



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

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Session: I

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

Submitted by: Singapore, Japan



**Preparatory Meeting for the Symposium on
APEC Supporting the WTO Negotiations on
Trade Related Aspects of E-Commerce
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WTO E-commerce negotiations in context of COVID-19 pandemic

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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

Outline of issues of the WTO E-commerce negotiations in JSI

Themes	Main issues
Openness	<p>Cross-border data flows, Location of computer facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulating the restriction which hinders the cross-border data flow <p>⇒ Key to high standard/commercially meaningful outcome. Discussions intensify this year</p>
	<p>Customs duties on electronic transmissions</p> <p>⇒ How to add value to WTO-wide (multilateral) moratorium renewed over years</p>
Trust	<p>Personal information, Source code, Cryptography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of personal information • Regulating the request for disclosure of source code and algorithms <p>⇒ Substantive discussions and textual convergence expected this year</p>
	<p>Consumer protection, Spam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring to protect consumers and personal information • Promoting the participation into the digital economy <p>⇒ Substantial progress made toward textual convergence in small-group meetings</p>
Facilitation	<p>E-signatures and authentication, Paperless trading, etc</p> <p>⇒ Substantial progress made toward textual convergence in small-group meetings</p>
Market Access	<p>Expand the range of specific commitments on WTO agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of commitments on goods and services related to e-commerce <p>⇒ Substantive discussions expected this year</p>
Horizontal issues	<p>Cybersecurity, Transparency, Capacity building, Legal framework</p> <p>⇒ Substantive discussions on technical items expected this year</p>