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**Report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts
on E-commerce and the Digital Economy on its third session**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 3 to 5 April 2019

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Introduction

The third session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, from 3 to 5 April 2019.

I. Action by the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy

A. Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy (Agenda item 4)

1. At a meeting on 5 April 2019, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy adopted the terms of reference for the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy, and agreed on the following topics for the first meeting of the working group:

- (a) revision of the UNCTAD *Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Information Economy*;
- (b) measuring domestic and cross-border electronic commerce (e-commerce).

B. Provisional agenda of the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy (Agenda item 5)

2. At its closing plenary meeting, on 5 April 2019, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts decided to defer a decision on this agenda item to the Trade and Development Board. The UNCTAD secretariat would compile the proposals received from member States on the agenda and guiding questions, which would be presented for consideration by the Board, and a final version of the provisional agenda would be decided by the Board.

II. Chair's summary

A. Opening plenary

3. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD delivered a statement, followed by statements made by the representatives of the following delegations: Pakistan; Indonesia; India; the United Arab Emirates; Iraq; the State of Palestine; Senegal; the European Union, on behalf of the European Union and its member States; Malaysia; the Holy See; the Sudan; the Niger; and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

4. In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD highlighted the growing significance of and attention to data flows, and noted that the debate on data, in particular concerning use, ownership, security breaches and vulnerability, was a major phenomenon. Transformations linked to data represented a major concern for individuals, enterprises and countries, and it was important to consider both the positive and negative implications. There were opportunities to optimize the economic benefits of data, through converting data into digital intelligence, to inform sound decision-making, design opportunities or map policies. However, there were also concerns regarding security, privacy, ownership and taxation. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy provided a forum for debate on the basis of sound evidence and informed discourse on trends, to optimize opportunities for inclusive prosperity. The discussion on the role and impact of data needed to look at the digital divide and the significant gaps in data access and capacity to translate data into digital intelligence, both between and within

countries. A key question that could guide discussions was how to generate thought leadership to assist the development community in aligning trends and possibilities with regard to the growing importance of data with aspirations of inclusive prosperity.

5. The UNCTAD secretariat introduced the background document on the value and role of data in electronic commerce and the digital economy and its implications for inclusive trade and development (TD/B/EDE/3/2). The data-driven economy created both opportunities and challenges. Access to data was crucial for the competitiveness of companies and the productivity of countries, through the provision of new sources of knowledge, innovation and profits. Data could also help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. However, there were risks related to privacy, security, ownership and the use of data, and the concentration of market power by companies controlling data. Only half of the world's population was connected to the Internet, and understanding the different dimensions of the digital divide was therefore important. The value of data emerged following transformation into digital intelligence, which could be monetized in different ways. Key policy issues to be addressed included data privacy and security, competition, the regulation of cross-border data flows, taxation and capacity-building for data analytics. Reaching agreement on a common data protection legal framework might be difficult, yet identifying core principles could serve as a starting point in interoperability and harmonization efforts. Monopolistic trends linked to data could require the adaptation of competition policies. As international trade was increasingly becoming digital, the interface between trade policies and Internet governance was growing more important, and there was a need for more effective international cooperation in all policy areas. Support for capacity-building in developing countries to harness the benefits and deal with the challenges of data-driven development needed to be scaled up. The first step in this direction could include needs assessments, such as the e-trade readiness assessments of UNCTAD. Finally, the four guiding questions to be considered were presented, as follows:

(a) What are the role and value of data in e-commerce and the digital economy in the context of inclusive trade and development?

(b) What are the key opportunities and challenges associated with managing and regulating data and data flows?

(c) What are the public policies, regulations and institutional arrangements in different countries and regions for harnessing and protecting data related to e-commerce and the digital economy and bridging the digital divides, including between and within countries, and related to youth, rural economies, microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises and gender?

(d) How can developing countries build capacities, including skills, to use new and emerging technologies such as big data analytics and artificial intelligence?

