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**INFORMAL WORKING GROUP ON MSMEs**

PRESENTATIONS PROVIDED TO THE WTO INFORMAL WORKING GROUP ON MSMEs

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The following communication, dated 24 March 2023, is being circulated at the request of the Coordinator of the Informal Working Group on MSMEs.

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**Brief Description:** The present document includes the list of all presentations provided by participating organizations in the meetings convened by the WTO Informal Working Group on MSMEs from 18 February 2021 to 7 April 2022. The presentations are sorted by thematic category and date. Each presentation includes a summary along with its corresponding institution, title and link.

**Thematic categories:** 1) Implementation of the December 2020 Package; 2) Innovation; 3) Intellectual Property Tools; 4) Low-value shipments; 5) MSME Provisions in Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs); 6) MSME Financing; 7) Sustainability; 8) Trade Facilitation; 9) Cyber-Readiness; 10) Digital; 11) Other Topics.

**Period covered:** 18 February 2021 – 13 March 2023.

## **1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECEMBER 2020 PACKAGE**

### **1.1 Global Trade Helpdesk update, ITC (IO)**

24 September 2021

1.1. The International Trade Centre (ITC) updated the Group on latest developments regarding the Global Trade Helpdesk (GTH). Members were invited to submit, ideally by the end of this year, information to feed into the GTH as per Annex 2 of the 2020 package.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/gth\\_sept21.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/gth_sept21.pdf)

### **1.2 Global Trade Helpdesk update, ITC (IO)**

8 February 2022

1.2. The ITC gave a presentation on the Global Trade Helpdesk's plans for 2022, including navigational videos, possible new training with the ICC Centres for Entrepreneurship, and new tools it is working to develop, including AI enhanced search of HS codes. The ITC also provided information on the verification surveys it has received from MSME Group members so far, as agreed in Annex 2 of the 2020 Package.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/822022\\_e/Global\\_Trade\\_Helpdesk\\_Update.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/822022_e/Global_Trade_Helpdesk_Update.pdf)

### **1.3 Global Trade Helpdesk update, ITC (IO)**

7 April 2022

1.3. Update on the national information as per Annex 2 of the package and planned GTH informational webinars. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/gth\\_update\\_7april22.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/gth_update_7april22.pdf)

### **1.4 Global Trade Helpdesk update, ITC (IO)**

13 March 2023

1.4. Representatives from the ITC provided a presentation of their updates, outreach and plan of work for the Global Trade Helpdesk.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/global\\_trade\\_helpdesk.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/global_trade_helpdesk.pdf)

### **1.5 Good regulatory practices to improve SPS measures, WTO (Secretariat)**

8 February 2022

1.5. The Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) presented their new report on Good Regulatory Practices in the context of SPS measures, which include greater transparency and reviewing changes with a small business lens. The guide offers practical guidance and encourages public and private sector stakeholder engagement. The Guide aims to improve compliance, reduce administrative costs and increase trust in new SPS regulations. All of this ties in closely with Annex 4 of the December 2020 package to promote MSME inclusion in regulatory development in the area of trade, and members noted the importance of encouraging close work and dialogue with other WTO bodies and committees to identify synergies.

[https://www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF\\_GRP\\_Guide\\_EN.pdf](https://www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_GRP_Guide_EN.pdf)

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## **1.6 Update on the Implementation of the 2019 Integrated Database (IDB) decision, WTO (Secretariat)**

7 April 2022

1.6. Update on the implementation of the 2019 IDB decision that streamlines processes and allows integration of additional data elements. Canada and Uruguay have already established direct transmission of related data and others are in advanced talks, all of which would ensure updated and accessible information for businesses.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/idb\\_7april22.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/idb_7april22.pdf)

## **2 INNOVATION**

### **2.1 Developing countries challenges in innovation and policy aspects, UNCTAD (IO)**

4 May 2021

2.1. Clovis Freire, an economist from UNCTAD's division on Technology and Logistics, presented to the MSME Group on the importance of innovation, especially in developing economies, in order to create new products that lead to economic development, diversification and stronger, broader exports. Unfortunately, MSMEs are more challenged to innovate because of market failures that make it hard to protect their intellectual property; system failures, like those that make it challenging for MSMEs to access capital; and "capability failures", or lack of adequate education and training. Innovation and trade works in both directions: trade can provide opportunities for "emulation" by MSMEs when they insert themselves into upstream production, creating low-cost value-added parts or repairing imported items, which then leads to more specialization and innovation as they learn and even future exports. Targeted policy instruments can be an important way to increase innovation and bring MSMEs onboard, including through education, infrastructure, industrial parks, special economic zones, and industrial institutes.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/unctad\\_innovation0521.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/unctad_innovation0521.pdf)

### **2.2 World Trade Report 2020 – Government policies to promote innovation in the digital age, WTO (Secretariat)**

4 May 2021

2.2. Over the past decade, many economies have been adopting new types of policies aimed at technological upgrading and transitioning to a new digital economy. The WTO World Trade Report 2020 looked at addressing what has changed with the digital economy, what are the policy implications, and what is the role of trade and the WTO given this trend. Government R&D funding was found to be important to promote innovation in an economy generally, especially in developing regions, and, for MSMEs, direct financial support was the main instrument to encourage their R&D. Trade has an important role in that open trade policies contribute to innovation through GVCs and cooperation in the multilateral trading system has supported the expansion of digital sectors, which in turn provide opportunities for digitally connected MSMEs and new areas for economic exploration and innovation. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/wtr2020\\_0521.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/wtr2020_0521.pdf)

