emerge from the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development with regard to harnessing new technologies and data in ways that contribute to the economic recovery, reduced inequality and sustainable development.

Key issues

1. **Providing direction on fast technological change**. Artificial intelligence, big data, the Internet of things, robotics and biotechnology offer tremendous potential for making development truly sustainable, but they also raise important and varied concerns, including with regard to jobs, market power, citizens' rights, and new technological divides and the ability of countries to harness new technologies for structural transformation. There is a need to steer technological change towards shared prosperity and sustainable development.

2. **Forging partnerships**. Governments, in dialogue with the private sector, academia, civil society and other stakeholders, will play a unique role as coordinators of the national system of innovation and investors of first resort in the ecosystem required for new science, technology and innovation to support sustainable development. They also need to adapt policy responses in the areas of, for example, data, competition, taxation, social policies and trade. Building the right skills and capacities in the workforce is also crucial for shared prosperity, as skills gaps are a determinant of success or failure in the context of rapid technological change.

3. **Enhancing international collaboration**. Joint action is urgently required to bridge digital divides (including in terms of gender), to reduce technological gaps between countries, tackle ethical questions to ensure their safe adoption, and

UNITED NATIONS
UNCTAD

Connect with us

OVERVIEW

develop normative frameworks to guide a fair, transparent and accountable development of frontier technologies. Any international approaches will need to include sufficient flexibility to satisfy all countries while fully addressing the needs of the most vulnerable ones, in particular the least developed countries.

Participants

11:33 – 11: 40   Introductory remarks:
Ms. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General, UNCTAD

11:40 – 12:30   **Harnessing Frontier Technologies for Shared Prosperity**
Speakers:

Mr. Douglas Letsholathebe, Minister of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology, Botswana

Mr. Franklin Garcia Fermin, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Dominican Republic

Mr. Stanislav Raščan, Minister for Development Cooperation a.i. and State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia

Mr. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia

Ms. Clarisse Iribagiza, eTrade for Women advocate, Rwanda

Moderator:

Catherine Fiankan-Bokonga, Senior United Nations Correspondent, Vice-President of the Swiss Press Club and the Association of Accredited Correspondents at the United Nations, Switzerland

12:30 – 13: 00   **Questions and answers**

Contacts

Rémi Lang
Economic Affairs Officer
Division on Technology and Logistics
UNCTAD
Tel: 41 22 917 4431
remi.lang@unctad.org