



## 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

### **Women and the COVID-19 pandemic: Building back better, including through trade**

Tuesday, 5 April 2022

Delivered by the Division on International Trade and Commodities

#### **PROGRAMME**

Geneva, Palais des Nations		Room XX
10:00 - 10:15	Welcome address, Ms. Geneviève Féraud, Head, Knowledge Development Branch, DTL  Short course will be moderated by Ms. Randa Jamal, Economic Affairs Officer / Programme Coordinator, Policy Capacity Building Section.	
10:15 - 11:00	<b>Session 1</b>  Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, women have made significant progress in the areas of gender equality and women's empowerment, such as, poverty eradication, educational attainment, labor market participation, and trade. This session will update delegates on the impact of the pandemic on women and on rescue measures that countries, especially developing and least developed countries, have put in place to help women and women-led businesses limit the pandemic-induced economic shock.  How and what can be done to address women's shrinking participation in the economy and in trade will be addressed in this session.  Presented by Ms. Simonetta Zarrilli, Chief, Trade, Gender and Development Programme, Division on International Trade and Commodities. Q&A session	
11:00-11:45	<b>Session 2</b>  Emerging evidence on impact of COVID-19 demonstrates that the pandemic has been especially harmful for women small-scale cross-border traders who handle a significant volume of trade in developing countries. This session will consider the impact of the pandemic on those already marginalized micro-entrepreneurs and examine new strategies that have been put in place, especially by women traders, to adapt and survive in a harsh COVID-19-induced business environment. It will also highlight the work UNCTAD has undertaken to strengthen the resilience of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries and	

	<p>economies in transition, by improving their capacity to mitigate the pandemic's economic and social impacts.</p> <p>Presented by Ms. Mariangela Linoci, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade, Gender and Development Programme, Division on International Trade and Commodities. Q&amp;A session</p>
11:45-12:45	<p><b>Session 3</b></p> <p>The COVID-19 crisis continues to dominate as African countries turn towards implementing the historic Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Inherent in this crisis that has dealt a mass blow to Africa's sustainable development are opportunities to transform the trading paradigm so that intra-African trade contributes to inclusive socio-economic development in Africa. Ensuring that women can equally participate in new trade and entrepreneurship opportunities created through the AfCFTA is particularly important given the common objective of all African countries to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic recovery from COVID-19. This session will consider opportunities that the AfCFTA holds for women and women-led businesses, and link ongoing efforts to the importance of responding to new and emerging challenges from the COVID-pandemic and post-pandemic environment.</p> <p>Presented by Ms. Nadira Bayat, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade, Gender and Development Programme, Division on International Trade and Commodities. Q&amp;A session</p>
12:45-13:00	<p>Ongoing and future activities of the Trade, Gender and Development Programme</p> <p>Presented by Ms. Simonetta Zarrilli, Chief, Trade, Gender and Development Programme, Division on International Trade and Commodities. Q&amp;A session</p>

## **Women and the COVID-19 pandemic: Building back better, including through trade**

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The COVID-19 pandemic has halted or reversed decades of progress on efforts to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Economic downturns tend to affect men and women differently, mainly because of gender-segmentation into different economic sectors, the structure of markets and institutions and associated inequalities, as well as the different roles women and men play in society. Women's shrinking participation in the economy may have negative longer-term effects that extends beyond gender equality. Phenomena linked to unemployment, such as skill erosion, discouragement, loss of business networks and discrimination, may lead to women permanently exiting the labour market with high risks of productivity losses for the broader economy. The course entitled "Women and the COVID-19 pandemic: Building back better, including through trade" will begin by updating delegates on the impact of the pandemic on women and on rescue measures that countries, especially developing and least developed countries, have put in place to help women and businesses limit the pandemic-induced economic shock.

Emerging evidence on impact of COVID-19 shows the pandemic has been especially harmful for women small-scale cross-border traders who handle a significant volume of trade in developing countries. The impact of the pandemic on those already marginalized micro-entrepreneurs will be considered and new strategies that have been put in place, especially by women traders, to adapt and survive in a harsh COVID-19-induced business environment, will be examined. The COVID-19 crisis continues to dominate as African countries turn towards implementing the historic Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Opportunities that the AfCFTA holds for women and women-led businesses will be discussed alongside considerations for transforming the trading paradigm in a COVID-pandemic and post-pandemic environment, so that intra-African trade contributes to inclusive socio-economic development in Africa.

The course will conclude with a brief overview of ongoing and future activities of the Trade, Gender and Development Programme.