### **2.3 Briefing on discussions on MSMEs, IP and innovation in the context of the TRIPS Council, WTO (Secretariat)**

26 July 2021

2.3. Related to support of MSME IP, the WTO Secretariat updated the Group on discussions at the TRIPS Council. Over the past seven years 116 interventions on the issue of MSMEs and innovation have been made to the Council, touching on issues from national strategies to technical assistance. At its foundation, the IP system is about innovation and the availability of technology to promote social and economic welfare. Members have reported on a range of initiatives to increase MSME understanding and use of IP, including workshops, dedicated portals and practical support while others have implemented innovation policies like tax incentives or incubation centers. Still, there are a wide range of challenges to MSMEs for using the IP system, including cost, enforcement, and a high reliance on informal IP or "knowhow". Members of the Group expressed interest in working

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more closely with the TRIPS Council and with WIPO to explore ways to address these challenges.  
[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/260721\\_trips.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/260721_trips.pdf)

#### **2.4 SMEs and innovation experiences in Ecuador, Ecuador's Ministry for Production, Trade, Investment and Fisheries (Member)**

26 July 2021

2.4. Ecuador also shared its national experience regarding the importance of rural MSMEs and their various projects to support innovation by these businesses. Support has been focused in particular on re-forestation and the flower and agri-business sectors.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/260721\\_ecuador.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/260721_ecuador.pdf)

### **3 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY TOOLS**

#### **3.1 Tools on intellectual property for SMEs, WIPO (IO)**

26 July 2021

3.1. WIPO delivered a presentation that underscored MSMEs in Europe that make use of intellectual property (IP) have 70% more revenue than those that do not, however only 9% of European MSMEs use IP as part of their strategy. Given that MSMEs are less likely to make use of IP, WIPO presented its work to develop intellectual property tools to support MSME Growth and innovation, such as the IP Diagnostic Tool and Inventor Assistance Program to match developing economy inventors and MSMEs with patent attorneys. WIPO also continues to look into IP as a form of collateral to increase MSME access to finance and it was suggested this could be something for the MSME Group to consider in relation to Annex 6 of the December 2020 MSME Package on access to trade-related finance. WIPO also suggested the group consider adding a point on IP in the "checklist of MSME-related information to voluntarily include in WTO Trade Policy Reviews" appended to Annex 1 on the collection of MSME-related information in TPRs of the December 2020 package. Lastly, he also invited members of the Group to share information on WIPO's tools with their constituents.  
<https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=q:/INF/MSME/R27.pdf&Open=True>

#### **3.2 IP tools and support for MSMEs, WIPO (IO)**

8 November 2021

3.2. MSMEs are important to the global economy, but they do not always know how to make the best use of IP or its potential benefits to increase competitiveness and visibility as well as to avoid the risk of unknowingly infringing on proprietary content. WIPO is actively working to develop resources for MSMEs related to IP. These include an IP diagnostic tool, IP for business guides (this includes guides currently in development on IP and technologies like artificial intelligence and Big Data), a list of intermediaries and IP support offices that MSMEs can contact, IP management support, and information on IP and finance such as IP-backed finance. The WIPO IP Business Division is also currently supporting a number of projects and activities for MSMEs in the economies of many MSME Group members. WIPO also works to provide training and support services through the development of business support units in national IP offices, mapping of MSME intermediary institutions and their services, the Investor Assistance Program (IAP) and patent drafting programs.  
[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/wipo\\_presentation.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/wipo_presentation.pdf)

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## 4 LOW-VALUE SHIPMENTS

### 4.1 A proposal to simplify duty and tax collection on imported low-value shipments, Global Express Association (Other)

18 February 2021

4.1. The Global Express Association GEA presented a video to the Group (available on their website) noting how the Internet has allowed for more MSME participation in trade and that the volume of small parcel shipments has increased dramatically in recent years. However, customs procedures, designed for large shipments, have not kept in step with this change, causing difficulties for many small traders at the border. To address this, the GEA has a proposed system of three options for consideration by national governments to simplify the process and to focus border formalities on health, security and safety rather than inefficient tax collection. The first option would be to eliminate specific duties for parcels under a certain value and instead apply a flat rate on these entries at the border. The second option would be to follow the model implemented by Canada for imports under a value threshold which allows for three tariff categories (for example all textiles are grouped into the first category), with only one tariff for any product within the category, rather than a multitude of tariffs based on the HS codes of individual products. This would significantly reduce classification difficulties. The third option would be to simplify or eliminate import duties altogether, as in Australia (which mostly charges a flat 5 per cent duty on imports) and Singapore (which is almost entirely duty free), and instead implement a goods and services tax (GST) or value-added tax (VAT) on imports just as applies to domestic transactions. More information on the GEA proposal can be found here. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/gea\\_18221.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/gea_18221.pdf)

### 4.2 Australia's experience on Goods and Service Tax (GST) on low value imported goods, Australia's Department of Home Affairs (Member)

4 May 2021

4.2. The Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs presented to the MSME Group on their national e-commerce experience given their goods and services tax (GST) on low-value imports. Australia has a de minimis threshold of AUD 1,000 on customs duties, GST and reporting obligations, introduced in 2000 before the significant rise in e-commerce. The increase in e-commerce and a rise in cross-border low-value shipments meant a significant GST revenue loss, which the government has tried to counter with a new GST on low-value goods, implemented on 1 July 2018. This new GST requires overseas businesses with a turnover greater than AUD 75,000 to register with the Australian Taxation Authority. GST is then collected at the point-of-sale, while at the border the AUD 1,000 de minimis level remains, thereby preventing double-taxation. Registration is simplified and traders using an e-commerce marketplace are not required to register separately, rather the e-commerce marketplace itself must register and follow the necessary requirements, thereby assisting MSME trade.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/australia\\_gst0521.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/australia_gst0521.pdf)

### 4.3 Canada's low-value shipments policy regarding the application of customs duties, Canada Border Services Agency (Member)