6. Many delegates acknowledged the timely choice of topic addressed in the background document. Several delegates recognized that the Intergovernmental Group of Experts offered a unique forum to discuss the development implications of data and the digital economy. Some delegates highlighted various benefits related to digital transformations in their economies, including job creation, increased sales and exports, flourishing local creative economies, improved gender parity, the empowerment of the population and better opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises. Experts highlighted different challenges related to reaping benefits from the data-driven economy, including limited skills and technological capabilities to regulate and harness data, a lack of technology transfer and the market access barriers faced by small and medium-sized enterprises. Many delegates underlined the importance of adopting relevant legal frameworks in areas such as data protection and privacy, cybercrime prevention, consumer protection, electronic transactions, intellectual property, customs and competition. Concerns were also raised with regard to the need to properly regulate the ownership and pricing of data, cross-border data flows and taxation, to ensure that gains from the digital economy were shared equally among all stakeholders. One delegate highlighted the need for policy space for developing countries to be able to adopt appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks. Experts broadly agreed on the need to address the digital divides and build digital capabilities and infrastructure in developing countries.

Many delegates highlighted the importance of international cooperation, including in UNCTAD.

B. The value and role of data in electronic commerce and the digital economy and its implications for inclusive trade and development

(Agenda item 3)

7. Under the agenda item, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy held five round-table discussions.

1. The growing role of digital data in the world economy

8. Panellists for the first discussion comprised the Co-founder and Non-executive Chair of Infosys, the Chief of the Innovation and New Technologies Unit of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Inaugural Executive Director of Digital Asia Hub. They set the stage for the meeting by highlighting the role of data in the economy and the implications for trade and development.

9. The first panellist discussed the evolution of the data economy and the importance of leveraging, as data became increasingly strategic and valuable. Data were at the centre of the digital economy, and the panellist presented four worldwide models for handling and organizing data. For example, in the United States of America, the primary function was to monetize data, and major platforms benefited from network effects, resulting in innovation but also concerns with regard to privacy, democracy and ethical issues. In Europe, the general data protection regulation was the main instrument, and there was a focus on human rights and consumer privacy, to prevent the misuse of data. In China, the model was based on sovereignty on the Internet, and domestic champions had emerged due to firewalls, with technologies harnessed for use by the State, and China had become a world leader in many digital technologies. Finally, in India, the model was based on harnessing the data driven-economy through a combination of regulations, technologies and new institutions. People were becoming data rich, and this could be a tool for empowerment and improving lives. Work was ongoing to finalize the legal framework and data privacy laws in India, to ensure that citizens harnessed their own data. The data empowerment and protection architecture included a project on unique identification that involved, on one side, a group of people as information providers and on the other, a set of information consumers. People could thus move their own data from any data consumer to any data producer through data fiduciaries. The project had first been applied in the financial sector, and future applications were envisaged in health and education.

10. The second panellist compared the exponential growth of cross-border data flows with other international flows to demonstrate the intensity of digital globalization. Digital trade had become increasingly important, and global business-to-consumer e-commerce had grown rapidly, in particular across borders. Barriers to cross-border data flows included local storage and processing, illegal transfers and conditionality, and related policy responses varied. With regard to e-commerce in Latin America, empirical evidence showed that languages, payments and delivery systems were important, and that the impact of distance had been reduced but not eliminated. Fostering regional cross-border e-commerce through regional integration required improving human capital and digital skills, regulatory convergence, reduced inefficiencies in logistics, customs and postal services and improved international payment systems. The panellist presented the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean as an example of regional cooperation, noting that the need for scale in the digital economy required strengthening regional digital markets. Empowerment through data was important not only for private profits but to meet the needs of the public and private sectors, to move from digitalization to development.

11. The third panellist emphasized that context, culture and language mattered in the role of data in the digital economy. There were several conflicting ideas about data. Viewing data as “the new oil” could lead to data hoarding, which challenged the view that certain types of data should not be collected but rather protected or given special treatment. Data could be regarded as an externality, producing value up to a certain point, after which

the value started to decrease. The panellist stated that a discourse on rights was needed. Winner-takes-all dynamics and catch-up narratives could lead to a vacuum of legal norms on data in certain countries, to improve their competitive position. Privacy could instead be seen as a competitive advantage. Sequencing regulations and piloting were key, prior to the implementation of large-scale experiments. Artificial intelligence was the next frontier at which data collection played a significant role, in particular in developing countries. It was important to recognize how algorithms could affect assessments, and interdisciplinarity and multi-stakeholder participation were essential in understanding the complexities and implications of data. Systems needed to be leveraged to augment human capabilities and not to replace them. Finally, it was important to start with already existing open and public data.

