

Intergovernmental  
group of experts on  
**E-commerce  
and the digital  
economy**  
7<sup>th</sup> session

## Programme (as of 30 April)

06–08 May 2024, 10 a.m to 6 p.m. (CET)  
Room XIX, Palais des Nations, Geneva

### Monday, 06 May 2024

10 a.m.–11 a.m. Opening plenary

**Item 1** Election of officers

**Item 2** Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

**Item 3** Building digital readiness: From assessment to implementation

Introductory  
remarks

Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Presentation of  
background  
document

Ms. Shamika Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics

Followed by

Statements and Q&A by regional groups and individual delegations

## Monday, 06 May 2024

11 a.m.–1 p.m.

**Session 1: High-level panel discussion: Addressing digital readiness challenges in developing countries**

*This session will set the stage for the meeting by discussing the key issues pertaining to building the digital readiness of developing countries, including challenges related to infrastructure, digital literacy, legal frameworks, digital payments, access to finance, data gaps and other key digital divides.*

- **H.E. Mr. Chola Milambo**, Zambian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Co-Facilitator of the Global Digital Compact
- **H.E. Ms. Cham Nimul**, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia
- **H.E. Mr. Mohamed Abdallahi Louly**, Minister of Digital Transition, Innovation and Modernization, Mauritania
- **Ms. Ana Sandoval**, eTrade for Women Advocate and COO of Bold

*Interactive discussion*

3 p.m.–6 p.m.

**Session 2: Enhancing e-trade readiness of developing countries: Insights from country assessments**

*This session will discuss the main challenges that developing countries are facing as identified through the work of key organizations in assessing their digital readiness and how those are currently addressed and could be addressed better.*

Proposed panelists:

- **Ms. Cécile Barayre**, Chief, Digital Economy Capacity-building Section, E-Commerce and Digital Economy Branch, UNCTAD
- **Ms. Luisa Bernal**, Policy Specialist, Sustainable Finance Hub, UNDP
- **Mr. Suresh Yadav**, Senior Director, Trade, Commonwealth Secretariat
- **Ms. Kati Suominen**, Founder and CEO, Nextrade Group, Founder and Technical Director, USAID eTrade Alliance

*Interactive discussion*



10 a.m.–1 p.m.

**Session 3: Moving from assessment to the formulation of e-commerce strategies and action plans**

*This session will focus on good practices and tools to enable a sustained and impactful implementation of e-commerce initiatives. The discussion will describe how strategies and action plans can contribute to improving in-country coordination, facilitating monitoring and enhancing policy impact, at both national and regional levels.*

Proposed panelists:

- **Ms. Martine Julsaint Kidane**, Economic Affairs Officer, Digital Economy Capacity-building Section, E-Commerce and Digital Economy Branch, UNCTAD
- **Mr. Kolawole Sofola**, Acting Director of Trade, ECOWAS Commission
- **Ms. Marie Angélique Umulisa**, Principal Trade Officer, EAC Secretariat
- **Mr. Nanno Mulder**, Chief International Trade Unit, UN-ECLAC
- **Mr. Darius Kurek**, Senior Officer in Export Strategies, ITC

*Interactive discussion*

3 p.m.–6 p.m.

**Session 4: Making implementation work**

*This session will discuss challenges, lessons learned and successful conditions for moving into effective implementation of e-commerce policy reforms. Issues related to political leadership, capacity constraints as well as institutional coordination and governance will be addressed. Monitoring mechanisms to track progress and ensure rigorous follow-up on e-commerce initiatives will also be presented.*

Proposed panelists:

- **H.E. Ms. Mere Falemaka**, Permanent Representative of the Pacific Islands Forum to the United Nations in Geneva
- **Mr. Steffen Grammling**, Head of Project, Pan-African E-commerce Initiative, GIZ
- **Mr. Sven Callebaut**, Principal, TradeWorthy Ltd.
- **Mr. Alessandro Vitale**, Programme Management Officer, Digital Economy Capacity-building Section, E-Commerce and Digital Economy Branch, UNCTAD
- **Mr. Piet Battiau**, Head, Consumption Taxes Unit, OECD

*Interactive discussion*



10 a.m.–1 p.m.

**Session 5: Leverage international cooperation and resource allocation to fast-track digital readiness**

*Recognizing the imperative to enhance global cooperation and coordination, as well as allocate greater resources, various new initiatives, including from the United Nations, have underscored the necessity of accelerating efforts to ensure inclusive outcomes from digitalization. This session will showcase successful partnerships, including with donors, development banks and eTrade for all members, to provide coordinated and scaled-up support to countries lagging behind.*

Proposed panelists:

- **Ms. Lisa Kurbiel**, Head of the UN Joint SDG Fund (video recording)
- **Mr. Charles Abani**, UN Resident Coordinator, Ghana
- **Representative of Afreximbank** (tbc)
- **Mr. Thomas Spoormans**, Digital Affairs Officer at EU Delegation to the UN in Geneva

*Interactive discussion*

3 p.m.–4.30 p.m.

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

*The Intergovernmental Group of Experts will consider the report of the fourth meeting of the Working Group, held on 30 November and 1 December 2023, and decide on the topic for the fifth meeting.*

**Mr. Alexandre Barbosa**, Chair, fourth meeting, Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy

*Interactive discussion*

4.30 p.m.–6 p.m.

**Closing plenary**

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

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