24 September 2021

4.3. Canada's low-value shipment policy regarding the application of customs duties can simplify tariffs and duties at the border. Canada has both a low-value threshold of CAD 3,300 and a renewed de minimis for courier remission orders (CIROs) only. Canada applies different categories of CIRO and postal import remission order (PIRO) de minimis thresholds for imports depending on their origin with exceptions for certain imports such as alcohol and tobacco. Canada also applies the Generic Harmonized System (GHS) for qualified postal and courier shipments, which is a simplified classification process that allows imports to be categorized in one of three generic MFN tariff rates provided the value is CAD 500 or less. Goods also need to be imported for personal or household use and certain goods, including alcohol and tobacco, are ineligible. Overall, Canada has found that GHS has a minimal impact on tariff revenue, no impact on sales tax revenue, and it facilitates the processing of low-value shipments.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/canada\\_sept21\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/canada_sept21_e.pdf)

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#### **4.4 Low Value Shipment Duty/Tax Collection, Global Express Association (Other)**

12 October 2022

4.4. The Global Express Association (GEA), an organization representing three of the largest global express carriers i.e., DHL, FedEx and UPS, returned to the MSME Group to present on two proposed low value shipment (LVS) duty/tax collection processes, their common features, and a proposal for a global duty/tax rate repository. As detailed in two documents submitted to the MSME Group (INF/MSME/P/2 and INF/MSME/P/3) and the GEA's 2021 presentation, two main options are proposed to simplify the duty compliance burden for traders – namely a simplified flat-rate duty for all dutiable imports below a certain de minimis threshold or a simplified classification structure based on plain language with varying tax/duties attached to these categories. One of the key features of these two systems are their "vendor models" that rely on the seller as the source of information. These two systems would benefit from cross-border cooperation among customs officials given that buyers must pay the duties but vendors hold the information. A global repository, which the GEA suggests that the WTO could hold, might contain information related to national duty/tax rates, the type of simplified duties applied, the value threshold, the commodity list, and the GST/VAT or other tax rates if applicable. Ultimately, an automated system relying on standardized information would be the most efficient and beneficial to firms of all sizes. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/gea\\_low\\_value\\_shipment\\_duty\\_collection.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/gea_low_value_shipment_duty_collection.pdf)

### **5 MSME PROVISIONS IN REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS (RTAS)**

#### **5.1 MSME provisions in Regional Trade Agreements, WTO (Secretariat)**

24 June 2021

5.1. The Secretariat presented on a report completed in 2019 on MSME references in regional trade agreements (INF/MSME/W/6/Rev.1), including the updated background database available at the MSME provisions in regional trade agreements webpage ([https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmesandtra\\_e/rtaprovisions\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmesandtra_e/rtaprovisions_e.htm)). The Secretariat was invited to update the 2019 report for discussion at a forthcoming meeting. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/rta\\_240621.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/rta_240621.pdf)

#### **5.2 MSME-related language in Regional Trade Agreements, WTO (Secretariat)**

7 April 2022

5.2. Updated report regarding MSME references in regional trade agreements (INF/MSME/W/6/Rev.3) and the associated online database. More than half (56 per cent) of in-force RTAs contain at least one reference to MSME-related provisions and the share and variety of such provisions continues to increase. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/rtas\\_7april22.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/rtas_7april22.pdf)

### **6 MSME FINANCING**

#### **6.1 National Supply Chain Finance Initiatives and Platforms, IFC (IO)**

4 May 2021

6.1. Aksinya Sorokina joined the MSME Group to present on supply chain finance (SCF), its importance for MSMEs, and the role of public entities and industry associations to promote SCF. SCF allows for frequently smaller, sub-suppliers or buyers, to access finance based on the reputation of a larger, anchor, company and the contracts it has made with the supplying or buying company. In order for SCF to function optimally, it requires visibility of the entire underlying trade flow, which new digital technologies have made increasingly possible. Public institutes and industry associations have an important role to bring awareness to SCF as a finance tool for MSMEs and to push for an appropriate legal and regulatory framework. Governments also need to support digital infrastructure and technological capacity to build up SCF programs and increase local bank interest in SCF for MSMEs, potentially through risk-assumption. Ms. Sorokina laid out a number of different, specific, approaches that Governments can take to support SCF, from an "enabling framework provider



approach" that lays out an appropriate regulatory environment for SCF to a "financing approach" where public institutions can provide SCF directly at preferred rates. Ultimately, there is no "one-size-fits-all" for SCF, but it can be a powerful tool to bring MSMEs into trade.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/national\\_scf0521.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/national_scf0521.pdf)

## **6.2 Unlocking financial inclusion for MSMEs, Global Legal Entity Identifier Foundation (Other)**

8 February 2022

6.2. The Global Legal Entity Identifier Foundation (the GLEIF) joined the Group to present the Legal Entity Identifier (LEI), a life-long code owned by the respective legal entity. The GLEIF highlighted the benefits of the LEI through supporting presentations by four financial institutions and businesses with a case study from Zimbabwe. First, Yann Desclercs, Managing Director of Cornerstone Advisory Plus, a west African financial compliance firm, explained the importance of the LEI, especially for African financial institutions. The LEI can help financial institutions to increase their compliance standards, thereby reducing their exposure to "derisking" when the international financial community offloads certain institutions because they assume they will require excessive due diligence. Next, Munyaradzi Kamhozo and Erasmus Bhunu from the NMB Bank in Zimbabwe, reported that the LEI can significantly reduce the time to validate the identity of MSMEs and can decrease the cost of doing business for traders who are especially exposed. Finally, Second Muguyo from Copperwares, a Zimbabwe copper and silver goods manufacturer, explained how the LEI would make finance more accessible to small businesses like Copperwares, assuring their business sustainability.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/822022\\_e/GLEIF\\_Presentation.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/822022_e/GLEIF_Presentation.pdf)