2. Digital data and implications for inclusive trade and development

12. Panellists for the second discussion, centred around the first guiding question for the Intergovernmental Group of Experts – what are the role and value of data in e-commerce and the digital economy in the context of inclusive trade and development? – comprised a Senior Fellow of the Brookings Institution, an Associate Director of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation and the Executive Director of IT for Change.

13. The first panellist noted that the digital economy had enabled important productivity increases and the transformation of international trade. Cross-border data flows were a form of trade and could also enable trade. The value of cross-border data had surpassed that of goods trade, and the transformation of digital trade was evident in the use of data by platforms, in increasing digital services trade and the services value added in manufactures, as well as in global value chains. However, data-driven opportunities increased the need for domestic data regulation. Countries had several legitimate reasons for domestic regulation and data localization, but needed to consider a balanced approach so as not to restrict data flows and stifle the data economy and the potential to benefit from it. The panellist noted that a digital trade agenda should aim to expand Internet access and reduce costs, facilitating global data flows, with commitments by data source and destination countries, and some global convergence on appropriate regulatory standards.

14. The second panellist discussed how technology had opened the door of digital trade to all individuals, enterprises and economies. He emphasized the importance of cross-border data flows and the power of platforms for innovation and economic growth in the increasingly digitalized global economy. Data localization did not always matter for data value maximization as it did not necessarily create employment, and infrastructure was expensive to build and maintain. The value of data emerged from use and not from the storage location, and value was maximized through the ability of data to flow and be aggregated and analysed. The panellist noted that policymakers should focus on prioritizing the broad adoption of information and communications technology, improving the infrastructure that supported data innovation and digital trade, maximizing the supply of reusable and cross-border free flows of data and helping workers develop data science and literacy skills. Finally, the panellist stated that data regulation should not stifle innovation in local enterprises, as most developing countries needed scale to access international markets.

15. The third panellist highlighted the complexity of the fast-moving digital economy. The most valuable intelligence about individuals and groups of users was owned by a few major players, that is, global digital platforms, at the top of the data value chain. Intelligence had been disembodied from production processes. The panellist noted that the main concern of developing countries therefore needed to be not only privacy as a human right, but also the economic value and governance of data produced by citizens. Much of the added value of data came from relationships and the collective and anonymized data of communities, and should therefore be owned by such communities. For an inclusive digital economy to benefit developing countries, it was important that data be controlled by developing countries, to allow them to develop digital intelligence. Once the national property of data had been established, negotiations on possible cross-border data flows could take place, depending on the type of data.

16. During the ensuing discussion, several delegates shared their national experiences in building an enabling environment for e-commerce and the digital economy.

Some delegates noted that there was a need for balance between allowing cross-border data flows for trade and innovation and protecting legitimate national interests regarding personal data and privacy. The challenge was to ensure the protection of data and privacy while monetizing data and data flows. Some other delegates underlined the importance of the economic value of data, stating that developing countries should have greater control over their data for inclusive digital development. Data should belong to producers, rather than to collectors, and there was a need for legal frameworks for the ownership and pricing of data, as well as for cross-border data flows, to ensure that economic benefits were equitably shared. A few delegates highlighted the possible implications for revenue mobilization and industrialization in developing countries of the World Trade Organization moratorium on e-commerce, whereby customs duties are not imposed on electronic transmissions. It was critical for developing countries to have enough policy space to establish the adequate legal and regulatory frameworks to govern cross-border data flows. One delegate emphasized that high standards of data protection should be preserved, to maintain trust in the digital economy.

