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Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy

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

Summary

In this document, prepared by the Chair of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy, a summarized account is given of discussions during the third meeting of the Working Group, held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 28 and 29 November 2022, in a mixed in-person and virtual format.

The Working Group discussed progress in electronic commerce (e-commerce) and digital economy measurement by international organizations, the definition of the digital economy for statistical purposes, web scraping and data sharing mechanisms for official statistics on e-commerce and the digital economy, and measuring the gender dimension of e-commerce and the digital economy. Based on the discussions, the present Chair's summary proposes possible topics for future meetings of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy, for the consideration of and decision by the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy at its sixth session, to be held from 10 to 12 May 2023.

* This document summarizes the discussions held during the third meeting of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy; it does not necessarily reflect the views of the UNCTAD secretariat or its officials or member States.

Opening

1. The third meeting of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy was held in hybrid format on 28 and 29 November 2022 in Geneva.

2. At the opening plenary meeting, the Working Group elected the Head of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Statistics Section at the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics as its Chair.[1] The Deputy Director and Deputy Chief Economist of the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was elected Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.[2]

3. After the election of officers, the Chair informed the Working Group that the results of the meeting would be presented to the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy at its sixth session in May 2023, in the form of a Chair's summary to be finalized after the Working Group's third meeting.

4. The Working Group adopted an agenda, as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Progress in measuring e-commerce and digital economy work by relevant international organizations
4. Defining the digital economy for statistical purposes
5. Web scraping and private sector data for official statistics
6. Measuring the gender dimension in e-commerce and the digital economy
7. Topics for future consideration by the Working Group
8. Adoption of the Chair's summary.

5. The Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics of UNCTAD, in her opening remarks, pointed out that the increased use of digital solutions triggered by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had been largely sustained but with a mixed picture. For some developing countries, the increase in the share of people using a mobile phone or the Internet to make purchases online had been dramatic, while the share in some other developing countries witnessed a decrease over the same period. She underlined that addressing the "statistical digital divide" remained a significant challenge and meeting it required priority setting at the national level, more capacity-building support from international organizations and effective sharing of good practices among countries.

6. The Officer-in-Charge of the UNCTAD Statistics Service stressed the importance of better statistics on e-commerce and the digital economy. Better statistics could help in understanding the role of the digital economy and harness its full potential for development and inform policymakers and the public of inclusiveness and digital divides, including gender gaps. It was essential to develop better data governance capacities and be innovative in measurement to harness digital technology and data as a shared asset. In that regard, statisticians could play a role in reducing the data divide, including by promoting more equal sharing of benefits from digital data. She acknowledged the role of the Working Group in exploring new approaches of measurement to meet the challenges, including getting access to privately held data for official statistics as well as broader developments in official statistics at the global level, such as the 2025 update of the System of National Accounts and the ongoing update of United Nations trade statistics manuals.

[1] Ms. Linah Waiterero Ngumba.
[2] Mr. Richard Heys.

Item 3
Progress in measuring e-commerce and digital economy work by relevant international organizations

7. The Working Group reviewed progress in related work of international organizations. In the case of UNCTAD, the work was guided by the Bridgetown Covenant,[3] which strengthened the UNCTAD mandate to supporting the collection and processing of data to produce e-commerce and digital economy statistics. After the Working Group's second meeting, UNCTAD had published a revised edition of the *Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Digital Economy 2020*, available in English, French and Spanish, as well as Portuguese (with the support of Brazil), with Arabic and Russian versions planned for 2023.[4] An online training course based on the manual was piloted in June–July 2022 with national statistical offices in Pacific Island countries.

8. The UNCTAD secretariat also detailed its efforts in modernizing the collection of core indicators and metadata from national statistical offices, which in 2023 would utilize an online interface including secure access through user accounts and real-time validation checks. The secretariat called upon member States to volunteer for pilot testing of the new system and also to respond to its 2023 questionnaire on ICT use in businesses.