## **7 CROSS-BORDER PAYMENTS**

### **7.1 Current state of e-commerce and payments, dLocal (organized by Member)**

4 May 2021

7.1. Sergio Fogel, co-founder of dLocal, a Uruguay e-payment company, presented on the current state of e-commerce and payments. Currently, there is a lot of innovation and change occurring in this field and no clear winning process has emerged. What is clear, is that e-commerce is hindered by a number of regulatory frictions, both in terms of the movement of goods but also for payments. There is a need for governments both to protect small e-payment innovators that may be able to bring new solutions to the market, as well as facilitate the integration and interoperability of these new technologies for cross-border transactions. <https://dlocal.com/>

### **7.2 Cross-border payments for MSMEs Post-Covid, World Economic Forum (Other)**

13 October 2022

7.2. The World Economic Forum (WEF) organized an information session on Cross-border payments for MSMEs. In their introductory presentation, the WEF underscored the importance of basic infrastructure and digital payments, especially in the face of a pandemic. Further, the changing digital landscape for MSMEs has highlighted the need for payments to cover new digital services and e-commerce, many of which are linked with MSMEs, but which face challenges ranging from lack of infrastructure or interoperability to cyber-crimes. The WEF closed with four calls to action. The first was for continued investment in basic infrastructure for the digital economy, both physical and regulatory such as the MLETR guidelines. Second, the WEF call for a commitment to interoperable systems to ensure that payments can be made across borders. Third, the WEF proposed a commitment for international coordination pertaining to innovation and regulations. The final call to action was for a commitment for multi-stakeholder engagement in the design of regulations. All of these are essential for functioning cross-border digital payment systems. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/wef\\_cross-border\\_payments\\_for\\_msme\\_post-covid.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/wef_cross-border_payments_for_msme_post-covid.pdf)

### **7.3 Payments to advance growth for all, Inter-American Development Bank (IO)**

13 October 2022

7.3. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) provided information on the growth of digital payment use in Latin America and noted Brazil as a case study of a leading economy with regards to adoption and use of innovative payment technology. In fact, Brazil adopted a national payment system, PIX, which has allowed over 40 million people to make their first bank transfer in 2020 and far outpaced other economies' payment system growth. Going further, the IADB described a joint program with the WEF called Payments to Advance Growth for All (PAGA), which was launched in 2021. Key takeaways from PAGA include the need to build good regulatory practices to reduce market barriers and promote innovation; encourage public-private sector collaborations; explore digital trade agreements to secure cross-border digital payments; and facilitate new technology and innovation. Overall, the IADB noted the need for interoperability among payment systems; the importance of ensuring end-to-end payments for businesses just as for individuals; digital identities, consumer protection and cyber security; and review of payment licensing. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/iadb\\_payments\\_to\\_advance\\_growth\\_for\\_all.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/iadb_payments_to_advance_growth_for_all.pdf)

### **7.4 Inclusive trade and cross-border payments, Visa (Other)**

13 October 2022

7.4. Visa described the changing payment environment and the way that economic digitalization can lead to greater equity and inclusion. For example, women entrepreneurs are increasingly creating "born digital" and "born global" firms, relying on digital sales and exports from initialization of their business. Cross-border payments also go beyond trade and e-commerce, they are tied closely with remittances which continue to increase worldwide. Visa underlined the importance of payment interoperability, but perhaps even more importantly regulatory interoperability between economies' payments systems. One best practice in this regard that was cited in the presentation was the Singapore-Australia Digital economy Agreement. This model demonstrates how economies can consider digital payment interoperability and standardization to increase secure, functioning payment transactions. Ultimately, to increase access and ensure a more equitable digital economy, focus will need to be turned towards providing citizens with the opportunity to access digital networks; to increase digital skills; and to develop trust in digital systems and products. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/visa\\_inclusive\\_trade\\_and\\_cross\\_border\\_payment\\_s.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/visa_inclusive_trade_and_cross_border_payment_s.pdf)

## **8 SUSTAINABILITY**

### **8.1 SME & Africa Strategies, United Nations Global Compact (IO)**

24 September 2021

8.1. The UN Global Compact gave a presentation on its new strategy to engage with businesses of all sizes. Given the importance of MSMEs to the global economy, the UN Global Compact has recognized that the only way to fulfil the SDGs is to bring these firms on board with the Compact's ten principles focused on human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption. Recognizing the resource challenges and everyday business realities of MSMEs, UN Global Compact has implemented digital onboarding and benchmarking for MSMEs including an onboarding readiness tool along with tailored programming tools like playbooks, accelerators, and peer learning groups. The UN Global Compact has also recently developed an Africa strategy focused on SMEs in the region. These strategies will focus on local resources through the UN Global Compact's Local Networks to increase SME engagement and provide on-the-ground support for sustainable development. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/un\\_global\\_compact\\_sept21.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/un_global_compact_sept21.pdf)

### **8.2 GreenToCompete, ITC (IO)**

8 February 2022

8.2. The ITC reported to the MSME Group on their GreenToCompete initiative to build MSME capacity and strengthen their resilience in green markets. Recognizing the competitive forces in trade that

are affecting businesses, both negative from value chain risks due to climate hazards and environmental externalities created by business including emissions and waste as well as positive forces like new environmental business opportunities, the ITC looked for ways to activate green trade focusing on circularity, climate resilience and the bioeconomy. Through new GreenToCompete Hubs (<https://www.sustainabilitygateway.org/hubs-landing/>), access to green finance via a mapping of national sources, platforms for dialogue and thought leadership, the ITC hopes to help set the policy agenda and support MSMEs to drive green change. As part of the initiative, the ITC has developed a toolkit on the circular economy, coaching programmes for MSMEs, and are in the process of developing a platform where MSMEs can do an environmental assessment of their business.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/822022\\_e/ITC\\_Green\\_to\\_Compete.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/822022_e/ITC_Green_to_Compete.pdf)

