Contribution to the UNCTAD Draft Call for Action on the Aid for eTrade Initiative

Submitted by

the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA)

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
Dear Mr. Fredriksson,

On behalf of the entire WITSA community, I would like to thank you for presenting the newly proposed Aid for eTrade initiative to our members on April 5th. As you will recall, the feedback we received from our representatives – spanning over 80 countries around the world – was not only positive, but very enthusiastic. I am therefore excited to let you know that WITSA is fully supporting the new initiative, as per the draft call for action you outlined for us.

The vast majority of our national ICT industry associations are from emerging markets and have a great personal interest in programs which can help facilitate growth in e-commerce. We therefore wholeheartedly endorse draft call for action, “Unlocking the potential of e-commerce in developing countries”, which will take into account the following critical constraints:

- Limited knowledge among Governments and regulators of e-commerce and its application;
- Concerns about possible adverse effects of e-commerce and how to mitigate them;
- Affordable ICT infrastructure (Internet and broadband coverage);
- Trade logistics and facilitation, including customs procedures and trade compliance;
- Lack of security (user mistrust);
- Inadequate online payment facilities;
- Lack of trade finance;
- Limited skills among enterprises to use ICTs strategically for buying and selling goods and services;
- Lack of statistical data on electronic commerce;
- Weak legal and regulatory frameworks, including contract and dispute-resolution mechanisms.

As the leading recognized voice of the global ICT industry, WITSA aims to drive transformation and grow the industry given that ICT is the key driver of the global economy. WITSA advocates international public policies that advance the industry's growth and development, facilitates
international trade and investment in ICT products and services through our global network of contacts, promoting industry cooperation and strengthening our national associations, and working closely with internationally recognized organizations to promote and facilitate growth.

We are very pleased to work closely with UNCTAD on issues that are important to our industry worldwide, as formalized on our Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by WITSA Chairman Santiago Gutierrez and Secretary General Dr Mukhisa Kituyi at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland on March 24, 2015.

We are looking forward to explore further cooperation and engagement in regard to the new Aid for eTrade initiative.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Jim Poisant
Secretary General