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Trade and Development Board
Intergovernmental Group of Experts
on E-commerce and the Digital Economy
Fifth session
Geneva, 27–29 April 2022
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Provisional agenda and annotations

I. Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Recovering from COVID-19 in an increasingly digital economy: Implications for sustainable development.
4. Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy.
5. Provisional agenda of the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy.
6. Adoption of the report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy.

II. Annotations

Item 1

Election of officers

1. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy will elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy may wish to adopt the provisional agenda contained in chapter I above.
3. It is proposed that the first plenary meeting of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy, which will start at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, 27 April 2022, should be devoted to procedural matters



(items 1 and 2 of the provisional agenda) and introductory statements. The closing plenary meeting, on Friday, 29 April 2022, will be devoted to the adoption of the report and the provisional agenda of the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts. In view of the short duration of the session, the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur will be authorized to complete the final report after closure of the session.

4. The remaining meetings, from 27 April (after the election of officers and general statements) to the morning of 29 April, can be devoted to substantive items 3 and 4 of the provisional agenda.

Documentation

TD/B/EDE/5/1 Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3

Recovering from COVID-19 in an increasingly digital economy: Implications for sustainable development

5. Members of the Trade and Development Board decided, through a silence procedure that ended on 13 October 2021, that the focus of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy should be on the topic, “Recovering from COVID-19 in an increasingly digital economy: Implications for sustainable development”.

6. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, millions of people have lost their lives due to the pandemic, causing immense human suffering. The global health emergency led to the deepest global economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The pandemic has exposed how unprepared countries, including the wealthiest, are for unexpected shocks. Digitalization has played a key role during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, it has helped to mitigate some of its effects, as digital technologies have been useful for addressing the health and economic crisis and enabling resilience. However, countries faced various challenges in harnessing digital solutions to cope with the pandemic, with those less prepared to engage in and benefit from the digital economy being more affected. As a result of the acceleration of digitalization resulting from the pandemic, important lessons can be learned from policy responses. These will be useful in the search of ways for digitalization to function in the recovery for inclusive and sustainable development, and for building resilience against potential future shocks. It is also critical to strengthen international cooperation for digitalization that works for a better future.

7. The Trade and Development Board likewise approved the following questions for discussion at the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts:

- (a) What is the role of digitalization during the coronavirus disease pandemic and during recovery in countries at different levels of development?
- (b) What have been the challenges faced in harnessing digital solutions to cope with the pandemic?
- (c) What are the lessons to be learned from policy responses?
- (d) Moving forward, what is the role of international cooperation?

Documentation

TD/B/EDE/5/2 Recovering from COVID-19 in an increasingly digital
economy: Implications for sustainable development

Item 4**Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy**

8. At its fourth session in October 2020, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy agreed that the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy should discuss progress in measuring electronic commerce (e-commerce) and digital economy work by relevant international organizations, next steps in the implementation of the revised UNCTAD *Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Digital Economy 2020*,¹ and the use of non-survey sources of data to supplement the traditional measurement of e-commerce and the digital economy. The impact of the pandemic would be considered.

9. The issues mentioned above were discussed at the second meeting of the Working Group held online on 3 and 4 May 2021. A Chair's summary on these discussions will be presented to the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy at its fifth session.

10. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts is invited to take note of the Chair's summary of the second meeting of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy and to decide on the topics for its third meeting, as proposed in the Chair's summary.

Documentation

TD/B/EDE/5/3

Chair's summary of the second meeting of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy

Item 5**Provisional agenda of the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy**

11. Acting in its capacity as the preparatory body for the sixth session, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy is expected to agree on the provisional agenda for its next session of the meeting, which should come out of the discussions under items 3 and 4.

Item 6**Adoption of the report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy**

12. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts will adopt its report to the Trade and Development Board.

Experts are requested to submit written contributions related to the agenda item 3 to the UNCTAD secretariat as soon as possible. For further information, please contact Pilar Fajarnes (pilar.fajarnes@unctad.org), Chief, Digital Economy Policy Research Section, E-Commerce and Digital Economy Branch, Division of Technology and Logistics.

¹ UNCTAD, 2021, *Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Digital Economy 2020*, revised edition (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.21.II.D.15, Geneva).