### **8.3 G20 Policy Toolkit for Green via Digital MSMEs, UNCTAD (IO)**

8 February 2022

8.3. On behalf of G20 Italian Presidency, UNCTAD presented the "Non-Binding Policy Toolkit on Promoting Born Green via Digital MSMEs and Entrepreneurship in Global Supply Chains", which was developed in collaboration with the ITC, OECD, World Bank and WTO. The green and digital economies are two entry points for MSMEs and are tied in with the G20 priorities of people, planet and prosperity. Recognizing new challenges that MSMEs face accessing green finance, digital technologies, online marketplaces, compliance with green regulations and access to new knowledge and skills, a toolkit with a framework of five elements was developed. These elements include enhancing entrepreneurship education and skills; facilitating technology exchanges and innovation; improving access to finance; promoting partnerships and linkages; and optimizing the regulatory environment. It is hoped that this toolkit can inform further discussions and exchanges of best practices, provide a reference for those looking to support MSMEs in the green and digital economies, and can inform policy support and technical assistance.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/822022\\_e/UNCTAD\\_G20\\_toolkit\\_on\\_MSMEs.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/822022_e/UNCTAD_G20_toolkit_on_MSMEs.pdf)

### **8.4 Supporting MSMEs on Accounting and Financial, Sustainability and SDG Reporting, UNCTAD (IO)**

8 February 2022

8.4. UNCTAD also presented on the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting (ISAR). Created by ECOSOC and housed at UNCTAD, ISAR seeks to generate consensus building, provide policy guidance, and give technical assistance on financial and sustainability reporting. ISAR also looks to support enterprise reporting for assessing the private sector contribution to implementation of the SDGs. Key areas of focus also include MSME accounting and reporting. Currently, ISAR is in the pilot phase of developing an e-accounting platform for MSMEs. It has also developed guidance on core SDG indicators and a training manual on accounting for MSMEs. Improving MSME reporting and accounting capacity can help these businesses improve their credit worthiness and access to finance.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/822022\\_e/UNCTAD\\_Supporting\\_MSMEs\\_reporting.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/822022_e/UNCTAD_Supporting_MSMEs_reporting.pdf)

### **8.5 The Climate Impact of SMEs, ICC (IO)**

13 March 2023

8.5. The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) presented [The Climate Impact of SMEs report](#), which was launched at COP27 with their partner Sage. This report seeks to promote a global approach to climate regulation and put a renewed emphasis on MSMEs as key stakeholders for decarbonization. The report surveyed more than 4,000 SMEs in the United Kingdom and South Africa about their views on sustainability and how they apply to their businesses. Overall, the study found that MSMEs are eager to take climate and environmental action, however this action is often limited due to financial constraints. That is, MSMEs will tend to take action on "low-hanging" fruit when it comes to decarbonization and 16 per cent even report that switching to more environmental practices can attract new customers. However, MSMEs face significant hurdles when it comes to more substantial environmental changes. Overall, the report identifies 11 policy recommendations to help MSMEs transition to more sustainable business practices, including adapting standards and

reporting requirements; providing tailored guidance and training; fostering the use of digital technologies; and addressing trade barriers.

## **9 TRADE FACILITATION**

### **9.1 Promoting integration of MSMEs in international trade, UN/CEFACT (IO)**

18 February 2022

9.1. UN/CEFACT presented information to the Group on the Integrated Services for MSMEs in International Trade (ISMIT) project which has been completed and approved since its initial presentation in 2019. ISMIT is a single submission portal (SSP) meant to bridge the gap between an e-commerce transaction made on a platform and national single windows or other government customs and trade procedures. Although similar to a Single Window in that it seeks to connect traders to regulatory procedures and offers facilities to streamline the official trade process, it is not run by the government and could be offered by many different private and non-governmental providers. In addition, the ISMIT goes beyond regulatory procedures covered by Single Windows and could provide additional services related to legal advice, insurance, logistics, foreign exchange settlement, etc. and could even act as a source to document small traders' transaction histories for access to finance. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/unece\\_18221.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/unece_18221.pdf)

### **9.2 EIF VANUATU: ASYCUDA-CDS Communication Platform Project, Enhanced Integrated Framework (Secretariat)**

26 July 2021

9.2. The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), briefed the Group on its ASYCUDA-CDS Communication Platform Project in Vanuatu, developed in partnership with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Universal Postal Union (UPU). As ecommerce exploded the volume of small packages being sent across borders, it was recognized that national postal services and customs administrations needed new methods to facilitate this trade, which is often conducted by MSMEs. With this in mind, the cooperation launched a project in Vanuatu to facilitate clearance by exchanging pre-arrival/pre-departure information among agencies and automate customs clearance processes. The UPU and UNCTAD have identified 23 LDCs where an interface between the UPU's customs declaration system (CDS) and UNCTAD's ASYCUDA could also be established and interested MSME Group members were invited to reach out to learn more. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/260721\\_eif.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/260721_eif.pdf)

### **9.3 Briefing on SPS/TBT notification alert system ePing and related capacity building activities in Vietnam, WTO (Secretariat)**

26 July 2021

9.3. The WTO Secretariat introduced the new Vietnamese version of the e-Ping platform, an online alert system that helps companies follow new developments on standards and regulations for traded goods. ePing's services allow for private sector stakeholders, in particular MSMEs, to filter through the large amount of information to stay informed on regulatory developments. Given that language barriers were identified as a main obstacle to access regulatory updates, ePing was translated and additional sectors were included, allowing MSMEs in Viet Nam to directly follow and react to measures that affect them. Given the positive results from this project, there is a hope to find similar opportunities in the future. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/260721\\_eping.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/260721_eping.pdf)

