WTO E-Commerce Negotiations in Context of COVID-19 Pandemic

Submitted by: Singapore, Japan
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Challenges for the JSI amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

• Travel restrictions --> virtual meetings across time-zones
  • Less efficient than face to face meetings
  • Limited by time due to time-zone difference
• Difficult issues may require ministerial guidance.
  • Uncertainty on MC12 dates
• Domestic agencies’ focus on COVID-related work priorities.
• Need to step up efforts on transparency and outreach
<table>
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<th>Themes</th>
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| Openness           | **Cross-border data flows, Location of computer facilities**  
|                    | • Regulating the restriction which hinders the cross-border data flow  
|                    | ⇒ **Key to high standard/commercially meaningful outcome. Discussions intensify this year**                                                |
|                    | **Customs duties on electronic transmissions**  
|                    | ⇒ **How to add value to WTO-wide (multilateral) moratorium renewed over years**                                                               |
| Trust              | **Personal information, Source code, Cryptography**  
|                    | • Protection of personal information  
|                    | • Regulating the request for disclosure of source code and algorithms  
|                    | ⇒ **Substantive discussions and textual convergence expected this year**                                                                    |
|                    | **Consumer protection, Spam**  
|                    | • Ensuring to protect consumers and personal information  
|                    | • Promoting the participation into the digital economy  
|                    | ⇒ **Substantial progress made toward textual convergence in small-group meetings**                                                         |
| Facilitation       | **E-signatures and authentication, Paperless trading, etc**  
|                    | ⇒ **Substantial progress made toward textual convergence in small-group meetings**                                                         |
| Market Access      | **Expand the range of specific commitments on WTO agreement**  
|                    | • Expansion of commitments on goods and services related to e-commerce  
|                    | ⇒ **Substantive discussions expected this year**                                                                                           |
| Horizontal issues  | **Cybersecurity, Transparency, Capacity building, Legal framework**  
|                    | ⇒ **Substantive discussions on technical items expected this year**                                                                       |