

2017 UNCTAD E-Commerce Week
Key outcomes and Way Forward (Closing session)
Statement of the UNCTAD Youth Network on Youth Employment in the Digital Economy

Geneva, 28 April 2017

We are very happy to be with you today representing the over 450 youth from around the world who participated in the 2017 UNCTAD E-Commerce Week, both physically and through virtual engagements. Thank you for providing us with this space for youth at the heart of the United Nations. Youth met during this e-Commerce week, just a few months after the first-ever held UNCTAD Youth Forum was held at UNCTAD's 14th Ministerial Conference in Nairobi last year, where youth made a declaration about the role we want to play in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the voice we want to have in the work of UNCTAD as we will ultimately inherit the world we are working towards in 2030.

The E-Commerce Youth session that took place last Tuesday conveyed the message that e-commerce offers the opportunity to chart a new path for globalization, and holds huge potential to drive inclusive and sustainable development. This, in an economic context that is already digital and where technologies are becoming the rule for successful and impactful business models.

Disruptive economic trends are changing the job market globally and we, the Youth – more than anyone – are aware we need to be prepared for it.

To meet the challenge of e-Commerce, for us, first, updating the public school system in developing countries and closing the quality gap between public and private schooling is a priority. Youth require equal access to quality education, especially in STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). We also need access to training on using social media platforms for e-commerce purposes, as well as quality language school programmes in the case of non-English speaking countries. We believe these tools can help serve the young individuals that face challenges in the transition from school to the job market, in the context of an interconnected, fast-changing technological and digital economy.

Secondly, ways forward on e-commerce must involve trust in youth. We master technologies and have the ability to easily adapt to them. Trusting in our capabilities to create sustainable businesses and leading innovation for e-commerce is a priority. E-commerce needs young innovative entrepreneurs at the core of its expansion. We have the hearts and the minds to make inclusive digitalization truly global and create more and better jobs.

Finally, as young entrepreneurs, sustainable businesses will only be possible if an enabling regulatory e-payments framework is set in place. Allowing cross-border e-payments, promoting online transactions and funding for innovation on digital payments platforms is a priority for granting all segments of society – including youth – equal access to products, and equal opportunities to create and expand businesses.

We urge all stakeholders to unite efforts, make the necessary and right partnerships and include us to address these three priority actions to make e-commerce inclusive, sustainable and a great asset towards the achievement of the Agenda 2030.

We wish to thank the international community once more for the opportunity to express our voice and we look forward working with you towards e-commerce for inclusive development.

And as we mentioned at the closing ceremony of the UNCTAD 14 Conference, we count on you and you can count on us.
