



## COURSE ON KEY ISSUES ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AGENDA

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

### UNCTAD's lens: supporting SIDS in building new development models

Friday, 10 October 2025

Delivered by the Divisions for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes,  
Technology and Logistics; and International Trade and Commodities

UNCTAD

#### PROGRAMME

Geneva, Palais des Nations		Room VII
10:00 - 10:15	<p>Welcome address, Mr. Angel Gonzalez-Sanz, Head, Technology, Innovation and Knowledge Development Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD.</p> <p>Moderator, Ms. Randa Jamal, Economic Affairs Officer, Policy Capacity Building Section/P166, Technology, Innovation, and Knowledge Development Branch-DTL, UNCTAD</p>	
10:15 - 11:15	<p><b>Session 1 – UNCTAD's Overall Strategy for SIDS and way forward</b></p> <p>This session will focus on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the long-standing structural challenges that impede their development, including smallness, remoteness, limited economic diversification, and high vulnerability to climate and external shocks. Zooming on UNCTAD's strategy, the course will shed light on constraints while also promoting inclusive and sustainable growth through the strengthening of productive capacities, fostering innovation, and supporting the development of green industries. The course will address the need for improved access to high-quality data to support informed decision-making. Rooted in international consensus and aligned with frameworks such as the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) and relevant UN resolutions, the strategy underscores the importance of tailored international support mechanisms to help SIDS chart resilient and self-determined economic paths.</p> <p>At the end of the course, delegates will gain an understanding of the long-standing vulnerabilities that make SIDS a distinct group of UN Member States. They will learn how these vulnerabilities tend to manifest in today's trade, finance and climate; how they shape economic development roadmaps for SIDS; how UNCTAD's strategy responds to these challenges; and examine concrete examples of how UNCTAD supports SIDS in fostering productive capacities. Therefore, delegates will have the full background to tackle the challenges and where opportunities for policies can be harnessed.</p> <p>Presented by Rachid Bouhia, Economic Affairs Officer, Productive Capacities and Sustainable Development Branch, Division for Africa, LDCs and Special Programmes (ALDC), UNCTAD Q&amp;A</p>	

11:15 - 12:10	<p><b>Session 2 – Harnessing the Digital Economy and E-Commerce to Overcome Structural Constraints</b></p> <p>Building on the first session, UNCTAD places particular emphasis on the potential of e-commerce and the digital economy to help SIDS transcend structural limitations, such as, remoteness and small market size. The course will explore how UNCTAD assists SIDS through comprehensive research and tailored assessments of their eTrade ecosystems, the development of strategic roadmaps, and the deployment of tools such as the eTrade Readiness Assessments and the eTrade Reform Tracker. UNCTAD helps build capacity in SIDS to measure and monitor e-commerce, the digital economy, and digital trade, with a view to supporting the development of policies that enhance connectivity, access to new markets, and inclusive economic participation. Delegates will also have the opportunity to zoom on these efforts, draw on lessons learned from UNCTAD’s extensive work with SIDS in the Pacific, Caribbean, and African regions, providing grounded, and practical insights.</p> <p>Presented by:  Ina Hodge, Programme Management Officer  Thomas Van Giffen, Economic Affairs Officer  Scarlett Fondeur Gil, Economic Affairs Officer  E-commerce and Digital Economy Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD  Q&amp;A</p>
12:10 - 13:00	<p><b>Session 3 – Strengthening Trade Resilience through Transparent and Adaptive Regulatory Frameworks</b></p> <p>This session will highlight UNCTAD’s support for SIDS in addressing complex trade regulations, including technical barriers to trade (TBT) and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures. SIDS are disproportionately affected by such Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs). UNCTAD collects and publishes NTM data to improve transparency and help countries navigate complex regulatory frameworks. NTMs play a critical role in international trade. While they are essential to protect human, animal and plant health, consumer safety, and the environment, they can also increase trade costs and affect market access. Modern trade agreements increasingly reflect the importance of NTMs, underlining the need for balanced approaches that safeguard public interests while facilitating trade. Through practical examples, this session will show how greater transparency and better regulatory design can help SIDS reduce unnecessary costs, comply with international standards, and strengthen their integration into regional and global markets. The session will offer delegates a better understanding of NTMs impact on trade and particularly on SIDS.</p> <p>Ms Seul Lee, Economic Affairs Officer  Mr. Julien Bliesener, Economic Affairs Officer  Division on International Trade and Commodities, UNCTAD.  Q&amp;A</p>

## **UNCTAD's lens: supporting SIDS in building new development models**

10 October 2025, Room XXVI

The short course will provide an overview of UNCTAD's strategy to support Small Island

Developed States (SIDS), which recognizes the deep-rooted structural challenges facing them, including their small size, geographic isolation, limited economic diversification, and vulnerability to climate shocks. In response, UNCTAD's strategy focuses on strengthening productive capacities, promoting innovation and green industries, improving resilience to external shocks, and enhancing access to quality data for decision-making. It is built on consensus that these countries deserve both the policy space to manoeuvre, and the necessary support, to bolster their economic trajectories. The strategy aligns with international frameworks like the ABAS and UN resolutions that call for tailored development assistance, better financing options, and access to technology for SIDS.

With this backdrop, the short course will also focus on how UNCTAD supports SIDS in leveraging e-commerce and the digital economy to overcome structural constraints and remoteness in SIDS, by doing research, assessing their eTrade ecosystem through assessments and strategy development, providing monitoring tools like the eTrade Reform Tracker and assistance in the area of measuring of e-commerce and the digital economy. This part of the course will draw on our extensive experience of working with SIDS in the Pacific, Caribbean and Africa.

Simultaneously, UNCTAD also supports SIDS in addressing trade related regulations such as technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary measures by enhancing Non-Tariff Measures transparency, understanding and design. UNCTAD's integrated approach is holistic in terms of SIDS, not only adapting to the digital era but also reducing trade costs and regulatory hurdles, reinforcing their economic resilience and sustainable development.

At the end of this course, delegates will have gained knowledge of:

- UNCTAD's strategy for SIDS and the deep-rooted structural challenges facing them.
- Requirements for tackling geographic isolation and limited economic diversification through policies based on their economic trajectories and needs.
- Leveraging e-commerce and the digital economy to overcome structural constraints and contributing to economic development and regional and international integration.
- Deeper understanding of NTMs and NTBs in the context of SIDS and their role in addressing challenges that lead to national regional and international integration.