9. The UNCTAD secretariat further presented its analysis of the impact of the pandemic on e-commerce. COVID-19 had showcased the importance of e-commerce and the digital economy for recovery and resilience, but also exposed the urgency of addressing the digital and data divides, both of which required increased technical assistance for measuring e-commerce and the digital economy. There was a need to strengthen the availability of core indicators on ICT use by businesses and the ICT sector and also a need for member States to think about further expanding measurements with a view to guiding digital economy policy in developing countries.

10. As Chair of the task team on globalization and digitalization established by the United Nations Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics, Statistics Canada explained the contribution of the task team on globalization and digitalization to the forthcoming manual on principal indicators, which includes many definitions and guidelines for indicators related to ICT use and e-commerce. In the future, the Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics will focus on digitalization, productivity and innovation; well-being and social inclusion; and the green economy and identification of the best data production framework to achieve them. The Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics is also exploring new data sources and methods to provide guidance on measuring e-commerce, rather than building new indicators. Statistics Canada furthermore shared its national experience in measuring digital trade through two main surveys: the Survey on Digital Technology and Internet Use and the Canadian Internet Use Survey, with the former measuring the impact of digital technologies on businesses and the latter measuring the adoption and use of digital technologies by individual residents.

11. The United Nations Capital Development Fund presented the latest updates of its Inclusive Digital Economy Scorecard, which is meant as an evolving policy tool to understand and monitor the status of countries' digital transformation and its level of inclusiveness. The Inclusive Digital Economy Scorecard indicates the level of inclusion of the key segments of the population in the digital economy, such as women, youth, elderly, refugees, migrants, microenterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises, rural inhabitants and people with disabilities. It seeks to measure the inclusiveness of the digital economy through "building blocks", which include both quantitative and qualitative indicators, and currently refer to (a) policy and regulation, (b) infrastructure, (c) innovation and (d) skills. The quantitative indicators are based on currently available statistics.

12. As current Chair of the Steering Committee of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, the International Telecommunication Union updated the Working Group about the Partnership's inputs to the thematic review of the high-level political forum on

[3] See TD/541/Add.2.

[4] See https://unctad.org/webflyer/manual-production-statistics-digital-economy-2020.

sustainable development and the Digital Cooperation and Development Forum organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia of the United Nations in 2021. In 2022, the Partnership also presented its biennial report on progress in ICT statistics to the Statistical Commission. The report introduced the latest revision of the core list of ICT indicators and highlighted the need to implement revised guidelines with a view to improving the availability and quality of indicators on ICT and better assessing digital readiness to face crises such as that caused by COVID-19. The Statistical Commission endorsed the revised core list, requested that more information be collected on topics, including domestic and cross-border e-commerce, and supported the further exploration of the use of alternative data sources for measuring ICT statistics in a timely manner. The Partnership had organized a session at the 2022 World Summit on the Information Society Forum on tapping into innovative data sources and multi-stakeholder collaboration to provide timely and relevant statistics. The International Telecommunication Union also shared its ongoing work under the United Nations Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics, at which the use of online (website) data for statistical purposes, such as the impact of the digital economy and e-commerce, had been discussed. Big data gaps still existed regarding those indicators on e-commerce, and the International Telecommunication Union encouraged more member States to start collecting and reporting those data. It was also noted that the International Telecommunication Union collected household data on e-commerce since 2018.

13. The Statistical Office of the European Union shared recent developments in its enterprise survey on ICT usage and e-commerce, which included an e-commerce module and COVID-19 impact questions in 2021. The surveys planned for 2023 and 2024 would also collect information on the use of artificial intelligence and data. New questions would focus on the use of artificial intelligence to analyse personal data and on measures to check artificial intelligence-generated bias. Questions regarding the use of business software, data sharing, data analytics and data trading are included in the 2023 survey. The expert noted that the data module in the 2023 survey will include questions on both data use and data analytics.

