

UNCTAD E-Commerce Week
Open Consultations on Aid for eTrade
Towards an Action Plan for an Aid for eTrade Programme
21 April 2016

Summary of the statement by the WTO

The WTO welcomed the effort made by UNCTAD to follow up on the session organized at the [5th Global Review](#) on "Electronic Commerce and the Aid-for-Trade Initiative" and the idea of launching a dedicated initiative as proposed by [Kati Suominen](#). The theme of the last Global Review of Aid for Trade had been "Reducing Trade Costs for Inclusive Sustainable Growth". In this context, [research](#) had been presented by the Asian Development Bank about how e-commerce was opening trade opportunities for niche exporters from remote Pacific Island economies, and in turn having positive gender empowerment impacts. Referencing the 72-hour world-wide delivery target outlined by the speaker from Alibaba Group, he echoed other speakers in citing the importance of implementation of the WTO [Trade Facilitation Agreement](#). The Aid for Trade initiative was promoting soft infrastructure reforms (such as TFA implementation) and encouraging support for hard infrastructure (such as road, rail, port and airport connectivity) too.

The WTO speaker suggested that there were many reasons to support of the Aid for eTrade initiative. The timing of the launch was propitious since WTO was taking forward plans for the next Global Review of Aid for Trade to be held in mid-2017. The theme of the 6th Global Review of Aid for Trade would be "Promoting Connectivity". E-commerce would be a major theme therefore, along with the role that services play both as inputs for merchandise goods and as value chains in their own right. On this point, the WTO noted that the internet was making some services more tradable through online platforms. The WTO speaker agreed to work closely with UNCTAD on ecommerce issues in the preparation of the next Global Review.

Turning to the draft call for action, he welcomed the private sector engagement outlined in the concept note, recalling that this was an area where the Aid for Trade initiative was keen to develop outreach, even if experience had been somewhat variable. He recalled that the private sector, through corporate social responsibility and corporate philanthropic foundations, was an important actor also in the technical assistance field. The WTO speaker lastly highlighted the large body of research work on aid effectiveness that underscored the need to align support around the needs expressed by developing countries themselves. Mainstreaming of trade-related needs into national and regional development strategies was an important step in this regard and should include e-commerce constraints too. In this context, he recalled the work of the [Enhanced Integrated Framework](#) in mainstreaming trade needs into LDCs national development strategies. In closing, he suggested that coherence would be an important focus moving forward.