

# Trade and the Sustainable Development Goals

An Online Training Course

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# The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 17 SDGs and their 169 targets are an agenda for “achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions—economic, social and environmental—in a balanced and integrated manner” (UN 2015)

Intent: “a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.”



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



# SDGs and trade

“International trade is **an engine** for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction, and contributes to the promotion of sustainable development” (UN 2015)

However, the SDGs contain surprisingly few *explicit* references to trade or trade policy

- What are the **fundamental links** between trade and SDGs?
- Does trade **help or hinder** efforts to attain the SDGs?

# Finding connections is a challenge

- Many (most?) of the linkages and issues connecting trade and the SDGs are **implicit**
- Why?
  - Designers of the SDGs omitted or downplayed some important **direct connections**, such as those between trade, resource allocation, and household incomes
  - Many trade-SDG linkages are **indirect**

# Overview of the course

- Introduction: “A” modules
  - Big picture: main topics, key issues, policy questions
  - Stylized facts
    - Gains from trade; winners and losers
  - Some basic analytical tools
    - Some useful economic principles
- Specifics: “B” and “C” modules
  - Primary focus: social-economic and environmental SDGs
  - Notable: labor markets; externalities; policies
  - “C” Modules: Health, GVCs
  - Big insight: SDG effects of trade depend on **institutions**
  - **Unpack/understand indirect trade-SDG linkages, conflicts, and complementarities**

# An example

How does increased trade reduce poverty?

- Trade (and FDI) takes advantage of abundant resources – including labor
- Labor demand increases wages and incomes
- Direct effects on those employed
- Indirect effects on ancillary industries
- Gains spread more widely through migration and remittances to poorer origin communities
- But **gains depend on labor mobility**, so the institutions of the labor market conditions results
- Typical conclusion: **two targets, two instruments**

# Looking ahead

- 11/18: Key issues, discussion, Q&A
  - Prerequisite: complete A modules, including tests
- 11/28: Specific issues and policies, expert panel
  - Prerequisite: complete B and C modules, including tests
- Accomplishment: certificate for completing online course, passing quizzes (75%), attending workshops
- Questions: **post to chat on the course platform**
- Rest of today: guidelines on course access and use (ESCAP team); brief Q&A (use Teams chat)