14. The ensuing discussion focused on methodological issues that have arisen when implementing surveys to measure e-commerce and the digital economy. One delegate asked about good practices in order to secure high response rates of surveys as well as the challenges that countries might face in collecting responses. Another delegate wanted to know whether the informal sector had been included in the measurement of exports of digitally delivered services, for example in Costa Rica and India, and how it could be included. The secretariat noted that measurement of exports of digitally delivered services currently only covered the formal sector but noted that future methodological research and capacity-building to measure e-commerce and the digital economy could consider how to better reflect the informal sector.

15. Furthermore, in the context of capacity-building, one delegate expressed appreciation for UNCTAD support for the formulation of e-commerce strategies, noting that measurement was vital in assessing the progress made in implementing such strategies. The delegate also asked how the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development could help with the capacity-building of national statistical offices. In response, the secretariat encouraged delegations to take advantage of the capacity-building opportunities offered by UNCTAD and other international organizations, based on their respective expertise in measurement, and offered to facilitate requests of technical assistance that could be undertaken cooperatively by the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development.

16. In addition, one delegate suggested that countries in conflict and post-conflict zones situations could be considered as an additional country grouping when analysing e-commerce and digital economy statistics. The secretariat took note of the suggestion.

Item 4
Defining the digital economy for statistical purposes

17. The Working Group discussed the definition of the digital economy for statistical purposes, including conceptual frameworks being used by international organizations. Two draft chapters of a new (forthcoming) handbook on measuring digital trade, by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund and UNCTAD, and an UNCTAD paper on measuring the value of e-commerce served as background documentation.

18. The UNCTAD secretariat acknowledged the lack of a widely accepted definition of the digital economy and related concepts, such as digitalization, while noting that some of the digital economy components had been identified and could be quantified in the context of economic and trade statistics. The UNCTAD working definition of the digital economy is based on these components (core technologies and infrastructure, the information technology sector and digitally enabled sectors). However, reliable statistics on its key components were still lacking, especially in developing countries.

19. The Asian Development Bank presented its proposed framework to capture the digital economy, which also looks at its quantifiable components, in particular national accounts data. The framework referred to a "core" digital economy (mainly producers of digital products) and a "digitally dependent" economy. The Bank presented results of a pilot application of the framework to 16 economies, which showed the contribution of the core digital economy to gross domestic product (ranging from 2.4 per cent in Kazakhstan to 9.2 per cent in the United States of America), disaggregated by digital subsector. The framework also helped identify the most digitally disrupted economic sectors and the degree of "digital dependence" in those economies (i.e. the share of digital inputs to total intermediate inputs for digitally dependent sectors). While the Asian Development Bank noted that the framework was limited by its analysis of the "narrowest definition of digital products", it made forward-looking suggestions for supplementary analyses of the digitally dependent economy, such as to assess changes in employment in digital sectors and participation in global value chains.

20. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development presented its approach to measure the digital economy through digital supply-use tables. This aims to improve the visibility of "digital transformation" in economic statistics by refining the disaggregation of data in national accounts into those economic activities that would be considered part of the digital economy. Digital supply-use tables are already being implemented in a few countries, and a handbook on compiling digital supply-use tables is being developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development as a companion to the new (forthcoming) handbook on measuring digital trade. Going forward, countries could use digital supply-use tables as the basis for the compilation of digital economy satellite accounts. The compilation of digital supply-use tables presents challenges for developing countries that might not have the appropriate business surveys, administrative records or statistical business registers, but it also offers a way to at least begin producing partial statistics. The approach means a reallocation of data rather than a new compilation exercise, and national statistical offices can start by compiling the components for which they have data.

21. The Working Group was also presented with two draft chapters of the new (forthcoming) handbook on measuring digital trade for comments, which contain some revisions from the first version currently available online. The draft chapter 2 on the "Conceptual framework for measuring digital trade" has a simplified definition of digitally delivered trade in order to better align with the UNCTAD concept of ICT-enabled services and, for services products that are digitally deliverable (i.e. can be delivered over computer networks), with mode 1 (cross-border) supply of the General Agreement on Trade in Services. The aim is to make data collection on digitally delivered trade easier. The draft chapter makes clear that non-monetary digital flows are, for the time being, not in the scope for digital trade and simplifies the reporting template for digital trade.

