

IGF 2017 'Shape Your Digital Future!'

UNCTAD Open Forum proposal: "Digitalization and International Trade"

15 June 2017

Background and description

The United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has been the primary UN agency involved in supporting developing country interests in the global economy since 1964. In recent years, the shift to a digital economy, the rise of the Internet and the opportunities provided by global electronic commerce have become central to our work. For example, for over a decade we have produced a series of well-received semi-annual *Information Economy Reports* <http://unctad.org/en/Pages/Publications/InformationEconomyReportSeries.aspx>, and since 2015, UNCTAD has hosted annual *E-Commerce Week* meetings that in 2017 brought 1,000 delegates representing governments and all stakeholder groups from 100 countries to Geneva. In addition to offering a very focused multi-stakeholder dialogue on a range of detailed issues, the E-Commerce Week also has been instrumental in promoting important initiatives intended to help developing countries and other parties to adapt to the rapidly evolving digital economy, including the highly-regarded eTrade for All initiative http://unctad.org/en/Pages/DTL/STI_and_ICTs/eTrade-for-All.aspx.

As more and more economic transactions go digital, it becomes increasingly important to bring the trade community and the Internet Governance community together. Accordingly, the purpose of this Open Forum would be three fold: 1) to introduce IGF participants to UNCTAD work's work on e-commerce and the digital economy; 2) to present the key messages from the Information Economy Report 2017 (due in October 2017); and 3) foster a multi-stakeholder discussion on how to enable more developing countries to benefit from the evolving digital economy. This will among other things address the challenge of enhancing the interface between the Internet community and the trade and development communities. We believe such an event would be greatly enriching to all sides in the discussion.

Names of Speakers

Session Moderator:

Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD

Speakers:

Torbjörn Fredriksson, Chief, ICT Analysis Section, UNCTAD

Stakeholder Responses

William J. Drake, University of Zurich (Civil society)

Robert Pepper, Head, Global Connectivity and Technology Policy, Facebook
(business) (tbc)

Anriette Esterhuysen, APC (tbc) - civil society

Anne-Rachel Inne, ICANN or Sally Wentworth, ISOC (tbc) - technical community

Olga Cavalli, Argentina (Government) (tbc)

Julian Braithwaite, Ambassador of the United Kingdom (Government) (tbc)