### **9.4 Global Trade Hub for Internationalization of Brazilian MSMEs, Brazil Mission to WTO (Member)**

24 September 2021

9.4. Global Trade Hub, a UK-funded project in partnership with the Brazilian government, aims to create a digital solution to help Brazilian MSMEs internationalize. The initiative is based on UN/CEFACT's ISMIT concept to bring e-commerce trade services together in a platform for easier MSME access and trade in services. The Global Trade Hub will bring together private sector service

providers, Brazilian federal government agencies and national business associations among others to create "The Amazon of export services" for Brazilian businesses looking to internationalize. The Global Trade Hub was implemented in September 2021 and intends to be operational by 2022. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/brazil\\_sept21.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/brazil_sept21.pdf)

## **9.5 Supporting SMEs Through Trade Facilitation Reforms: Toolkit for Policymakers, ITC (IO)**

12 October 2022

9.5. The International Trade Centre (ITC) provided the MSME Group with a presentation on MSMEs and trade facilitation based on their 2018 report [Supporting SMEs Through Trade Facilitation Reforms: Toolkit for Policymakers](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/itc_supporting_msme_through_trade_facilitation_reforms.pdf). The Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) is especially important for MSMEs whose competitiveness is impacted twice as much as large firms by trade inefficiencies. Within the TFA, the ITC has identified 19 TFA provisions that impact MSMEs most, either positively or negatively, and provided recommendations for how to address reforms bearing a MSME-perspective in mind. Besides the strong recommendation for publishing information in plain language and implementing commonly used solutions like e-payments, the ITC also identified the disproportionately high benefits MSMEs can gain from Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) status. However, the ITC noted that MSMEs are sometimes prevented from joining AEO programs because of criteria related to volume or frequency of shipments as well as financial requirements, all of which the ITC recommends eliminating. The ITC also noted the need for e-payments to streamline the customs process, especially in economies where there are large "unbanked" segments of the population and many traders cannot send traditional money transfers. To close, it was underscored that "reforms that work for larger firms might not benefit MSMEs, but reforms that work for MSMEs will also benefit larger firms".

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/itc\\_supporting\\_msme\\_through\\_trade\\_facilitation\\_reforms.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/itc_supporting_msme_through_trade_facilitation_reforms.pdf)

## **10 CYBER-READINESS**

### **10.1 Canadian SME Cybersecurity Initiatives & Programs, Government of Canada (Member)**

18 February 2021

10.1. Although many MSMEs believe they are too small to be targeted for a cyber breach, Verizon data for 2019 indicate that more than two fifths of attacks were against MSMEs. To address this problem, CyberSecure Canada, a cyber security partnership initiative for MSMEs developed by the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, was created. Canada's national cyber security strategy, administered through the Centre for Cyber Security, has three high level goals – to increase resilience of Canadian systems; to foster an innovative and adaptive cyber ecosystem through skills and talent; and to provide effective leadership, governance and collaboration. CyberSecure Canada is a voluntary certification programme based on 13 "security control areas" or best practices on cyber security, such as developing an incidence response plan; creating data backups with encryption; and implementing user authentication protocols. Launched in 2018, the programme is currently in its pilot phase through fall 2021 at which point it will move to a Canadian National Standard. Outreach and engagement are currently ongoing, with four certificates already issued and 175 SMEs undergoing the certification process. CyberSecure Canada also intends to engage with other national initiatives including the UK Cyber Essentials and the US Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) programme to ensure mutual recognition and reciprocity. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/cybersecure\\_canada\\_18221.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/cybersecure_canada_18221.pdf)

### **10.2 Strengthening MSME Cyber Security, TechUK (organized by Member)**

4 May 2021

10.2. TechUK is an industry association representing UK businesses on digital and cyber matters. It works directly with government and its MSME members to develop technology policy and create an environment conducive to technological change. One of the biggest concerns when it comes to MSMEs and technology is cyber security. Despite a growing cybersecurity sector in the UK, MSMEs

face a number of challenges to access these services including the costs of these services; lack of skills and awareness of their business' cyber risks; and brain drain as employees with cyber security skills can gain higher compensation elsewhere. Actions the UK government has taken to protect MSME cyber security includes developing a National Cyber Security Strategy 2016-2021, creating specific cyber security advice for MSMEs, and creating a Cyber Essentials certification program for firms. Businesses that sign up for Cyber Essentials can be reviewed for security defects and receive recommended actions to improve their digital security.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/cyber\\_security0521.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/cyber_security0521.pdf)

### **10.3 Importance of cybersecurity for digital trade, Coalition to Reduce Cyber Risk (CR2) (Other)**

24 September 2021

10.3. CR2 presented to the Group on the importance of cybersecurity for digital trade. Currently there are more than 80 different national strategies for critical infrastructure in place that define what critical infrastructure is in scope but do not specify ex ante security requirement or a process and timelines for incident reporting. The digital ecosystem is reliant on trust, and cyber-attacks compromise that trust. Companies need to be able to take an integrated, risk-based approach to cybersecurity, however many prescriptive policies prevent firms from doing so. There is also a need by governments to follow international standards and best practices because divergent laws can act as non-tariff barriers requiring companies to duplicate their efforts or even exit a market out of fear of legal repercussions. A consistent use of standards can reduce complexity and compliance costs, thereby increasing MSME participation in trade, including international trade. Alignment with international standards can also increase security outcomes thereby protecting MSMEs which are the most vulnerable to cyber-attacks. For examples of cyber language in trade agreements, CR2 noted cybersecurity cooperation in CPTPP, the G20 Finance Ministers Declaration, RCEP and the Australia-Singapore DEA to name some.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/cr2\\_sept21.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/cr2_sept21.pdf)

### **10.4 GCA Cybersecurity Toolkit for Small Business, Global Cyber Alliance (Other)**

7 April 2022

10.4. Presentation on the Global Cyber Alliance's (GCA) approach to cyber readiness for MSMEs and the GCA free-to-use toolkit of MSME resources. Overall, the GCA is focused on building a secure and trustworthy internet including by building a domain trust community for information sharing and best practices. Tools that the GCA has developed for MSMEs include six guided steps for better MSME cyber security, skills assessments and video trainings. These steps include knowing what a business has already; applying relevant updates, such as for software; using strong passwords; ensuring systems are backed up and recoverable; and finally, protecting email. The Toolkit itself is accessible via an interactive website with a menu bar, guided popups, video introductions and handbooks on the relevant topics. Besides a toolkit for business, the GCA also offers cybersecurity toolkits for other potential users including mission-based organizations and financial institutions.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/gca\\_toolkit\\_7april22.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/gca_toolkit_7april22.pdf)

