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Assistance provided includes:

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- Briefing of parliamentarians

REGIONAL REVIEWS OF E-COMMERCE LEGISLATION HARMONIZATION

The comparative reviews aim to:

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- Provide recommendations for further harmonization of legislation where required

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To benefit from such opportunities, governments need to put in place modern legal systems that address the issues raised by the electronic nature of these technologies. These regulatory environments should ensure trust in online transactions, ease the conduct of domestic and international trade online, and offer legal protection for users and providers of e-commerce and e-government services.

UNCTAD is mandated to help developing countries in the field of ICTs. Since 2000, the UNCTAD e-Commerce and Law Reform Programme has supported developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

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**KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Association of Southeast Asian Nations**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was the first developing region to prepare a harmonized e-commerce legal framework.

UNCTAD supported ASEAN to meet the objectives of its ICT Masterplan 2015 through:
- A survey of ASEAN member States and e-commerce businesses on the legal frameworks for e-commerce
- A regional workshop to discuss advances and challenges in adopting and enforcing e-commerce legislation
- Capacity-building and awareness-raising workshops for policymakers and lawmakers from Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic from 2003 to 2009, and assisted them in drafting e-commerce legislation

In 2013, the ASEAN Secretariat and UNCTAD published a comprehensive review of e-commerce legislation harmonization in the region which is available at UNCTAD website: http://unctad.org/ICT4D.

**East African Community**

As part of its regional integration process, the East African Community, with the assistance of UNCTAD, established a Task Force on Cyberlaws in 2007. UNCTAD provided legal advice and training to build awareness on policy and legal issues pertaining to e-commerce.

The Task Force prepared and endorsed two cyberlaw frameworks, the most advanced in Africa.

UNCTAD published two studies:
- Harmonizing Cyberlaws and Regulations: The experience of the East African Community
- Mobile Money for Business Development in the East African Community

**Economic Community of West African States**

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) developed a set of Community Acts in order to achieve a more harmonious ICT sector within the region. Since 2013, UNCTAD has carried out a series of regional online capacity-building trainings and face-to-face workshops to identify and discuss the numerous challenges to regional harmonization of cyberlaws.

A comprehensive review of e-commerce legislation harmonization within ECOWAS has been published and is available at UNCTAD website: http://unctad.org/ICT4D

**Latin America and the Caribbean**

Since 2007, UNCTAD has carried out joint capacity-building activities in the field of ICTs with the General Secretariat of the Latin American Integration Association and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System.

Regional training sessions, including cyberlegislation harmonization workshops, have reached over 1,100 representatives of the public and private sectors.

UNCTAD prepared two publications:
- Study on Prospects for Harmonizing Cyberlegislation in Latin America
- Study on Prospects for Harmonizing Cyberlegislation in Central America and the Caribbean

**Briefings of parliamentarians**

UNCTAD supports governments by organizing parliamentary briefings to facilitate the adoption of the appropriate legal instruments.

- In 2011, a briefing session was held in Kenya for the Parliament’s Departmental Committee, which handles communications matters.
- In 2013, a special briefing session was organized in Cameroon by UNCTAD with the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Participants analyzed legal and regulatory issues pertaining to e-commerce, including legal recognition of electronic messaging for commerce and e-government.

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The topics covered, including consumer protection, cybercrime and cyber security, data protection, and privacy and online content control, were not only very pertinent to the United Republic of Tanzania but also to the rest of the developing Commonwealth countries as they grapple with the challenges brought by new frontiers in ICT development.

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Regional institutions in developing countries, including the Secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, East Africa Community Secretariat, Economic Community of West African States, General Secretariat of the Latin American Integration Association and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System

- United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- United Nations regional commissions

How to Request UNCTAD Assistance on E-Commerce and Law Reform

All developing countries or economies in transition may benefit from UNCTAD technical assistance, either individually or through intergovernmental organizations.

Member States of UNCTAD or regional institutions may submit requests for assistance in writing with an indication of the nature of assistance required.

Requests should be addressed to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD through the countries’ permanent missions in Geneva by fax or e-mail:

Fax: 41 22 917 04 65
E-mail: ICT4D@unctad.org

For further details on the programme and upcoming projects, follow us on Twitter:

https://twitter.com/ICT4DatUNCTAD

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