Measuring cross-border e-commerce

A Joint UNCTAD-UPU-WTO initiative

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Measuring E-Commerce Day
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Why is this important?

• Imminent and inevitable:
  – E-commerce is changing the way international business is done
  – Rapid growth of cross-border data flows
  – Better connectivity $\rightarrow$ more digitization (4th industrial revolution)

• Better statistics on cross-border e-commerce needed for:
  – Policy making on trade and economic development
  – Trade negotiations (WTO, RTAs)
  – Analyzing impact
  – Analyzing global value chains
  – Business intelligence for the business sector
Measuring cross-border E-Commerce

**Key players**

- **International Organizations**
  - ITC, ITU, OECD, UNCTAD, UPU, WCO, World Bank, WTO
  - Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development
  - Task Force on International Trade Statistics (TFITS)

- **Governments**
  - National Statistical Offices, Customs, Ministries of Trade / Commerce, Postal system / national post operators

- **Private sector**
  - Business associations, consultancy firms, enterprises in e-commerce ecosystem
Preliminary inventory

- UNCTAD Technical Note “In Search of Cross-Border E-Commerce Trade Data”
- Public data:
  - Enterprise, household, consumer, and customs surveys; balance of payments
- Private sector data:
  - Market research, company reports, shipment information, data flows
What do we know?

- Very limited information on cross-border e-commerce
- Data mostly from developed countries and not detailed; some bilateral data
- Survey data unable to distinguish between domestic/international and B2C/B2B e-commerce
- Official statistics mainly from enterprise or household surveys
- Lack of harmonization regarding definitions, scope of goods and services
- Private sector data differ in quality, methodology and transparency
What do we need?

- Inventory of existing data
- Clarity on how data are collected, estimated and collated
- Collaboration among relevant stakeholders
- Data that cover both merchandise and services trade
- An effective conceptual measurement framework that connects with existing frameworks
What would we like to know?

- Type of trade
- Type of e-commerce / transactor
- Mode of delivery
- Disaggregation by firm size
- Mode of order, device/platform
- Type of product
- Mode of payment

A comprehensive data view

...In a way that allows international benchmarking...
Could this be obtained through supply-side enterprise surveys?
Next steps

- Further multi-stakeholder collaboration
- Continue to raise awareness -- opportunities
  - May 2016, WTO Stakeholder meeting (Private Sector CEOs)
  - September 2016, WTO Public Forum
  - September-October 2016, UPU Ministerial
  - October 2016, Inter-Agency Taskforce on Int’l Trade Statistics
- Methodological collaboration and knowledge sharing:
  - Sharing data catalogs, experiences
  - Agreeing on definitions, survey vehicles, model questions
  - Linking data
THANK YOU!