

Statement by H.E. Mr. Junichi Ihara  
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Geneva

At the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  
Open Consultation on Aid for eTrade

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Madam Chair,

First, I would like to join the Belgium Ambassador in congratulating the success of the E-Commerce Week and commend the UNCTAD Secretariat for organizing this timely event. The wide range of participants, from academia, civil society, private sectors, and governments of both developed and developing countries indicate the stake and potential of the issue.

E-Commerce is not just a new type of trade or business. The platform which enables E-commerce becomes more and more an indispensable and integral part of international trade. And ICT plays a key role there. This is why we should consider E-Commerce, or E-Commerce platform as a basic infrastructure for the trade in the future.

This E-Commerce platform has also the potential to expand dramatically economic opportunities for developing countries, MSMEs, women, youth and people living in remote areas. Benefits go not only to urban multinationals but also to rural farmers and artisans.

But to make it happen, we need to address, among many things, two basic issues; how to build capacities in developing countries in terms of both human resources and basic ICT infrastructures, and how to deal with regulatory aspects, that is, ensuring free flow of data, while protecting privacy and other sensitive information.

Japan, in the past more than 40 years, has assisted developing countries by providing technical and financial aids so that they can develop ICT related human resources and necessary infrastructure. We will continue this policy in closer cooperation with other donors and international organizations.

Given the potential of E-Commerce on inclusive growth and in light of the adoption of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, we think that the Aid for eTrade initiative is highly relevant and timely. To harness benefits of E-Commerce, coordinated assistance to developing countries is necessary, and this initiative, I am sure, provides an opportunity for more collaboration among the relevant stakeholders including my country.

Thank you.

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