

UNCTAD E-Commerce Week

Open Consultations on Aid for eTrade: Towards an Action Plan for an Aid for eTrade Programme

21 April 2016

Statement of Canada

Thank you for organizing this consultation. As other speakers have already made clear, there is no denying the growing pervasiveness of e-commerce and its potential for driving sustainable and inclusive development. This is a timely initiative and Canada is following its elaboration with great interest.

We recognize that it is a work in progress, and note that Torbjorn's presentation this morning already adds some new precision to the role that UNCTAD would play in this initiative. We are also still reflecting on the proposal.

As our Chairperson requested, I will keep my remarks brief and I will make three preliminary comments, which hopefully will be helpful as the project document is elaborated over the coming weeks.

Firstly, the scope of the project should be carefully considered and clearly defined to avoid duplication. This is a challenge due to the breadth of policy areas implicated by e-commerce, but it will be important to establish the value-added of the project.

Secondly, and related to defining the project's value-added, we note the emphasis on RBM evaluation. It will be important to establish from the outset a set of clearly defined expected results, perhaps turning the lists of challenges and barriers into specific results.

Thirdly, we would flag our particular interest in the elements of the project related to regulatory and policy frameworks. The challenges and opportunities were clearly enumerated by the previous speakers. We see an examination of policy prescriptions as an area where UNCTAD can play a very helpful role. There are already a number of tools available. The paper highlights the importance of trade facilitation and implementation of the trade facilitation agreement would be one important tool. The paper does not mention the information technology agreement, but it would be relevant when it comes to access to affordable technology. These are only a couple of examples.

I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to comment, and wish you the best as you continue to elaborate this program.