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NOTIFICATION

Consultations on a draft call for action

Aid for eTrade Unlocking the potential of e-commerce in developing countries

Background and purpose of the consultation

E-commerce can become a powerful driver of economic growth, inclusive trade and job creation across the developing world. While some developing countries have made significant inroads into e-commerce, most are still lagging behind. As mentioned in the UNCTAD [Information Economy Report 2015](#), the extent to which people purchase goods and services online varies considerably among countries, ranging from less than 2 per cent of people in some middle-income countries to more than 70 per cent in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Smaller businesses also trail larger enterprises in taking advantage of the Internet for e-commerce, hampering their ability to reach new customers in domestic and foreign markets.

While numerous development partners, foundations, and private sector players are working from different angles to unlock the power of the Internet for economic development, current efforts are seldom holistic or systematically focused on building e-commerce economies.

Against this backdrop, UNCTAD is taking the lead in exploring possibilities for launching a new global initiative called Aid for eTrade, aimed at unlocking the potential of e-commerce in developing countries. To launch the initiative, a draft call for action has been prepared by representatives of Governments, international organizations and private sector enterprises involved in e-commerce.

Aid for eTrade in brief

Aid for eTrade is intended to be a multi-stakeholder initiative to improve the ability of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to use and benefit from e-commerce. It will be a demand-driven mechanism in which leading development partners cooperate with the private sector to pool capabilities and resources.

The goals of the initiative are as follows:

- To raise awareness of opportunities and challenges related to leveraging e-commerce;
- To mobilize and rationalize financial and human resources to implement e-commerce projects in developing countries;
- To strengthen coherence and synergies among partners' activities with a view to avoiding duplication of work and enhancing aid efficiency.

Background document and contributions

To facilitate the discussion, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared a draft call for action, available in English only. The documents and information will soon be available at the following link: unctad.org/Aid4eTrade.

UNCTAD invites all stakeholders to review the draft call for action and contribute their experiences, views and priorities concerning the Aid for eTrade initiative. Written comments are welcome and should be sent to ict4d@unctad.org no later than **10 April 2016**.

Contributions will be made available online in the language in which they are received, unless contributors have specifically requested that they should not be published.

A further opportunity to provide feedback will be given at the public consultation meeting to be organized on 21 April 2016 in Room XXIII of the Palais des Nations, Geneva, during E-Commerce Week, to be held by UNCTAD from 18 to 22 April (unctad.org/e-week).

Further information and contact details

All other enquiries should be addressed to the coordinator in the substantive division:

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(signed)

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