

WSC Summaries and Conclusions

“Current Developments in E-Commerce and E-Business”

Summary Statement

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We recommend that, in order to support innovation and growth in e-commerce and e-business, governments adopt the following principles in the development of an enabling global legal framework:

1. Technological neutrality in services trade commitments (especially Mode 1).
2. A continued moratorium on customs duties for online purchases.
3. Full support for the protection of intellectual property rights online.
4. Policy co-operation in fighting cyber crime.
5. Support for private sector self-regulatory initiatives.
6. Creation of model regulations to address sensitive issues such as privacy, authentication, consumer protection and recourse, etc.

We further recommend that governments review their human resource development plans to ensure an adequate supply of knowledge workers equipped to make use of the new information and communication technologies.

We also recommend that governments fast-track e-government initiatives so that SMEs in particular will benefit from lower transaction costs.

We make the above recommendations based on the following analyses:

- Digital trade is expanding rapidly and is of importance to all of our economies.
- Adoption of e-business practices has been relatively slow by SMEs and can be stimulated through e-government initiatives.
- Lack of appropriately skilled human resources can be a barrier to benefiting from e-commerce potential.
- There is currently a lack of familiarity among policy makers and trade negotiators with e-commerce regulatory issues, as well as difficulties in accelerating the pace of policy formulation to match the speed of technological change.

Finally, we commend the bilateral approach currently being tested between India and Singapore as a strategy for learning what works and generating success stories to build public confidence.