Call for papers – Final Symposium-

Catching up and global value chains in times of transformation

19-20 February 2024, Maastricht, NL

The world economy is undergoing a profound transformation, that is characterized by factors such as the widespread use of digital technologies, the rising demand for environmentally sustainable forms of production and consumption, the questioning of the benefits brought about by globalization in a context of growing inequalities within and across countries, uncertainties and risks. These developments have an influence on the structure of many industries and the creation of monopolistic rents and entry barriers, on the firm-level strategies to leverage from these new forms of organization, on the different role that natural and extractive resources could have, moving away from a concept of curse towards a new potential to foster catching up, and of course on the likelihood of attaining the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The greening of Global Value Chains (GVCs) is clearly a central aspect of this transformation, that is creating new challenges and opportunities for latecomer countries. On the one hand, new export opportunities for latecomer countries with abundant renewable energy resources and other green assets are likely to emerge. On the other hand, latecomer countries could also face risks and vulnerabilities in the transition to a green economy, such as job losses in carbon-intensive sectors and higher costs of compliance with environmental regulations. Rapid technological change, rising geopolitical tensions and global shocks are also having a significant impact on GVCs and latecomer development. In any case, the required investments in new and improved capabilities at the firm-level will be remarkable, as well as the challenge to rethink and organize institutions and organizations to help address such transformations.

This symposium will therefore discuss research to develop a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing latecomer countries to catch up in years of green and digital transformations. The implications for the design of policies and strategies to support catching up processes within a framework of digital and sustainability transitions will also be a main concern of this symposium.

We invite relevant early-stage papers on the following (including but not limited to) issues and questions:

• The twin transition (green and digital) in GVCs: How are the greening and digitalization of GVCs interacting with each other? What are the challenges and opportunities for latecomer countries in the twin transition? When/how are such technologies developed? How can latecomer countries foster innovation in green technologies and products? What are the key challenges and opportunities for latecomer countries to access and create green technologies?

• The greening-extractive interface: What are the implications of the green transition for the demand for extractive resources? What does the greening of exploration and exploitation technologies imply for latecomer countries with abundant extractive resources? How could they benefit from such an interface?

• Green industrial policy and windows of opportunity. What are the key design elements of effective green industrial policies? What are the essential institutional factors determining “how” a green
industrial policy may be effective? What role can green industrial policy play in supporting the greening of GVCs and latecomer development? How can latecomer countries identify and seize green windows of opportunity in GVCs? What are the necessary conditions and factors for such opportunities to emerge and for latecomer countries to exploit and capitalize on them?

- The impact of the green transformation on labor markets and social welfare in latecomer countries: What are the implications of the green transition for an equitable socio-economic transition? What are the likely implications for employment, and for specific skills, in different sectors of the economy? What policy implications for employment and skill building? What policies to support workers and communities that are negatively affected by the green transition?

Extended (1000 words) abstracts of papers to be presented at the Symposium should be uploaded from link to be found at the following website: https://www.merit.unu.edu/events/event-abstract/?id=2353&speaker=UNU-MERIT%20Maastricht%20(Netherlands)

The deadline for abstracts is December 1, 2023. A selection of the papers presented at the symposium will be invited for a later publication in a special issue in an international high-quality journal.

Contact for questions or comments: catchain@merit.unu.edu

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