3. Opportunities and challenges related to data and data flows

17. Panellists for the third discussion, centred around the second guiding question for the Intergovernmental Group of Experts – what are the key opportunities and challenges associated with managing and regulating data and data flows? – comprised a Presidential Fellow of the Global Development Institute; a Senior Fellow of the Centre for International Governance Innovation; and a technology correspondent for *Brand Eins* and contributing writer for *The Economist*.

18. The first panellist discussed how datafication and data integration in value chains could open opportunities in developing countries, in particular for microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises, for connecting with global markets. Digitalization had reduced some operational costs, yet there were concerns that leading firms that controlled data emanating from developing countries might also control economies, leading to automation and affecting employment. There were systemic challenges faced by developing countries in benefiting from data. The economic potential of data went beyond platforms. Since value chains were specific, data issues should be considered by sector and country. Data locked into a value chain could provide unfair competitive advantages to leading firms, which were mostly based in China and the United States. It was increasingly important for developing countries to access data for development. Different policy approaches to reaping development gains from data included adopting a free market approach, by opening up cross-border data flows; legislating only with regard to some kinds of critical data, thereby providing incentives to share certain types of data for the public good; viewing the power of leading firms in developed countries as a structural problem that could not be fixed by the market, with a need for industrial policies to ensure that data were localized in developing countries; and a more statist data policy approach, whereby States could become controllers of certain types of data. The panellist noted the need to consider places, contexts, sequencing and conditions under which such different policy approaches might be applied.

19. The second panellist highlighted that, while discussions about negotiating a global approach to cross-border data flows were ongoing, many developing countries first needed to build capacity for data governance, to avoid incoherent policies and Internet fragmentation. The existing approach to governing cross-border data flows through trade agreements had not led to binding, universal or interoperable rules. Data were both a product and at times a public good, raising the question of whether data flows should be governed by trade rules or by a new, more effective approach. Major powers with regard to data had a patchwork of rules governing data, and the lack of data governance in developing countries was compounded by the competitive advantage of the main, already established players in developed countries and the lack of relevant skills and capacities to capture value from data. Policymakers needed to find common ground for regulations. Finally, developing and developed countries needed to collaborate to formulate smart data governance, to make data a resource for economic development.

20. The third panellist noted that data were considered the world's most valuable resource. Vast information asymmetries between the dominant players in the data economy and everyone else warranted a new framework. Dominant players in developed countries reaped large profits, yet it was unclear who could claim the ownership of the data behind such profits. In the absence of regulation, the data economy had become an oligopoly, with China and the United States likely to dominate in the future. Competition policy was not apt for the digital world; the panellist therefore proposed a progressive data-sharing mandate, whereby a company reaching a certain market share would be obliged to share its data with competitors. Since the data context was not a zero-sum but a multiple-sum game and data were non-rival, global platforms would continue to benefit from data. Data sharing could be a way to benefit firms worldwide, with access to data regardless of storage location.

21. During the ensuing discussion, the experts presented diverging views, in particular with regard to the regulation of cross-border data flows and data localization. Some delegates emphasized that, as data were a source of competitive advantage for firms in developing countries and trade agreements tended to preserve the first-mover advantages of dominant players, it was critical to regulate domestically generated data flows in order for developing countries to be able to capture the economic value of data. Moreover, building a local digital industry required locally available data and digital industrial policy, and it was important to address market concentration and taxation issues in the digital economy. Several delegates highlighted the need for legal frameworks on data to be adapted to national conditions. Conversely, some delegates supported the facilitation of cross-border data flows as a way to facilitate innovation and trade, emphasizing that data localization could increase costs and reduce efficiency and was not necessary for development. It was possible to have a regime that protected data and ensured the safety of data flows without localization. Moreover, many delegates expressed concern about the capacity of developing countries to enforce competition policy against powerful global digital platforms. Several delegates noted that regional integration played a role in shaping cross-border data flow policies. One delegate emphasized that, in sharing data, the right to privacy and data protection was fundamental. Several delegates noted that different kinds of data might need to be treated differently with regard to regulation.

