

Workshop on E-Commerce, Development and SMEs
Centre William Rappard (WTO)

8 and 9 April 2013

Opening remarks by H.E. Mr Shanker Das Bairagi

Good Morning Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome all participants to the First Session of this workshop on E-Commerce, Development and SMEs. This Session will feature presentations by four organizations which have excellent reputations for their respective research on E-Commerce and Information and Communications Technology. The focus of the discussions this morning will be on Facilitating Access to E-Commerce for SMEs in Developing Countries. However, before I make some more detailed comments about the subject before us, I would like to briefly introduce you to the panellists here with me on the podium. With us today are:

Mr Martin Labbé of the International Trade Centre, Dr Susan Teltscher from the International Telecommunications Union, Mr Torbjörn Fredriksson from UNCTAD and Dr Sacha Wunsch-Vincent from the World Intellectual Property Organization. I extend a warm welcome to each of you and thank you for agreeing to participate in this Session.

The use of information and communications technologies is profoundly influencing the way business is conducted around the world. The growth has been phenomenal, especially in the last 10 years, and particularly in some of the poorest regions of the world.

The transformation is expected to continue at break neck speed. The technology of the future is foreseen to become not only more complex,

but also more user-friendly. However, it will require more infrastructure, higher skills and greater accessibility if it is going to continue producing benefits for users all over the world. Small and medium-sized enterprises especially must follow closely the developments in this area if they are going to benefit more from E-Commerce generally. Otherwise, they risk being side-lined because of inadequate use or limited access capabilities.

It seems without question then that, in the future, small and medium-sized enterprises, which constitute the backbone of many developing and least-developed countries' economies, will need to learn more about how they can benefit from the increased use of e-commerce. There is also a need to identify the various obstacles and constraints to E-Commerce which exist the world over but which have particular implications for developing and least-developed countries. Such obstacles have to be studied and tackled head on if users are to benefit properly from all the opportunities which exist in the world of the internet.

This morning's session will focus on the relationship between Electronic-commerce, Development and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and on how some of the latter have used e-commerce to promote, market, service and sell their products nationally and internationally. You will hear about the various types of e-commerce services which exist but which many of us take for granted. These are services such as business-to-business e-commerce or business-to-consumer and business-to-government. In this session and based on the recent research of these four top organizations, we will try and shed some light on why some small and medium-sized enterprises have used the internet and realized significant increases in their exports and business activities overall, and why others are barely making use of the huge potential offered by the internet and its various applications. We will also discuss the needs to overcome infrastructural bottlenecks in

telecommunications, transport, electricity grids and logistics and see how they are addressed alongside policy issues such as consumer protection, security of transactions, privacy of records, and intellectual property. On this note, please allow me to introduce you to our first speaker.

Our first speaker is Mr Labbé who is an adviser on online marketing and digital networks with the International Trade Centre. He has been training and advising small- and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries and transition economies on web marketing and e-commerce since 2005. In the context of trade-related technical assistance projects, he has led the development and revamping of websites, such as the portal of the Tunisian Ministry of Trade or the Moroccan Textile Industry Association. Mr Labbé is a regular speaker on the topic of Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) and is currently piloting online and offline business-development and marketing activities for Bangladeshi IT companies. Mr Labbé holds a Master's degree in International Trade and Business Administration.

Mr. Labbé you have the floor.

[Presentation by Mr. Labbé]

Let me now invite our next speaker Dr Susan Teltscher from the ITU. Dr Teltscher is Head of the ICT Data and Statistics Division of the International Telecommunication Union's Telecommunication Development Bureau. Her Division is responsible for the collection, harmonization, analysis and dissemination of information and communication technology statistics worldwide, and for the production of analytical reports on global and regional trends in ICT. Before joining the ITU in July 2008, she was Chief of the ICT Policy and Analysis Unit, ICT and E-Business Branch, of UNCTAD Geneva. Dr Teltscher received her

Ph.D. in Economic Geography in 1992 from the University of Washington in Seattle.

Dr Teltscher, you have the floor.

[Presentation by Dr. Teltscher]

Let me now invite Mr Torbjörn Fredriksson from UNCTAD. Mr Fredriksson heads the ICT Analysis Section of the Division on Technology and Logistics at the UNCTAD. He is responsible for the annual Information Economy Report, UNCTAD's work on E-commerce and ICT measurement, and is UNCTAD's representative in the organization of the annual WSIS Forum. Mr Fredriksson joined UNCTAD in 2000 and was for eight years one of the principal authors of the World Investment Report. Before joining UNCTAD, Mr Fredriksson held positions at the Invest in Sweden Agency, the Swedish Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Industrial Institute for Economic and Social Research in Stockholm. Mr Fredriksson is the author of several books and has published articles related to international trade, investment and technology. He holds an MSc in International Economics from the Stockholm School of Economics.

Mr Fredriksson, you have the floor.

[Presentation by Mr. Fredriksson]

Let me now invite Dr Sacha Wunsch-Vincent from WIPO.

Dr. Wunsch-Vincent is a Senior Economic Officer under the Chief Economist of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva. Before joining WIPO, he was an economist at the OECD Directorate for Science, Technology, and Industry for seven years. Dr

Wunsch-Vincent holds a master's degree in international economics from the University of Maastricht, and a PhD in economics from the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland. He teaches international economics at Sciences Po Paris and the World Trade Institute.

Dr. Wunsch-Vincent, you have the floor

[Presentation by Dr. Wunsch-Vincent]