22. The draft chapter 3 on "Digitally ordered trade" distinguishes between survey and non-survey sources of data for measuring digitally ordered trade (cross-border e-commerce), while acknowledging that no single approach provides a full picture of all digitally ordered trade. A new section sets out the role for business ICT usage surveys as a key source for information and the possibility of using other sources, such as business activity surveys, to gather information on the value of digitally ordered exports and imports by businesses. Such measures can be complemented with data from household surveys, card payments, payment processing firms and postal and customs agencies to have a more holistic view of digitally ordered trade.

23. Finally, the UNCTAD secretariat presented a non-paper on measuring the value of e-commerce, which described the current situation regarding measures of the value of e-commerce, including cross-border e-commerce, for various economies for which statistics are available, focusing on business e-commerce, which is the main component of e-commerce. There is a considerable variety of statistics available from various economies, hence a considerable variation in terms of definitions, approaches to e-commerce value, survey questions, data sources, methods and scopes underpinning them. The non-paper showed that, in most economies, there are no national statistics on the value of e-commerce and, where they exist, they are mostly statistics on e-commerce sales, which implies that cross-border e-commerce statistics mainly refer to exports and rarely to imports. The non-paper showed a need to develop robust, exhaustive and internationally comparable statistics on the value of e-commerce across countries. The UNCTAD secretariat expressed its intention to build on the analysis by looking at the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches, and potential for standard measures, with the aim of eventually developing statistical guidelines to measure e-commerce. It suggested that the Working Group is well placed to contribute to this work by forming a task group of interested Working Group participants that would guide and develop the necessary measurement standards and guidelines.

24. During the ensuing discussion, one delegate stressed the importance of distinguishing between measuring the digital economy and the different parts of the digital economy with a view to understanding the process of digital transformation. The delegate of China shared the experience of its country with measuring the digital economy. Several delegates welcomed the proposal of setting up a task group and expressed interest in participating in its work (including Brazil, Canada, Kenya and Zimbabwe, as well as the Statistical Office of the European Union). A few delegates emphasized the need to consider the scope of e-commerce measurement and take into account the growing role of social media and the informal sector.

25. The Working Group experts were invited to provide feedback on the non-paper regarding the measurement of e-commerce and to volunteer for a task group to guide the development of standards and guidelines on measuring the value of e-commerce, including cross-border e-commerce. The non-paper would provide a basis to develop technical guidelines for all national statistical offices.

Item 5
Implementing web scraping techniques and facilitating data transfers to produce official statistics on e-commerce and the digital economy

26. The Working Group discussed non-survey sources of data to measure e-commerce and the digital economy, and participants were encouraged to share experiences in establishing mechanisms to enable data transfers from private providers for the use of official statistics, as well as examples of web scraping as a supplementary method for data collection. The session built on the discussion of initiatives leveraging big data to produce or complement official statistics that was held at the second meeting of the Working Group in 2021. The session recognized that statistical agencies in both developing and developed countries are still exploring ways to access big data alongside other data sources and find ways to efficiently leverage them in the production of statistics.

27. In introductory remarks, the UNCTAD secretariat noted that the *Digital Economy Report 2021* had analysed the importance of data in the evolving digital economy. It argued that official statistics on e-commerce and the digital economy may be considered a public good that justifies finding ways to securely access private sector data to gain crucial insights, including as an important contributing component for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

28. The Centre for Studies on the Development of the Information Society (Cetic.br) of Brazil presented lessons learned from a pilot project linking traditional survey databases with administrative records and data collected from the web. The Cetic.br is associated with nic.br, which manages the .com.br domain and facilitated access to information on the websites to be used for data gathering. Even with facilitated access, one of the main challenges was to match firms selected from the business register to relevant .com.br addresses, and Cetic.br acknowledged that matching methods therefore need further work. In some countries, the lack of a unified system of business identifiers would create extra challenges for matching companies to domain names. The project also acknowledged that websites are just one channel for selling online, and there is a need to consider companies using alternative channels. Nevertheless, the project had shown that web-scraping information from websites and their use of e-commerce-related words served to assess whether a company sells online and to identify areas for further research. The project is an ongoing partnership under the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations, involving Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico, and Cetic.br welcomed other countries in the region interested in joining the collaboration.