4. Regulatory issues and challenges

22. Panellists for the fourth discussion, centred around the third guiding question for the Intergovernmental Group of Experts – what are the public policies, regulations and institutional arrangements in different countries and regions for harnessing and protecting data related to e-commerce and the digital economy and bridging the digital divides, including between and within countries, and related to youth, rural economies, microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises and gender? – comprised the Head of the Data Protection Unit at the Council of Europe, the Director of the Office of E-Commerce at the Electronic Transactions Development Agency of Thailand and the Deputy Commissioner of the Competition Commission of South Africa.

23. The first panellist noted that Treaty No. 108 of the Council of Europe, the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data, was the only international legally binding instrument on the protection of private life and personal data, and was open to all countries. The convention had influenced other legislations worldwide, and had been revised to reflect recent developments, while maintaining consistency with other international guidelines, such as the general data protection regulation of the European Union, the Guidelines on the Protection of Privacy and Transborder Flows of Personal Data of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Privacy Framework of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. Data needed to be enriched by contextualization, liberated from silos and protected, to enable businesses to grow, through allowing data to flow across borders. However, customers also needed to be empowered and protected in the use of their data. As transborder data flows were risky, protection needed to be guaranteed through reciprocity and cooperation between data protection agencies. The general data protection regulation of the European Union aimed to promote international data transfers in the commercial sector, while protecting privacy, and envisaged several mechanisms for

identifying those countries to which the data of European Union citizens might flow, including adequacy decisions, binding corporate laws and standard contractual clauses. In the United States, a specific regime had been provided, namely, the Privacy Shield. A data protection instrument had not yet been developed under the United Nations; the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy had therefore recommended that Member States be encouraged to ratify Treaty No. 108.

24. The second panellist presented the work of the Electronic Transactions Development Agency in providing a secure infrastructure for electronic transactions, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises active in e-commerce, offering recommendations on privacy and personal data protection issues. Awareness-raising was important, as significant segments of the population were little informed about their data on social media platforms or did not read privacy policies due to their length or difficulties in understanding. In Thailand, privacy would become increasingly critical as the country moved towards digitalization. The right to privacy had been upheld by the constitution since 1991 but, until recently, there had not been any general law on data protection, but rather legislation in specific areas. In 2019, a bill on personal data protection had been endorsed by the National Legislative Assembly. The drafting process had been challenging due to the need to balance privacy and data protection with the push for technological development, which required public-private collaboration for digitalization and development.

25. The third panellist discussed digital markets and e-commerce and their implications for competition policy. As required under previous industrial revolutions, it was important to address challenges while embracing change. In Africa, for example, regional integration could be a response to the need to reach critical mass and facilitate intraregional trade. Competition-related concerns included resale price maintenance, cross-platform parity agreements, online sales bans or limitations and geographic price discrimination. The panellist noted that firms had become large and dominant in the market, and network effects were leading to high entry barriers and market power, and that existing competition regulation tools might be inadequate. Reviewing previous cases was useful in improving understanding of new business models. The anticompetitive actions of platforms often implied cross-border effects, which required coordination between authorities. National policy alone could not solve problems, given the size of the issues involved, including privacy, consumer protection, market power and network effects. The panellist highlighted that data mobility and open data systems might be part of the solution, with users able to move with their data and data sharing options. There was a need for a code of competitive conduct for digital markets, and regulators needed to be equipped to address the complexities of such markets. It was important to understand the underlying problem in order to address it properly, and the challenge lay in clearly identifying the (potential) harm to competition. Proactive regulation required demystifying competition concerns with regard to big data and technology, and investing in skills and cooperation among peers for a coordinated response. Finally, the panellist shared examples of competition regulation in the digital economy in South Africa and other jurisdictions.

26. During the ensuing discussion, the experts presented conflicting positions with regard to policy approaches to data. Some delegates emphasized the importance of regulating data ownership nationally, ensuring rights and control by individuals or communities. It was important to distinguish between different types of data. Appropriate policies needed to be devised to address oligopolistic trends and taxation in the digital economy, as well as for benefits from data to be widely shared. Policies also needed to allow developing countries to achieve industrial transformation, including through data localization. Some other delegates highlighted cross-border data flows as the right policy choice to enable countries to integrate into the global digital economy and avoid unnecessary costs that discouraged trade. Some delegates requested that UNCTAD undertake work to assess the value of data and how to share data fairly. Several delegates described different national measures for data protection and security. A few delegates raised concerns with regard to the adequacy requirements under the general data protection regulation. It was necessary to balance the objectives of technology and innovation, business development and privacy, while protecting the rights of all stakeholders.

