COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)

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Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on their efforts in 2013 to implement the outcome of the WSIS

Submission by

WTO

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 17th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

**FLOW OF INFORMATION FOR THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE
WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY**

Submission by the WTO 2013

Part One: Executive Summary of Activities

During 2013, WTO continued a reinvigoration of its work under the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce and further extended WTO's Moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions, both launched initially in 1998. Relevant activities, as carried out by the WTO bodies during 2013, are described below in Part Three. In 2013, the WTO also adopted a Ministerial Decision to continue the Work Program and to further extend WTO's Moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions at the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia in December. WTO Members cited the Moratorium as helping global e-business and trade to flourish. In addition, the Bali Ministerial reached an agreement on trade facilitation.

This and other work of WTO bodies undertaken in 2013 are relevant to certain of the WSIS actions lines and targets. Activities of WTO and its various bodies generally relate to action lines C6 – the enabling environment – and C11 – International and regional co-operation. In addition, some aspects of work of the WTO is relevant to AL C1 – the promotion of ICTs for development, C2 – information and communication infrastructure and C4 – capacity building. Such activities include work undertaken by the Committee on Trade and Development, the Council for Trade in Services, the Council for Trade in Goods, the Information Technology Agreement and trade facilitation activities. Notably, during 2013, the Committee on Trade in Development held a symposium on e-commerce and SMEs and the Council for Trade in Services held one on services related developments in e-commerce.

Part Two: Overview of Trends

The Members of the WTO have shown a renewed interest in trade-related aspects of ICT and electronic commerce which was in evidence over the past year. As a result, a re-invigoration of the E-commerce Work Program has taken place, including submissions by Members on the relations between e-commerce and economic development, SME's, regulatory principles, mobile applications and cloud computing. In the WTO discussions, many Members economies, both developing and developed alike, affirmed that developments in ICT have been instrumental in creating new trade opportunities and in supporting economic growth and development

Part Thre: Description of Activities

a) Activities undertaken

-       **Ministerial initiatives**

In December 2013, the WTO Ministers reached a Decision at the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia to further extended WTO's Moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions.[1] WTO Members cited the Moratorium as helping global e-business and trade to flourish. In addition, the Bali Ministerial reached an agreement on trade facilitation.[2] The Decision on trade facilitation aims to enhance customs transit and clearance procedures, and provide developing countries with technical assistance and capacity building, including, for example, in adopting automated data submission systems.

-       **WTO Work Programme on Electronic Commerce**

The General Council.— During 2013 the General Council reviewed progress of the Work Program in the subsidiary bodies and continued to hold Dedicated Discussions on electronic commerce. The Dedicated Discussions considered the current situation of the Work Programme and worked on a draft text on E-commerce to be forwarded to Ministers by the General Council. During the discussions, delegations underscored the importance of adhering to the WTO's basic principles in the on-going discussions on e-

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[1] [WT/MIN(13)/32 — WT/L/907](#)
[2] [WT/MIN(13)/36 — WT/L/911](#)

commerce and the need for the Work Programme to continue to examine the trade related aspects of various issues including, enhancing internet connectivity, the growth of mobile telephony, electronically delivered software, cloud computing, the protection of confidential data, privacy and consumer protection. Delegations also emphasised the importance of giving special consideration to the situation of developing countries and to continue to examine opportunities and challenges for access to electronic commerce by micro, small and medium sized enterprises.

The Council on Trade in Services.-- In March 2013, the CTS considered a submission by the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu entitled "Protection of Personal Information and the Development of Electronic Commerce". Following discussions at various meetings, Members agreed that a public workshop to examine services-related issues for the development of e-commerce be organised under the auspices of the CTS on 17 and 18 June 2013.[3] The workshop featured representatives from international organizations, the private sector, government ministries and regulatory agencies. At the June 2013 meeting of the CTS, Members expressed their satisfaction in particular with the diversity of the presenters, presentations and issues raised, and took the view that the workshop was a positive contribution to the Work Programme.

The Committee on Trade in Development.-- Similarly, a number of initiatives on e-commerce were undertaken in the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD). This was in line with the 2011 Ministerial Decision on E-commerce which had instructed the General Council, inter alia, to emphasise and reinvigorate the development dimension in the Work Programme, particularly through the CTD. Following the proposal by Ecuador and Cuba and the CTD's formal approval, a Workshop on E-Commerce, Development and SMEs was held on 8 and 9 April 2013. Prior to that workshop, the Secretariat had prepared a background document entitled "Electronic Commerce, Development and Small, Medium-Sized Enterprises. The workshop brought together experts from international organisations, business, civil society and academia and heard personal experiences of representatives from SMEs as well as from regulators in developing countries and LDCs. A detailed report of the workshop is contained in document WT/COMTD/W/198.[4]

The Council for Trade in Goods.— In 2013, Members reiterated their support to the reinvigoration of the Work Programme and welcomed the two workshops held under the auspices of the CTD and the CTS. They welcomed the positive results of these workshops which contributed towards identifying some non-tariff barriers and other elements having an impact on trade in goods.[5]

- **Activities of other WTO bodies**

ITA Committee.— Over the past year, a group of Members of the Committee of the Information Technology Agreement has undertaken work to expand the product coverage of the Agreement. Adherents to the ITA undertake to eliminate customs duties on covered IT products, thereby reducing the cost of information technology. The group of Members has produced an initial product list of tariff items, which would be added to the products currently covered. Discussions were also conducted on ways to reduce non-tariff measures affecting trade in IT products. Also, Russia became a Member of the ITA Agreement in September 2013, meaning that the agreement will now cover an additional $20 billion in IT products imported by Russia.

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[3]Agenda and presentations are available at:
https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/serv_e/wkshop_june13_e/wkshop_june13_e.htm
[4] Agenda and presentations are available at:
https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/wkshop_apr13_e/wkshop_apr13_e.htm
[5] G/C/53