29. The Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific of the United Nations presented its assessment of the increasing use of big data by statistical agencies in the Asia and the Pacific region, including scanner and online data on prices and mobile phone data for measuring migration, tourism and commuter patterns. Several key challenges limit the use of big data sources in the region, namely: rigid legal and regulatory frameworks around national statistical offices; data privacy and citizen perception; data access, sustainability and partnerships; capacity and skills; technological infrastructure; and data-source specific challenges, such as firms using multiple websites. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia looked at different models for data access partnerships between private-sector data owners and statistical agencies, ranging from mandatory data provision powers in countries such as Oman, the United Kingdom and countries of the European Union to commercial arrangements (i.e. paying for data). Knowledge sharing and training around the access to and use of these new data sources are a key priority for the Committee on Statistics and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

30. Finally, the Working Group heard from the Statistical Office of the European Union Eurostat, which introduced its Web Intelligence Hub, whose role is to "transform the content of the web into (micro) data" that can be used for statistics. The first application was the collection over the past four years of a dataset of almost 200 million job advertisements covering 28 European countries, 31 languages and 423 different job portals. The exercise required the agreement of those job portals and transparency in the process to select and gather data. The Web Intelligence Hub has several bilateral agreements with website owners to enable the uninterrupted and efficient retrieval of content. In this way, the Web Intelligence Hub has been able to engage positively with the target population of websites and gather data that is providing new statistics and insights.

31. In the ensuing discussion, the United Kingdom shared its experience in seeking to work with data providers on a voluntary basis, while using the Digital Economy Act 2017 legislation as a backstop. Australia had used a similar approach. The International Telecommunication Union highlighted the existence of a "scanner data task team" under the United Nations Committee of Experts, which is using web scraping to collect price data, noting this is something that may be of interest to delegates and that the methods might be reused for digital economy measurement.

32. The Statistical Office of the European Union noted that, although the Web Intelligence Hub is restricted to members of the European Union, the source code and training materials will be openly available for others, for example, national statistical

offices from developing countries, to reproduce the approach. It was suggested that the United Nations and the Statistical Office of the European Union could collaborate to include this in future capacity-building efforts. The Statistical Office of the European Union also noted that there was still work to be done in monitoring quality when it came to using content from the web to produce statistics.

Item 6
Measuring the gender dimension in e-commerce and the digital economy

33. This session discussed possible avenues to improve the measurement of the gender dimension in e-commerce and the digital economy, to better understand how women participate in the digital economy, and to support related policymaking and progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality.

34. The UNCTAD secretariat presented its recent work to assess data availability on gender equality in trade and the economy, in general, and in digital trade and e-commerce, in particular. The rationale for the assessment was that trade is not gender-neutral, and quality statistics are important for gender-responsive policies aimed at empowering women in different economic roles. A literature review had identified the following issues for measurement: preconditions for the participation of women and men in trade, to include motivations and aspirations, resources and constraints; outcomes reflecting the degree of participation and roles of women and men; and impacts, including the effects of trade on employment, division of labour, income, empowerment and well-being. The UNCTAD Statistics Service is currently looking at gender equality in trade statistics in the context of projects with the European Union Directorate General for Trade (2020–2021), the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations, and suggested that this work could be used as a basis for further analysis linking to the digital economy, e-commerce and the ICT sector (beneficiary countries included Cameroon, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Senegal and Zimbabwe). Sex-disaggregated data on entrepreneurs, managers, business owners, workers in different occupations, education and so on were key in this context. If micro data linking is not possible, macro linking industry-level trade data could still provide valuable insights, including in the ICT sector. Country-level data and analysis are needed to inform effective policymaking given identified gender equality gaps in trade.

35. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics provided an overview of the Women's Economic Index, developed by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with the State Department for Gender, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations Children's Fund. The dimensions of empowerment included attitudes towards violence against women, demographic and household indicators, and employment. The first version of the Women's Economic Index could be a basis to measure other dimensions, such as access to, ownership and use of ICTs by women. Recommendations after the first exercise included expanding the consultation process to include more female stakeholders to design the measurement of women's empowerment; including data on women's use of ICTs at the individual level and whether they engage in e-commerce; changing the sampling methodology to allow for measurement at county level; and women's perceptions of power and empowerment in the community (which could include participation in the digital economy).

36. The United Nations Capital Development Fund briefed about the new women's inclusiveness score that is part of the Inclusive Digital Economy Scorecard. The women's inclusiveness score aims at measuring the level of inclusion of women across the Inclusive Digital Economy Scorecard's main components of skills, innovation, infrastructure and policy and regulation. It is constructed of quantitative indicators based on global and country-based data sources, as well as qualitative data from country-team assessments. For example, Uganda had used the women's inclusiveness score to assess women's inclusion and to identify barriers that they faced. The United Nations Capital Development Fund recognized the importance of collecting and of bringing detailed data on women's digital

and financial inclusion to the attention of regulators and policymakers to improve lives, noting that the women's inclusiveness score and the Inclusive Digital Economy Scorecard were works in progress and inviting countries and organizations to collaborate in their development.

37. The ensuing discussion focused on policy and other interventions required to improve the measurement of the gender dimension in e-commerce and the digital economy. To this end, one delegate called for more experiences and lessons learned from the global South and developing countries. Another participant suggested that the development of data collection methods should address the paucity of data on women's participation in the informal sector and as part of the digital economy. For example, indicators could be developed to measure female digital entrepreneurship and enterprise ownership in the informal sector.

38. Separate and targeted survey tools and policy-driven initiatives that draw attention to data gaps in gender equality were identified as important steps towards addressing limited data availability on women's participation in the informal economy, including in the context of the digital economy. Similarly, leveraging big data from the private sector could be relied upon as an additional means of tracking and collecting information about the informal sector. For example, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics has collaborated in the past with civil society organizations to capture the value of certain work in the informal sector, which could be used as inspiration in the context of measuring the digital economy. The International Labour Organization offered to share with the Working Group the results of its engendering informality project in Peru and Uganda, which seeks to improve gender data on informality, including on the use of ICTs by women in the informal sector. In this context, the UNCTAD secretariat emphasized the importance of capacity building and training in producing data, including gender disaggregated data and statistics; this should be considered alongside looking at new ways of applying known technologies, such as web scraping.

Item 7
Topics for future consideration by the Working Group

39. As per its terms of reference, the Working Group discussed possible topics that could be examined at future meetings and that will be proposed at the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts will decide on the provisional agenda items to be discussed at the fourth meeting of the Working Group, in late 2023. The following topics received particular attention: (a) progress in measuring e-commerce and the digital economy work by relevant international organizations (to be made a standing agenda item); (b) measuring the value of e-commerce; and (c) non-survey-based measurement of e-commerce and the digital economy.

Item 8
Adoption of the Chair's summary

40. The Working Group agreed that a Chair's summary reflecting the key issues discussed during the meeting would be produced after the end of the meeting. It authorized the Chair and the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur to finalize the summary. The Chair's summary will be presented to the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and Digital Economy.

Conclusion

41. The Working Group reaffirmed that sharing the ongoing progress by international organizations in the measurement of e-commerce and the digital economy should become a standing agenda item.

