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WORK PROGRAMME AND MORATORIUM ON ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

COMMUNICATION FROM CHAD ON BEHALF OF THE LDC GROUP

The following communication, dated 14 November 2019, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Chad on behalf of the LDC Group.

As the expiration of the e-commerce decision approaches at the end of 2019, the LDC Group calls on the four designated bodies under the Work Programme, to delve deeper into the benefits and costs of e-commerce for LDCs. LDCs are interested in both aspects of this platform and the relevance of e-commerce in improving trade for LDC traders and consumers. The LDC Group appreciates the submissions of others in the context of the Work Programme over recent years, including those on data flows and on the customs duties moratorium.

In its interventions regarding the Work Programme at the Council for Trade in Goods and the Council for Trade in Services, the LDC Group has identified some challenges for LDCs in the utilization of e-commerce for consideration in the WTO e-commerce Work Programme including the following:

- Limited knowledge among enterprises, government players, and regulators of e-commerce;
- Lack of mechanisms to start up enterprises in e-commerce business;
- Concerns about possible adverse effects of e-commerce and how to mitigate them;
- Limited existence of and affordable information technology (ICT) infrastructure (noted above, e.g., internet, broadband coverage, electricity, telecommunications infrastructure and services);
- Access to credit cards (the main vehicle for on-line payments) and high incidence of unbanked consumers or limited experience with on-line payments;
- Adequate facilities for physical delivery of purchases online;
- User mistrust of quality and effectiveness;
- Inadequate online payment facilities;
- Trade finance for LDC e-commerce enterprises;
- Limited skills among enterprises desiring to use e-commerce and ICTs strategically for B2B, B2C, or B2G buying and selling goods and services;
- Lack of statistical data on electronic commerce in LDCs;

- Weak legal and regulatory frameworks where needed for example consumer protection laws; and
 - Lack of clarity on the nature of electronic transmissions and the ability of LDCs to apply internal taxes versus customs duties, where appropriate.
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