



UNCITRAL and the Law of Digital Trade

*Side event during the fifty-fifth session of the
United Nations Commission on International Trade Law*

Thursday 7 July 2022, 1.30 – 2.45 pm

(Eastern Daylight Time, UTC-4)

In-Person Venue: Conference Room 1

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Background

UNCITRAL has mandated its secretariat to carry out exploratory work on legal aspects related to the digital economy. In so doing, it singled out artificial intelligence (AI) and automation in contracting (including smart contracts), the use of distributed ledger technology (including blockchain), and data transactions as topics of particular relevance. The Commission at its 55th session will consider further work by Working Group IV on automation and on data transactions, which was covered in the two proposals¹ building on initial conceptual discussions that took place at the Working Group session in April 2022.

Focus

This side-event would provide informative exchanges with a wide range of stakeholders on the intersection between the bilateral, regional and plurilateral negotiations on digital trade, such as discussions under the WTO JSI on E-commerce, Digital Economy Partnership Agreements (DEPAs) or digital cooperation chapters in international trade agreements and the way UNCITRAL texts (past and future) provide the legal infrastructure for implementing digital trade agreements.

¹ The two proposals:

- (1) Summary of the Chairperson and the Rapporteur of the work of Working Group IV (Electronic Commerce) at its sixty-third session (New York, 4-8 April 2022), available at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/V22/028/06/PDF/V2202806.pdf?OpenElement>
- (2) Legal issues related to digital economy – proposal for future work on data transactions Note by the Secretariat <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/V22/024/80/PDF/V2202480.pdf?OpenElement>

Programme

1.30 – 1.40 pm: Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Greetings: Ms. Anna Joubin-Bret, Secretary, UNCITRAL
- Opening remarks: Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, Acting Envoy on Technology, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations
- Co-Opening remarks: Ambassador Jongin Bae, Chargé d’Affaires of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

1.40 – 2.10 pm: Session 1 – Trends in the digital economy

Moderator: Ms. Athita Komindr, Head, UNCITRAL Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific

- Mr. Torbjörn Fredriksson, Head of the E-commerce and Digital Economy Branch, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to present the findings of UNCTAD’s Digital Trade Report
- Ms. Barbara Kotschwar, Executive Director, Visa Economic Empowerment Institute, to present views from industry
- Mr. Ziyang David Fan, Head of Digital Trade, World Economic Forum, to present the findings of the report on “The promise of TradeTech: Policy approaches to harness trade digitalization”
- Ms. Marilia Maciel, Head of Digital Commerce and Internet Policy at Diplofoundation, to present on trade policy

2.10 – 2.40 pm: Session 2 – International agreements on digital trade

Moderator: Mr. Alexander Kunzelmann, Secretary to Working Group IV and Legal Officer, UNCITRAL

- Mr. Tang Wei Guo, First Secretary (Economics), Permanent Mission of Singapore to the WTO, to present on Singapore’s work on digital trade including trade agreements
- Ms. Maiko Meguro, Director for International Digital Strategy and International Affairs, Commerce and Information Policy Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), Japan, to speak on non-trade law regulatory aspects as well as technical aspects regarding materializing DFFT
- Ms. Pierina Giachetti Guzmán, SUBREI, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile, to present on the Digital Economic Partnership Agreement
- Mr. Jung-Hyun Park, Director for International Legal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Republic of Korea, “Where UNCITRAL encounters Digital Trade Agreements: Korea's Experience”

2.40 – 2.45 pm: Concluding Remarks

- Ms. Anna Joubin-Bret, Secretary, UNCITRAL