5. Capacity-building for data analytics and artificial intelligence

27. The fifth discussion, chaired by a delegate on behalf of the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, was centred around the fourth guiding question for the Intergovernmental Group of Experts, namely, how can developing countries build capacities, including skills, to use new and emerging technologies such as big data analytics and artificial intelligence? The panellist, a programme director of the Master in Applied Business Analytics of the University of Asia and the Pacific, discussed skills capacity-building in the context of the increasingly data-driven economy. The panellist noted that the shortage of data science and analytics skills was a critical concern for companies and economies. Projections had shown that there would be a significant demand for a data science and analytics workforce in member countries of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, whose Data Analytics Raising Employment project had resulted in recommended data science and analytics competencies and had proposed initiatives to close the digital skills gap. The Philippines aimed to build the relevant analytics capabilities to respond to the employment needs of the new digitalized economy and to develop the ecosystem for a data-driven economy that was globally competitive in analytics and a leading source of analytics talent for the benefit of society. Different analytics job roles had been defined, and the Master in Applied Business Analytics had been developed, with a multidisciplinary curriculum within a broad programme that included soft skills and was not limited to technical skills; graduates were analytics managers. The experience could be summarized as thinking big, starting small and growing manageably fast.

28. During the ensuing discussion, several delegates shared their national experiences in strengthening skills and capabilities and supporting the use of data analytics in other countries. One delegate noted that data analytics specialists were needed not only to grow businesses but also as policymakers. Another delegate emphasized the importance of soft skills for human interaction with technology, in particular in view of the expansion of artificial intelligence.

6. Discussion on proposed policy recommendations

29. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts discussed the set of policy recommendations proposed by the Chair under agenda item 3. On some issues, consensus seemed to be emerging, such as with regard to the growing importance of digital data for trade and development, the fact that digitalization could bring both opportunities and challenges and the need to address digital divides through capacity-building and other measures. A significant divergence of views remained on a number of other issues, however, in particular how to manage and regulate cross-border data flows; the nature of regulations on data (including data protection, localization and ownership and trade and digital industrial policies); and the national and international-level policies that should be recommended to reap trade and development benefits from data in e-commerce and the digital economy. Most of the topics under discussion at the third session were complex and politically sensitive, which contributed to the difficulties in reaching an agreement on a set of policy recommendations. However, the intense discussion among all stakeholders could help to build a better understanding of the issues at stake and the divergent views, and could contribute to future work related to reaping development gains from data and the digital economy.

C. Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy

(Agenda item 4)

30. The Trade and Development Board, at its sixty-fifth session, part I, decided to establish the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy was therefore invited to approve the terms of reference and the proposed topics for the first meeting of the working group, namely, the revision of the UNCTAD *Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Information Economy* and measuring domestic and cross-border e-commerce. The manual was the main reference tool in the United Nations system for the staff of national statistical organizations responsible for measuring the information

economy, intended as a guide for statisticians in developing countries to use at all steps in the production and dissemination of business-related information and communications technology statistics. The current version, issued in 2009, required revision to ensure that it contained up-to-date classifications and definitions and that new developments in the area of measuring e-commerce and the digital economy were introduced. The UNCTAD secretariat proposed that statistics experts from member States provide feedback and input on a revised draft of the manual at the first meeting of the working group, allowing for stronger ownership by the relevant national statistical authorities. The second topic had been proposed in response to the growing demand from member States to improve the measurement of domestic and cross-border e-commerce. The working group, at its first meeting, could take stock of recent methodological developments, and member States could be invited to share experiences and good practices in this domain. The topic was of relevance to both developing and developed countries, yet there was a shortage of statistics on e-commerce, in particular in developing countries.