## **11 DIGITAL**

### **11.1 The Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records – MLETR, Abu Dhabi Global Markets (other)**

24 June 2021

11.1. ADGM presented on its various initiatives to transform Abu Dhabi's business and finance landscape through digitization, the development of frameworks related to APIs and crypto assets, and the creation of regulatory sand boxes for digital and FinTech. ADGM's labs in particular are meant to help make it possible for FinTechs and start-ups to get their ideas and solutions in front of established banks. ADGM encourages all banks to participate in these labs where a problem is issued, and solutions can be proposed and reviewed. Separately, ADGM is also currently working on an SME platform to create an ecosystem where SMEs input their data and opt to receive offers from advisors providing finance, legal services, etc. in order to bring SME banking to a new level. This marketplace



will be available at the end of 2021. the regulatory landscape was also underscored, including how MLETR can support initiatives such as these.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/adgm\\_240621.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/adgm_240621.pdf)

### **11.2 Bahrain's ETR Law, Economic Development Board of the Kingdom of Bahrain (Member)**

24 June 2021

11.2. The Economic Development Board of the Kingdom of Bahrain presented on its experience as the first economy in the world to implement electronic transferable records (ETR) for specific trade documents and instruments. Unlike the MLETR, the Kingdom of Bahrain chose to specifically name the trade documents it would make electronically transferable, namely bills of lading, letters of credit, warehouse receipts, cheques, bills of exchange, promissory notes, and other documents or instruments (in respect of delivering goods or paying a fixed amount of money) specified in a regulation. They simultaneously issued a new Electronic Communications and Transactions Law (ECTL) to ensure consistency and avoid duplication with ETR. The Kingdom of Bahrain concluded by noting that ETR was not an isolated initiative, it required a number of complementary initiatives to implement not only in terms of making new laws available on the books ranging from personal data protection and revamping the electronic transactions law to ECTL, but also promoting the use of cloud computing and government digitalization as well as providing training and pursuing continued customs modernization initiatives.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/bahrain\\_240621.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/bahrain_240621.pdf)

### **11.3 Creating a modern digital trade ecosystem, ICC-UK (IO)**

24 June 2021

11.3. The ICC-UK presented on a recent joint report with Coriolis looking into the ways that digitizing transferable documents could support SME growth. Given the sheer number of trade documents, making them electronic can be a very practical way to support MSMEs. Governments play a critical role in this digitization and the benefits can be enormous based on the study, namely an estimated £25 billion in new economic growth and 25% more SME Trade by 2024; up to a 75% reduction in the number of days needed to process documents and up to £224 billion in efficiency savings. However, it's important that global harmonization is pursued when it comes to this transfer, which is provided by the MLETR framework. The ICC-UK made a call to action of the MSME Group to help to raise the visibility of the Model Law and of its importance for MSME growth and trade digitalization. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/iccuk\\_240621.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/iccuk_240621.pdf)

### **11.4 Overview of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records – MLETR, UNCITRAL (IO)**

24 June 2021

11.4. UNCITRAL began the meeting with a presentation on the history and purpose of the Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR). Adopted in 2017, MLETR enables the use of various trade documents in electronic format, including bills of lading and promissory notes. It also supports the use of emerging technologies like blockchain, IoT and smart contracts, but is a technology neutral agreement. MLETR is an enabling law – it does not create new regulations, rather it is built around functional equivalence rules meaning the same law applies to both electronic and paper-based documents. By enabling electronic records, MLETR makes it possible to put multiple regulatory documents together in one file, with permissions for each document selectively given based on relevance. It was noted that enacting MLETR can enable cross-border data flows, improve supply chain governance, reduce compliance costs, safeguard against fraud, and minimize manual inputs, all of which are especially useful for small businesses for whom compliance with regulations is a burden. Ultimately, MLETR is seen as a key enabler of digital trade financing and paperless trade facilitation moving the entire process online and reducing duplication of data. Currently it has been adopted in Bahrain, Singapore, and Abu Dhabi.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/uncitral\\_240621.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/uncitral_240621.pdf)

## **12 STANDARDS TO DIGITALIZE TRADE**

### **12.1 United Kingdom-Kenya Trade Logistics Information Pipeline (TLIP), IOE&IT (Other)**

15 July 2022

12.1. The Institute of Export and International Trade (IOE&IT) presented to the Group on their United Kingdom-Kenya Trade Logistics Information Pipeline (TLIP). By contributing to address trade-related challenges such as regulatory complexity, limited information access and burdensome logistics, TLIP aims to facilitate the trade process for exporters, especially for MSMEs. TLIP is a suite of digital solutions around three components. The first is a digital engine designed on distributed ledger technology (DTL) – commonly referred as blockchain technology. The second is an information engine that supports accessibility and availability of regulatory and market information. The third is a policy and governance engine that assists the sustainability of the digital and information engines. While TLIP is currently undergoing a testing phase, it intends to provide its potential users with a range of benefits, including: market exploration and discovery; connectivity and visibility between supply chain actors; tracking and traceability of goods; transparency on commercial and regulatory transactions; trade information infrastructure for virtual integrated border management; and coordinated frameworks for analysis and assessments on non-tariff barriers. TLIP focuses on United Kingdom-Kenya bilateral trade opportunities that can result under their Economic Partnership Agreement, and involves a range of partners playing a role in trade-related processes, such as importers, exporters, wholesalers, logistics providers, customs authorities, and other key institutions across the public and private sectors. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/uk\\_kenya150722.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/uk_kenya150722.pdf)

