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Council for Trade in Goods

WORK PROGRAMME ON ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

**REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS
TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

As agreed by the Council for Trade in Goods, at its meeting of 17 November 2016, I hereby make, under my own responsibility as Chairperson, the following factual report to the General Council:

Pursuant to the 2015 Ministerial Decision¹ instructing the General Council, *inter alia*, to hold periodic reviews on the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce in its sessions of December 2016 and July 2017, based on the reports submitted by the WTO bodies entrusted with the implementation of the Work Programme, the Council for Trade in Goods placed the issue of the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce on the agenda of its meetings held on 15 April, 14 July and 17 November 2016. At these meetings, the Chair invited delegations to express their opinions and to make suggestions as to how to work on the preparation of the periodic reviews to be held in the General Council at its sessions of December 2016 and July 2017.

The Goods Council addressed the issue of the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce at its meetings of 15 April, 14 July, and 17 November 2016. The factual report to the General Council concerning the discussions on e-commerce that took place at the 15 April and 14 July 2016 meeting is contained in document G/C/57.

At the Goods Council meeting of 17 November 2016, China and Pakistan introduced a communication circulated to the General Council, the Goods and Services Councils, and the Committee on Trade and Development², pertaining to the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce. China noted the complexity of the e-commerce debate, including in particular the wide digital gap among Members, and expressed the desire to proceed progressively in an inclusive manner on e-commerce, with a focus on realizing pragmatic progress at MC11.

The Council took note of the statements made by 22 delegations (Argentina; Australia; Brazil; Canada; Colombia; Costa Rica; Ecuador; the EU; Hong Kong, China; India; Japan; Korea; Mexico; Paraguay; Peru; Russian Federation; Singapore; South Africa; Switzerland; Chinese Taipei; the United States; and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) which referred to various aspects of the communication from China and Pakistan.

The issue of the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce will remain on the agenda of the meetings of the Goods Council to take place in April 2017 and in the second quarter of 2017, with a view to fulfilling the mandate given to it and report to the General Council, in July 2017, on discussions held in the Goods Council on e-commerce.

¹ Document WT/L/977

² JOB/GC/110/Rev.1, JOB/CTG/2/Rev.1, JOB/SERV/243/Rev.1, and JOB/DEV/39/Rev.1