**IMF \_ WTO Virtual regional workshop on e-commerce for Arab countries**

***Draft programme***

**Proposed dates:**  23 November – 3 December 2020

**Objective:** To enhance the understanding of the e-commerce discussions at the WTO, including recent developments with regard to the 1998 Work Programme on Electronic Commerce and ongoing discussions/negotiations under the Joint Statement Initiative on E-commerce.

**Target audience:** capital-based officials, basic level, that have a substantive interest/responsibilities in WTO matters.

**Background material:**

* The Work Programme on Electronic Commerce (WT/L/274)
* Secretariat Background Note (JOB/GC/73 and Corr.1, and JOB/GC/73/Add.1)
* E-commerce page on the WTO website: <https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/ecom_e/ecom_e.htm>
* The Joint Statements on electronic commerce (WT/MIN(17)/60 and WT/L/1056)
* Background notes for the trade dialogues
* Information note: E-Commerce, Trade and the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Programme:** 4 sessions of 1h30/2h00 twice a week

* **Session 1 – Overview of e-commerce discussions at the WTO: Work Programme on Electronic Commerce**

This session will provide participants with the background and history of the e-commerce discussions at the WTO, from the establishment of the Work Programme on E-commerce in 1998 to the more recent developments in the e-commerce discussion.

* **Session 2 –the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions**

This session will provide an overview of the issues that Members have raised in relation to e-commerce. It will especially focus on the issues surrounding the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions and the different considerations regarding its extension.

* **Session 3 – Joint Statement on Electronic Commerce: overview of objectives and discussions**

This session will look at the launch of discussions by a group of Members under the Joint Statement on Electronic Commerce and will explore the background, participants and objectives of this initiative.

* **Session 4 – Overview of the issues identified in the Joint Statement discussions**

This session will look at the issues that are being discussed under the JSI, with a focus on some of the main issues identified under five broad areas: enabling e-commerce; openness and e-commerce; trust and e-commerce; cross cutting issues, including development, transparency and cooperation; telecommunications; and market access and customs duties on electronic transmissions.