

**Intergovernmental Group of Experts on
E-Commerce and the Digital Economy**
First session

4-6 October 2017
Geneva

Statement by

THE PHILIPPINES

6 October, Session 5

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

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT
SESSION 5: The way forward

**First Session of the First Intergovernmental Group of Experts Meeting
on E-commerce and the Digital Economy**

Delivered by Ms. Maria Crispina S. Reodica
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Department of Trade and Industry
06 October 2017

The Philippines would like to take this opportunity, once again, to thank UNCTAD for the arrangements made for this IGE; the President for his leadership in guiding the discussions; and the speakers and fellow member-states for sharing their expertise.

We echo and support the views expressed by Mr. Souter.

With each one of us living, working and playing in a digital economy - in this digital world - we wish to stress that there are many opportunities that we can unlock and harness to bring inclusive and innovative growth for our countries and economies and to intensify cooperation and collaboration and sharing of insights and best practices between and among stakeholders across sectors.

That being said, we wish to stress the importance of continuous discussions on the pervasive and emerging issues and challenges on e-commerce and the digital economy, which are cross-cutting and are commonly discussed in various fora around the world and some of which we have heard at this meeting.

Throughout this meeting, a crucial message that was highlighted is that we do not want leave anyone behind. That is very true. What we want is inclusiveness, especially with e-commerce considered as the great equalizer. And as I am sure you will agree, we want a better quality of life for all.

For the next session, we support the focus on the topic of options for MSMEs in developing countries to engage in e-commerce. Our suggestion is to perhaps include the words “and go cross-border” for the topic to read as: options for MSMEs in developing countries to engage in e-commerce and go cross-border.

In terms of the guide questions, we propose that other e-commerce and digital trade barriers/issues such as those taken up in various fora, in addition to barriers to international e-commerce platforms, be also considered in the discussions.

The Philippines is very encouraged with the IGE’s discussions and the outcome of this first meeting, which will very useful as we implement the Philippine E-Commerce Roadmap 2016-2020 and as we deepen our various engagements. We are, thus, looking forward to the succeeding sessions of the IGE. **END**