



COURSE ON KEY ISSUES ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AGENDA

Short courses for Permanent Missions in Geneva
Organised by the Division on Technology and Logistics-Knowledge Development Branch
Policy Capacity Building Section / P166 courses

Harnessing Blockchain for sustainable development: prospects and challenges

Thursday, 4 March 2021

Delivered by the Division on Technology and Logistics

PROGRAMME

Geneva, Palais des Nations		Online
10:00 - 10:15	Welcome address, Ms. Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics Short course will be moderated by Ms. Randa Jamal, Economic Affairs Officer / Programme Coordinator, Policy Capacity Building Section	
10:15 - 11:00	Session 1 This session will cover the basics of the blockchain technology, describe its ecosystem of innovation, and discuss how blockchain could impact the SDGs. It will zoom on scenarios that impact sustainable development, in addition to the challenges and opportunities that face developing economies in particular. In this regard, the session will address the challenges that governments face and the policy options that could influence the rate and direction of innovation and building the blockchain to contribute to national development priorities and accelerate the progress towards the SDGs. Presented by Mr. Clovis Freire, Economic Affairs Officer, (Name of Section), the Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD	
11:00 - 11:15	Q&A session	
11:15 - 11:45	Session 2 This session will build on the previous and zoom on ASYCUDA, UNCTAD's largest technical cooperation programme, to illustrate digitalized economy and society, the security and accountability of data transactions and why they are critical elements. Blockchain technology could be a game-changer, serving as the base technology for cryptocurrency, enabling open (peer-to-peer), secure and fast transactions. Presented Mr. Clovis and an economic affairs office from ASYCUDA	
11:45 - 12:00	Q&A session	

Harnessing blockchain for sustainable development: prospects and challenges

In an increasingly digitalized economy and society, the security and accountability of data transactions are critical elements for creating trust and enabling breakthrough innovations in the digital world. In this regard, blockchain technology could be a game-changer, serving as the base technology for cryptocurrency, enabling open (peer-to-peer), secure and fast transactions. However, issues associated with scalability, privacy concerns, uncertain regulatory standards and difficulties posed by the technology in integration with existing applications are some of the potential market constraints. There is also the risk that the potential of blockchain for solving developmental problems has been somewhat inflated by its early adopters and the tech media and may not be as applicable for developing and least developed countries. These challenges that governments face will be addressed, in addition to the policy options that could influence the rate and direction of innovation and building the blockchain to contribute to national development priorities and accelerate the progress towards the SDGs.

This short course will also present the basics of the blockchain technology, describe its ecosystem of innovation, and discuss how blockchain could impact the SDGs. It will zoom on scenarios that impact sustainable development, providing delegates with a deepened understanding of the basics of blockchain technology, its potential impact on the SDGs, and the policy options to influence the rate and direction of innovation towards national development priorities and the SDGs. The course will also raise awareness on the prospects and challenges in harnessing blockchain technologies for sustainable development.