31. The experts expressed support for the working group, adopted its terms of reference and agreed on the two proposed topics for its first meeting (see chapter I). Two delegates noted the clarification provided by the secretariat with regard to having simultaneous interpretation for the working group in all official languages. One delegate suggested that the working group could consider efforts to measure the value of e-commerce, in particular consumer-to-consumer e-commerce, among the topics to be discussed at the first meeting. The Sudan and Thailand expressed interest in hosting future meetings of the working group.

III. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

32. At its opening plenary, on 3 April 2019, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy elected Ms. Kadra Ahmed Hassan (Djibouti), as its Chair and Ms. Julie Emond (Canada) as its Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

33. Also at its opening plenary, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts adopted the provisional agenda for the session, as contained in document TD/B/EDE/3/1. The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. The value and role of data in electronic commerce and the digital economy and its implications for inclusive trade and development.
4. Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy.
5. Provisional agenda of the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy.
6. Adoption of the report of the third session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy.

C. Adoption of the report of the third session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy

(Agenda item 6)

34. At its closing plenary, on 5 April 2019, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts authorized the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chair, to finalize the report on its third session after the conclusion of the meeting.

Annex

Attendance*

1. Representatives of the following States members of UNCTAD attended the session:

Afghanistan	Ghana	Pakistan
Albania	Guatemala	Panama
Algeria	Guyana	Paraguay
Argentina	Haiti	Peru
Australia	Honduras	Philippines
Austria	Hungary	Poland
Azerbaijan	India	Portugal
Bahrain	Indonesia	Republic of Korea
Bangladesh	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Russian Federation
Barbados	Iraq	Samoa
Belarus	Ireland	Saudi Arabia
Belgium	Italy	Senegal
Benin	Jamaica	Serbia
Bhutan	Japan	Seychelles
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Jordan	Sierra Leone
Botswana	Kazakhstan	Singapore
Brazil	Kenya	Slovakia
Brunei Darussalam	Kiribati	Slovenia
Bulgaria	Kuwait	Solomon Islands
Burkina Faso	Lao People's Democratic Republic	South Africa
Burundi	Latvia	Spain
Cambodia	Lesotho	Sri Lanka
Cameroon	Liberia	State of Palestine
Canada	Libya	Sudan
Chad	Lithuania	Sweden
China	Madagascar	Switzerland
Congo	Malawi	Thailand
Costa Rica	Mali	Togo
Cuba	Mauritania	Tunisia
Cyprus	Mexico	Turkey
Czechia	Mongolia	Tuvalu
Côte d'Ivoire	Montenegro	Uganda
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Morocco	Ukraine
Denmark	Mozambique	United Arab Emirates
Djibouti	Myanmar	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Ecuador	Namibia	United Republic of Tanzania
Egypt	Nepal	United States of America
Estonia	Netherlands	Vanuatu
Finland	New Zealand	Yemen
France	Niger	Zambia
Gabon	Nigeria	Zimbabwe
Germany	Oman	

* This attendance list contains registered participants. For the list of participants, see TD/B/EDE/INF.3.

2. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:
African Development Bank
African Union
African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
Caribbean Development Bank
Commonwealth Secretariat
Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf
Customs Cooperation Council
Eurasian Economic Commission
European Union
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
Organization of Islamic Cooperation
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
South Centre
West African Economic and Monetary Union
3. The following United Nations organs, bodies and programmes were represented at the session:
Economic Commission for Africa
Economic Commission for Europe
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
International Trade Centre
United Nations Children's Fund
World Food Programme
4. The following specialized agencies and related organizations were represented at the session:
International Labour Organization
International Organization for Migration
International Telecommunication Union
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
Universal Postal Union
World Bank Group
World Intellectual Property Organization
World Meteorological Organization
World Trade Organization
5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the session:
General category
Centre for Economic and Policy Research
Consumer Unity and Trust Society International
Consumers International
International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development
International Chamber of Commerce
International Network for Standardization of Higher Education Degrees
International Organization of Employers
International Road Transport Union
Organisation Camerounaise de Promotion de la Coopération Économique Internationale
Public Citizen
Public Services International
Third World Network
Special category
International Air Transport Association
International Ocean Institute