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Trade and Development Board
Intergovernmental Group of Experts
on E-commerce and the Digital Economy
Sixth session
Geneva, 10–12 May 2023
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Provisional agenda and annotations

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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 sixth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy, which will start at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 10 May 2023, should be devoted to procedural matters (items 1 and 2 of the provisional agenda) and introductory statements. The closing plenary meeting, on Friday, 12 May 2023, will be devoted to the adoption of the report and the provisional agenda of the seventh 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 the closure of the session.

4. The remaining meetings, from 10 May (after the election of officers and general statements) to the morning of 12 May, can be devoted to substantive items 3 and 4 of the provisional agenda.

Documentation

TD/B/EDE/6/1

Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3

How to make data work for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

5. Members of the Trade and Development Board decided, through a silence procedure that ended on 13 July 2022, that the focus of the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy should be on the topic, “How to make data work for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

6. Data have become a key strategic asset to solve many societal, environmental and economic challenges and to create both private and social value, while ensuring human rights, peace and security. If well managed, data can help address global development challenges, such as pandemics and climate change, while promoting prosperity. Data and data flows can contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in two main ways. First, they can help generate greater insights into progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by complementing official statistics. Intelligence derived from data can increasingly be incorporated in effective and more resource-efficient policymaking that serves people and the planet in a timely fashion. Second, data can also support the development of various technological solutions aimed at accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, negligent handling of data and data flows can contribute to adverse development outcomes, with regard to the environment, security, human rights and inequality. To date, capabilities and capacities for making data work for sustainable development are unequally distributed, which hampers progress towards ensuring sustainable and equitable outcomes from data for the 2030 Agenda. To seize the development potential of data, policymakers in developed and developing countries need to develop data governance frameworks at the national, regional and international levels that work for their national priorities and the planet.

7. The Trade and Development Board, also through the silence procedure that ended on 13 July 2022, approved the following guiding questions for discussion at the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts:

(a) What are the key issues at stake for developing countries in relation to cross-border data flows?

(b) What would be needed to ensure that benefits of the digital economy are shared more equitably?

(c) What national and international policies and support measures can help address the challenges of developing countries in electronic commerce (e-commerce) and the digital economy?

(d) What are the implications of cross-border data flows at the regional and international levels in relation to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda?

(e) What is the best way to contribute to the debate on data governance to maximize the development potential of data?

Documentation

TD/B/EDE/6/2 How to make data work for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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

8. At its fifth session, in April 2022, 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 e-commerce and digital economy work by relevant international organizations, defining the digital economy for statistical purposes, mechanisms to implement web scraping techniques and facilitate data transfers to produce official statistics on e-commerce and the digital economy, and measuring the gender dimension in e-commerce and the digital economy.

9. The above issues were discussed at the third meeting of the Working Group held in hybrid format on 28 and 29 November 2022. 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 sixth session.

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

Documentation

TD/B/EDE/6/3 Chair's summary of the third meeting of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy

Item 5
Provisional agenda of the seventh 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 seventh 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, 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 Laura Cyron (laura.cyron@unctad.org), Digital Economy Policy Research Section, E-commerce and Digital Economy Branch, UNCTAD Division of Technology and Logistics.