



Background

The world economy is at a key juncture as the global economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis is expected to be threatened by geopolitical tension and global value chains (GVCs) disruption—most notably in food, commodities, and energy—that are affecting different countries with varying intensities.

Responding to these crises is an unprecedented challenge for most governments around the world, and industrial development will play a prime role in supporting the post COVID-19 recovery and reigniting economic growth and poverty alleviation in the Asia-Pacific region. However, in a rapidly evolving scenario, countries need to rethink their industrial development strategies and take into account the lessons learnt from the pandemic as well as the future trends that are likely to shape industrial production in the years to come.

The UNIDO [Industrial Development Report \(IDR\) 2022](#) contributes to this discussion by providing evidence at the country, industry and firm level that documents the impacts of the crisis, and by examining the drivers of resilience and vulnerability in those same contexts.

It also identifies three megatrends that have been substantially changing the process of industrial development before the COVID-19 pandemic and are expected to continue doing so in the future: industrial digitalization and automation; global production rebalancing; and industrial greening. These megatrends are closely linked to technological change, science and innovation and should be factored-in when designing post-pandemic industrial recovery strategies and policies.

A key finding of the report is that the adoption of the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) has bolstered resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis: digitally advanced firms —those using the latest digital technologies in their production processes — were better able to weather the pandemic's impact on sales, profits, and employment.

Moreover, there are strong indications that the pandemic has boosted digitalization; however, translating digitalization opportunities into reality is challenging as the adoption of these technologies relies on many interdependencies between science and technology. As such, differences in capabilities and the availability (or lack thereof) of a supporting innovation system account for a large share of today's divide among countries and firms; tackling this divide requires strong and coordinated actions from the international community.



Accordingly, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) together with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will organize a side event during the Fourth Session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation, during which the main findings and messages of the IDR 2022 will be presented and discussed with a panel of prominent experts in the fields of industrial development and innovation policy. The event also aims to help stimulate thinking in the Asia-Pacific region on future courses of action to build back better from the crisis in terms of policymaking, development practices, research, and advocacy.

Agenda (time UTC+7:

16:30-16:35	Opening remarks (5 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mr. Gerd Müller, Director General of UNIDO (pre-recorded video)
16:35-17:00	Presentation of main finding and messages of UNIDO's IDR 2022, with focus on the COVID-19 impact on Asia-Pacific and the megatrends expected to shape the future of industrial development (25 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Nobuya Harguchi, Chief of UNIDO's Research and Policy Advice Division
17:00-17:45	Panel discussion (45 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ms. Rafaelita Aldaba, Undersecretary at Philippine Department of Trade and Industry- Ms. Eng Netra, Executive Director, Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI)- Mr. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), India- Mr. Dato' Gan Tack Kong, Vice-President, Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers
17:45-17:55	Interaction with audience (10 minutes)
17:55-18:00	Conclusions and main messages (5 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mr. Stein Hansen, Regional Director and UNIDO Representative