



# United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.: Limited  
5 July 2021

Original: English

---

## Trade and Development Board

Sixty-eighth session  
Geneva, 21 June–2 July 2021

### **Draft report of the Trade and Development Board on its sixty-eighth session**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 21 June to 2 July 2021

#### **Addendum**

## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
President's summary .....	2
<i>Technology and Innovation Report 2021: Catching Technological Waves – Innovation with Equity</i> .....	2



## President's summary

### ***Technology and Innovation Report 2021: Catching Technological Waves – Innovation with Equity***

(Agenda item 5)

1. The Director of the UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics presented highlights of the *Technology and Innovation Report 2021: Catching Technological Waves – Innovation with Equity*. As argued in the report, the accelerating pace of development of frontier technologies represented not only opportunities but also challenges such as job displacement, job polarization and various forms of inequality. She also introduced a frontier technology readiness index, which measures the national capabilities to use, adopt and adapt frontier technologies, and stressed that, while developed countries overall performed better, there were outperformers among developing countries. The existence of developing country outperformers indicated that readiness was not entirely bound by levels of development. She concluded that policy response and international cooperation were essential in promoting innovation as was mitigating risks, such as by building stronger national capabilities in science, technology and innovation, increasing women's participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and promoting inclusive debate on frontier technologies.

2. One panellist introduced various national initiatives to promote innovation and argued that more support for lower-middle-income and low-income countries, especially in information and communications technology infrastructure and skills development, was necessary. Another panellist mentioned that conditions such as conscious design accompanied by appropriate public policies would allow frontier technologies to reduce and not increase inequalities. Another panellist stressed the importance of mitigating inequality in access to information and communications technology infrastructure between and within countries and emphasized the urgency of building capacity in frontier technologies in developing countries to enable a transition to a path for significant technological development.

3. The representatives of several regional groups and some delegates commended UNCTAD for the *Technology and Innovation Report 2021* and welcomed the policy recommendations it contained, particularly those on strengthening national innovation systems. Some regional groups and several delegates stressed the necessity of international cooperation to narrow the technological divide and reduce inequality among countries. Some regional groups and one delegate also suggested that UNCTAD should play an active role in facilitating such international cooperation, including the continuation and expansion of science, technology and innovation reviews.

---