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Statement by

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.

Statement of UNCTAD Intergovernmental experts meeting

A recently conducted ITC study confirms that while there is great interest for E-Commerce among SMES from developing and least developed countries but in most cases they are handicapped from greater participation due to issues related to knowledge and skills, international payments, cross-border delivery, access to appropriate technologies and an ability to overcome legal and regulatory barriers.

Copies of the analysis from the 2,000 respondents in 182 countries is available online: we would be happy to provide copies of the report upon request.

The International Trade Centre's (ITC) E-Solutions programme aims to provide pragmatic answers to these challenges. Training and coaching are offered together with technologies, which allow the firms to easily list and manage products and integrate payments solutions. Access to these services is facilitated and work undertaken with local teams to optimise transport and logistics.

Projects have been successfully undertaken in Africa, the Middle East and in South East Asian Least Developed Countries. With the Government of Japan we are piloting connections to e-commerce for Internally Displaced women in Syria. A significant new project is planned in Rwanda with the support of the German Government, and additional projects are under design in several Central American countries and in Pakistan.

Making this possible is our work with private sector partners – 3 key partners to date include DHL for work in logistics, ebay for information and access to marketplaces and Sidley Austin for legal advisory. More private sector partnerships are under discussion, and include many who are already helping the programme.

As a founding member of the eTrade for All platform, we are fully subscribed to the mission of doing more and doing better together: working with UNCTAD, UPU and others and adding to our pool of partners is all part of the strategy to scale the support to more countries, more firms and opening the potential for SMEs in developing and least developed countries.