

Special Session on Assessing eTrade Readiness of the Least Developed Countries

26 April 2017

Room XVIII, Palais des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland

In the changing global marketplace, E-Commerce presents a powerful driver of economic growth, inclusive trade and job-creation including for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). However, while there is significant potential for growth through E-Commerce, many people and Small and Medium Enterprises in LDCs are not in a position to use the Internet, in particular broadband, due to a lack of E-Commerce infrastructure and other barriers, and they can therefore not effectively leverage E-Commerce to seize economic opportunities.

In line with the overall UNCTAD E-Commerce Week theme, "Towards Inclusive E-Commerce", the e-Trade for all platform is being launched to improve the ability of developing countries, particularly LDCs to use and benefit from E-Commerce. Concerted efforts through the public-private partnership platform are under way to unlock the power of the Internet for the achievement of inclusive economic growth in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Initiative bringing together 21 members, including the EIF, focuses on 7 key policy areas of particular relevance to E-Commerce development. Within the overall theme, this event will focus on how to assess the readiness of LDCs to engage in and benefit from E-Commerce. Such assessments are crucial for the formulation of relevant strategies and policies to harness the power of E-Commerce for economic growth and sustainable development. As part of the e Trade For All Initiative, demand-driven assessments from Bhutan and Cambodia have been conducted by UNCTAD to provide a rapid analysis of the current E Commerce situation and identify opportunities, barriers and relevant policy measures. In Rwanda, ITC and UNCTAD are currently involved in projects to facilitate greater benefits from E-Commerce.

This interactive Special Session brings together high-level government officials, development partners, private sector representatives and academic experts to discuss the status, the gaps and recommendations in fostering E-Commerce development in LDCs.

Discussions will also focus on supporting LDCs to formulate concrete proposals to facilitate E-Commerce as well as help LDCs to identify areas in which they could benefit from assistance by partners of eTrade for all.

The event will draw on existing work done in Bhutan and Cambodia, the EIF's various Diagnostic Trade Integration Study findings and will serve to build on existing activities and work by development partners and the private sector.

Moderator: H.E. Mr. Daniel Blockert, Ambassador of Sweden to the WTO, Chair of the EIF Steering Committee

Speakers:

- H.E. Mr Pan Sorasak, Minister for Commerce, Cambodia
- H.E. Mr Lekey Dorji, Minister for Economic Affairs, Bhutan
- H.E. Ms Anusha Rahman Ahmad Khan, Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecom, Pakistan

- Mr. Günter Nooke, Personal Representative for Africa to the German Chancellor, BMZ, Germany
- Mr. Ratnakar Adhikari, Executive Director of the Executive Secretariat for the Enhanced Integrated Framework
- Ms. Dorothy Ng'ambi Tembo, Deputy Executive Director, ITC
- Ms. Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
- Mr. Fernand Matendo, CEO, Burundi Shop
- Ms. Shomi Kaiser, Adviser, e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh (e-CAB)