

Global Business Community Urges Rapid Action on Ambitious WTO e-Commerce Framework



January 25, 2019

An open letter to WTO Trade Ministers:

On behalf of organizations representing businesses, workers, and entrepreneurs from around the world, we congratulate governments for making progress towards negotiations on trade-related aspects of electronic commerce under the umbrella of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

We urge governments to build on the progress achieved thus far under the Joint Statement on Electronic Commerce initiative to negotiate an ambitious WTO framework that is commercially significant, negotiated in a timely fashion and can adjust to innovation and new technologies.

The ability of businesses and individuals to participate effectively in the global economy today requires a modern e-commerce framework that facilitates customs clearance, digital transactions, transparency, trust, movement of information, and access to a variety of e-commerce platforms, payments technologies, communications, social media and marketing tools, productivity software, and shipping and logistics services.

Increasingly, the digital economy IS the economy. The digital economy and the global e-commerce boom are creating unprecedented opportunities for businesses from all sectors, of all sizes, and from all countries. Improving the enabling environment for digital trade and global e-commerce is particularly critical for micro, small and early-stage businesses to unlock customers, suppliers, and partners in new markets, integrate into global value chains, and manage their operations.

We commend trade officials from more than 70 countries for engaging in good faith discussions in Geneva on the practical implications of digital trade and e-commerce under the dialogue established following the WTO's 11th Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Countries now have a unique opportunity to clarify and improve the existing framework of trade rules and commitments around trade facilitation, services, digital trade, transparency and trust to improve the ability of businesses of all sizes and across all industries to benefit from the global digital marketplace and realize the potential of e-commerce for development.

We hope future discussions will lead quickly to a framework that promotes a vibrant and inclusive e-commerce ecosystem and supports businesses' ability to engage in digitally-enabled trade.

We encourage additional members to consider entering into the discussions as a means of enabling their small businesses and entrepreneurs to succeed, provided that new entrants are supportive of an ambitious result.

Sincerely,

Alliance Africaine pour le Commerce Electronique (AAEC)
American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore (AmCham Singapore)
American Chamber of Commerce to the EU
ANDI - The National Business Association of Colombia
ANDI del Futuro (ADF)
Asia Business Trade Association
Asia Cloud Computing Association (ACCA)

Asia Internet Coalition (AIC)
Asia Pacific MSME Trade Coalition (AMTC)
Asociación Latinoamericana de Internet (ALAI)
Associação Brasileira de Comércio Eletrônico - ABComm
Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Australian Information Industry Association
Austrian Retail Association- Handelsverband
British American Business Association
BSA | The Software Alliance
Business Council of Canada
Business NZ
BusinessEurope
Cámara Argentina de Comercio Electrónico (CACE)
Cámara de Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación - CAMTIC
Canadian Chamber of Commerce - Canadian Services Coalition
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters
Coalition of Services Industries (CSI)
Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA)
Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA)
Confederación de la Producción y el Comercio (CPC) (all trade & productive sectors)
Consumer Technology Association (CTA)
Digital Industry Group
DigitalEs
Elektronik Ticaret İşletmecileri Derneği (Turkish E-Commerce Association-ETİD-)
Engine
European Services Forum
Export Council of Australia
Global Express Association
Global Innovation Forum
GS1 Mexico, *formerly Asociación Mexicana de Estándares para el Comercio Electrónico (AMECE)*
IMRG - UK's Online Retail Association
Information Technology Industry Council (ITI)
Internet Association
Japan Electronics and Information Technology Industries Association (JEITA)
Japan Machinery Center for Trade and Investment (JMC)
Korea International Trade Association (KITA)
Manufacturers' Association of Israel (MAI)
National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC)
NZ Tech
Semiconductor Industry Association
Singapore Business Federation (SBF)
Singapore International Chamber of Commerce (SICC)
Startup Buenos Aires
Startup Canada
Startup Chile
techUK
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
United States Council for International Business (USCIB)
US-Kazakhstan Business Association