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UNCTAD E-Commerce Week

Open Consultations on Aid for eTrade

Towards an Action Plan for an Aid for eTrade Programme

21 April 2016

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ICANN statement

Good afternoon; I am very pleased to be here this afternoon; many thanks indeed for the invitation. Would like to congratulate UNCTAD for the whole E-Commerce Week that has been organised; the quality and relevance of the sessions has been significant. ICANN was pleased to be involved in the E-Commerce discussions on Monday and the discussions today on Aid for e-Trade.

Really excellent that UNCTAD has involved a variety of stakeholders to this discussion, clear such an issue needs the wisdom of a multitude of voices, not just governments. The multistakeholder dialogue you have taken forward should be a lesson to some other UN Agencies.

On the issue at hand, not sure I can add too much to the really insightful and constructive discussion that has been taking place on this important issue and the significant Initiative from UNCTAD. As has been said by many speakers, including the excellent government interventions we heard this morning, the Aid for E Trade Initiative is both significant and timely. It is significant because it recognises the need for a holistic approach when we are dealing with the adoption of E Commerce; it is not just a matter of connectivity but also better regulation; economically sensible policies and encouragement of innovative content. It is timely given the dynamic adoption of the Internet we are witnessing in so many places; we should not allow any country to fall behind. We should indeed be striving to turn the Digital Divide into the Digital Dividend. We have to ensure, as has been said, that the Initiative harnesses the many excellent projects and programmes already being carried out in a coherent and efficient manner. We cannot afford duplication.

ICANN, along with other members of the Technical Community has a role to play; our Mission includes the need for an open, interoperable and secure Internet; exactly what is also needed for the growth of e-commerce services. We thus have an interest, as discussed on Monday, in the promulgation and use of IPv6 and also in the roll out of International Domain Names (IDNs) which allow and encourage the promulgation of content in non-Latin based scripts. This in itself, encouraging the development of websites and services reflecting local culture and languages is important in terms of fostering growth in e-commerce services, especially in parts of the developing world. ICANN is also pleased to hear about the Private Sector Advisory Council being established for the Initiative; clearly important this also allows the Technical Community and civil society, as well as business, to have an input.

So finally thank you for this opportunity to speak, and I wish you well on progressing this important Initiative.