

JOINT STATEMENT ON ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

Ministers representing the following Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO): Albania; Argentina; Australia; Bahrain; Brazil; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; Canada; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; European Union; Guatemala; Hong Kong, China; Iceland; Israel; Japan; Kazakhstan; Korea, Republic of; Kuwait; Lao PDR; Liechtenstein; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Malaysia; Mexico; Moldova, Republic of; Montenegro; Myanmar; New Zealand; Nigeria; Norway; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Qatar; Russian Federation; Singapore; Switzerland; Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu; Turkey; Ukraine; United States; and Uruguay; reaffirm the importance of global electronic commerce and the opportunities it creates for inclusive trade and development.

We share the goal of advancing electronic commerce work in the WTO in order to better harness these opportunities.

We recognize the particular opportunities and challenges faced by developing countries, especially LDCs, as well as by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, in relation to electronic commerce.

We also recognize the important role of the WTO in promoting open, transparent, non-discriminatory and predictable regulatory environments in facilitating electronic commerce.

We, as a group, will initiate exploratory work together toward future WTO negotiations on trade-related aspects of electronic commerce. Participation will be open to all WTO Members and will be without prejudice to participants' positions on future negotiations. A first meeting will be held in the first quarter of 2018.

Welcoming the contributions since the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, our work will build on WTO rules. Our initiative will be undertaken without prejudice to existing WTO agreements and mandates. We encourage all WTO Members to join us and to support and enhance the benefits of electronic commerce for businesses and consumers across the globe.