42. Regarding the definition of the digital economy for statistical purposes, the Working Group agreed that UNCTAD should continue efforts to gradually improve the measurement of the digital economy by engaging with other international organizations and national statistical offices, including by sharing methodological guidance, knowledge resources and practical experiences, as well as statistical results; continuing to explore ways to improve the measurement of those components of the digital economy that are currently less well covered but are already the subject of policy interest and methodological testing, such as digital trade and e-commerce; and engaging in disseminating UNCTAD work in the context of other relevant international statistical meetings. In addition, UNCTAD should continue work to develop guidelines on measuring the value of e-commerce (including cross-border e-commerce) and coordinate a task group of interested Working Group participants to do so.

43. To keep up with the rapidly evolving nature of the digital economy, the Working Group asked that UNCTAD continue featuring experiences and projects based on non-survey-based sources of data for official statistics, with the aim of disseminating innovative approaches, good practices and relevant knowledge resources to statisticians in developing countries, and adding value by examining how these experiences can help improve the measurement of e-commerce and the digital economy.

44. In the context of the session regarding the measurement of the gender dimension in e-commerce and the digital economy, national statistical offices were encouraged to include sex-disaggregated questions on the use of ICT in businesses in the planning of labour force surveys, business surveys and entrepreneurship surveys, and to share the results at future meetings of the Working Group. National statistical offices were encouraged to produce the core indicators on gender in ICT related to employment, business and entrepreneurship proposed by the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development and to consider applying the UNCTAD conceptual framework for measuring gender in trade statistics to digital trade or to the ICT sector.

45. Based on the discussions of the third meeting of the Working Group, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy may wish to consider the following:

(a) Request that the Working Group address the following topics at its next meeting:

- Progress in measuring e-commerce and the digital economy work by relevant international organizations (standing agenda item)
- Measuring the value of e-commerce
- Non-survey-based measurement of e-commerce and the digital economy.

(b) Request that UNCTAD coordinate a task group of interested Working Group participants to support the development of UNCTAD guidelines on measuring the value of e-commerce (including cross-border e-commerce).

Annex I

Attendance list of the third meeting of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy

1. A total of 205 approved, registered participants attended the meeting, 52 per cent of whom were women.

2. Participants from the following member States of UNCTAD were in attendance:

Algeria
Argentina
Armenia
Australia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium
Belize
Benin
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burkina Faso
Cambodia
Canada
Chile
China
Congo
Costa Rica
Cuba
Denmark
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
Ethiopia
Fiji
Finland
France
Gambia
Germany
Guatemala
Honduras
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Ireland
Italy
Jamaica
Kenya
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Marshall Islands
Mexico
Moldova, Republic of
Morocco
Nepal
Netherlands
Niger
Nigeria
Oman
Panama
Peru
Poland
Portugal
Russian Federation
Samoa
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Seychelles
Singapore
Slovenia
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
State of Palestine
Suriname
Sweden
Switzerland
Togo
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Uganda
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America
Uruguay
Viet Nam
Zimbabwe

3. Participants from the following international entities were in attendance:

African Development Bank
Asian Development Bank
Economic Commission for Africa
Economic Commission for Europe

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
International Labour Organization
International Telecommunications Union
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Organization of Islamic Cooperation
Statistical Office of the European Commission
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
United Nations Capital Development Fund
Universal Postal Union
World Bank Group
World Trade Organization

4. Participants from civil society and the private sector included:*

Alpha Law Office
China Academy of Information and Communications Technology
City, University of London
Consumers International
Data Economy Policy Hub
DevStat Statistical Consulting Services
E-commerce Association of Bangladesh
Global Express Association
International Bar Organization
International Network for Standardization of Higher Education Degrees
Italo-Latin American Institute
Pan-African E-market
University of Havana
University of Lille

* Mention of any firm or licensed process does not imply the endorsement of the United Nations.

Annex II

List of resources referenced at the third meeting of the Working Group

All presentations and contributions available at https://unctad.org/meeting/working-group-measuring-e-commerce-and-digital-economy-third-meeting.

Asian Development Bank. *Capturing the Digital Economy: A Proposed Measurement Framework and Its Applications*. Available at https://www.adb.org/publications/capturing-digital-economy-measurement-framework.

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