### **12.2 United Kingdom-Kenya Trade Logistics Information Pipeline (TLIP), IOTA (Other)**

13 October 2022

12.2. In a follow-up of the 15 July 2022 presentation by the IOE&IT on the United Kingdom-Kenya Trade Logistics Information Pipeline (TLIP), the IOTA Foundation presented more details on its work with TradeMark East Africa to integrate TLIP into a pilot program. Fundamentally, IOTA noted there is a need for standards harmonization across trade in order to digitalize and automate international trade. Currently, the trade process remains full of paper and by the time a customs official sees these many documents they are removed from the actual supplier by at around three to four levels. Rather than rely on declarations, the IOTA Foundation is working to use blockchain so that each party in the transaction has access to the information and can share data in a trusted way. However, to make this system work, information must be standardized. By doing so, it not only makes automation possible but also reduces the burden of the trade process given that as much as 80% of the information is identical across documents (for example contact information, product, weight etc.). To conclude, the ICC-WTO Standards Toolkit was referenced as a starting point to increase standardization.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/tlip\\_how\\_standards\\_increase\\_data\\_flow.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/tlip_how_standards_increase_data_flow.pdf)

## **13 OTHER TOPICS**

### **13.1 Activities of the OECD Working Party on SMEs and Entrepreneurship, OECD (IO)**

18 February 2021

13.1. The OECD's presentation highlighted the recently updated OECD Scoreboard on financing SMEs and Entrepreneurs with information on 48 economies and a thematic chapter on the evolution of SME financing policies. It was also noted in the presentation that a forthcoming paper on trade finance in the digital era would be released soon. The presentation also showed how MSMEs have been at the center of the Covid-19 pandemic and bankruptcies are expected to rise sharply in 2021. Most economies have implemented business support measures beginning with deferral of payments and increased access to credit moving to structural policies such as acceleration of digitalization and internationalization. It was highlighted that many new options theoretically exist to assist MSMEs in the digital era, however challenges remain. From a policy perspective, efforts need to be made to make the finance process digital from end to end; interoperability needs to be prioritized; banks



need to be incentivized to provide digital solutions; and finally, MSMEs themselves need have access to digital tools. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/oecd\\_18221.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/oecd_18221.pdf)

### **13.2 Policy options to support rural MSMEs, Brazil Mission to the WTO (Member)**

4 May 2021

13.2. On rural MSMEs, Brazil proposed that the MSME Group could exchange best practices on rural MSME policies and hold a dialogue on trade facilitation and rural MSMEs in relation to Annex 3 of the package (the recommendation on trade facilitation and MSMEs). Rural MSMEs make up a significant portion of the economic participants in developing economies. Ensuring that they have access to international markets can benefit these actors by ensuring they have demand for their products and increasing efficiencies.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/rural\\_msme\\_brazil0521.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/rural_msme_brazil0521.pdf)

### **13.3 Legislative Guides on Business Registration and Limited Liability Enterprises, UNCITRAL (IO)**

24 September 2021

13.3. The United Nations Commission for International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) gave a presentation on the legislative guides on business registration and limited liability enterprises, both of which have important implications for MSMEs. These legislative guides join a host of UNCITRAL texts that apply to the whole of a MSME lifecycle, including UNCITRAL arbitration rules, technical notes on online dispute resolution and UNCITRAL Model Law on Secured Transactions. The new legislative guides came from work by UNCITRAL's Working Group I, which was established in 2013 to work on reducing legal obstacles throughout the lifecycle of MSMEs. Key features of the new legislative guide on key principles of a business registry are easy access to information, such as making registration information easily and publicly accessible (including across borders); creating a fully electronic process with all information located in one online location; providing guidance on the registration process as well as preservation of records for future access; and finally an improved registry system with regularly updated information and unique identifiers for users. For the legislative guide on limited liability enterprises, legislators sought to create a flexible business form that could be tailored to MSMEs and that could be supported by stand-alone national legislation. Ultimately, these guidelines look to benefit start-ups and informal MSMEs who are looking to join the formal economy.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/uncitral\\_sept21.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/uncitral_sept21.pdf)

### **13.4 Outcomes of the Global MSME Forum 2021 and Updates on the APEC Boracay Action Agenda, Philippines' Government<sup>1</sup> (Member)**

8 February 2022

13.4. The Philippines updated the Group on the APEC Boracay Action Agenda (BAA) as well as the outcomes of the 2021 Global MSME Forum on Greening SME Finance. The Boracay Action Agenda was initiated in 2015 and has five main priorities, namely trade facilitation, access to finance, the digital economy, capacity building, and support for women MSMEs. A recent study found that initiatives of the BAA focused on women, the digital economy and capacity building and included the creation of an APEC MSME Marketplace; APEC Trade Repository; APEC Authorized Economic Operator Compendium; APEC Strategy for Green, Sustainable and Innovative MSMEs; and La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth. A number of issues were also identified that still need addressing, including a strong need for MSME e-learning and skill certification programmes, increasing MSME access to finance, and establishing a common standard for intellectual property evaluation in APEC economies. The BAA also found a need for promoting green and SMART MSMEs as enterprises of the future. The Philippines noted its desire to collaborate with WTO Members in common priority areas of cooperation for MSMEs from the BAA including on transparency and information sharing; trade facilitation and e-commerce; participation in regulatory development; gender equality and women's economic empowerment; aid-for-trade and technical assistance and

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<sup>1</sup> This presentation contains relevant content for the sections on MSME financing, sustainability, trade facilitation, and digital.

capacity building; and access to finance.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/822022\\_e/Philippines\\_APEC\\_Boracay\\_Action\\_Agenda.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/822022_e/Philippines_APEC_Boracay_Action_Agenda.pdf).

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