**Digital transformation: How do we shape its socio-economic
and labour impacts for good?**

Messages

- The underlying message of the session was that digitisation brings benefits to society and advance growth and development, but also comes with challenges. To reap these benefits and ensure that no one is left behind, actions are needed in multiple areas: ensuring access to digital infrastructures and technologies, developing the capacities of individuals and companies to use digital technologies, and putting policies in place to support innovation and growth.
- E-commerce was seen as an enabler of global trade, empowering enterprises to reach international markets. But barriers still exist. Some pointed that this specific time is a historically important turning point in many meanings, then also touched upon a need to update cross-border trade rules and procedures, to better cater for the digital era. Others cautioned that time is needed to reach consensus between countries on how to best address the challenges of the digital trade. There were also calls for tackling issues such as limitations in cross-border data flows, as well as data privacy and security concerns.
- Some discussants noted that automation and artificial intelligence offer new avenues for development, and it is important to ensure that societies are able to adapt and take advantage of the opportunities. Other focused on the need to address risks associated with such technologies, from bias and imbalances in algorithmic decision making, to disruptions on the labour market and workforce.
- Some argued that societies and individuals will be able to adapt to the changes brought by new technologies, as was the case with previous industrial revolutions. While some jobs may become obsolete, technologies could develop new services, and create new markets and jobs. Others warned that the digital revolution risks leading to profound occupational changes, gaps in social protections, and workers' rights abuses. Among the proposed solutions were: digital inclusion, active market labour policies, social protection and social safety nets, and adequate legislation to regulate the behaviour of companies.
- There was general support for the view that education and capacity development especially for children, youth, and women are key to ensure that the future workforce has the skills required by the new economy. Calls were made for changes in the overall curricula and learning process, to allow individuals not only to make use of new technologies, but also to be able to challenge them.
- While it cannot be predicted how our digital future will look like, it was said that we should take a human-centric and ethics-based approach to digital development.