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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 12 and 13 November 2018, I hereby make, under my own responsibility as Chairperson, the following factual report to the General Council.

Pursuant to the 2017 Ministerial Decision¹ instructing the General Council, *inter alia*, to hold periodic reviews of the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce (WPEC or WP) in its sessions of July and December 2018 and July 2019, based on the reports submitted by the WTO bodies entrusted with the implementation of the Work Programme, the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG or the Goods Council) placed the issue of the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce on the agenda of its meetings held on 23 and 26 March, 3 and 4 July, and 12 and 13 November 2018. 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 review to be held in the General Council at its sessions of July and December 2018.

This report only concerns the CTG meeting that took place on 12 and 13 November 2018.²

At that meeting, I reported on the informal open-ended consultations that I had held on 2 November 2018 concerning a possible workshop on electronic commerce and trade in goods. Written comments and suggestions that had been submitted by various Members on the possible topics that could be addressed during the workshop were distributed in advance to facilitate the discussion. Following the discussion, in which only a few Members intervened, it was noted that at this stage there was no consensus to hold such a workshop, and that, consequently, I would not pursue consultations on this issue.

Following my report on the outcome of these consultations, three delegations took the floor. Of these, two reiterated their support for the workshop and suggested that it should focus on trade in goods, and highlighted the importance of having experience-sharing information sessions regarding cross-border E-commerce and trade in goods. The other delegation indicated that the lack of consensus on the proposed workshop suggested a need for a more pragmatic approach to the Work Programme. At that meeting, China also provided a summary of the main elements included in its recently adopted Electronic Commerce Law.

¹ Document WT/L/1032.

² The factual report to the General Council concerning the discussions on E-Commerce that took place at the CTG's 23 March and 3 July 2018 meetings is contained in document G/C/60.