E-commerce is emerging as one of the key priorities for policymakers and business people alike in the response to COVID-19. Online ordering has provided a vital supply channel for many, and has preserved jobs even while large sections of the economy have been shut down.

For developing and least developed countries, already behind in adopting e-commerce, the need to accelerate digital transformation is apparent: the economic consequences of the crisis demand ambitious solutions including innovative measures to promote inclusive access to the digital economy and its power to create opportunities and jobs.

Time to reflect, prepare and act

As part of ITC’s programme activities on the AfCFTA and within the context of its e-commerce programme – ecomConnect, ITC alongside UNECA (ATPC, IDEP) is hosting a day of conferences and workshops to provide practical recommendations that can set a framework for action in 2020, provide a platform for testimonials from the private sector and demonstrate research and services to policymakers and the business community.

The day begins with two thematic panels – the first considering the implications of the AfCFTA on e-commerce, the second on inclusivity and recovery.

The afternoon will propose a series of technical workshops on how to address particular aspects of e-commerce – for entrepreneurs and business support organisations.
Africa, the AfCFTA and e-commerce*

How relevant is e-commerce to the economy of Africa and its economic integration? This session will review the how inclusion of e-commerce within the AfCFTA negotiations has implications for policymakers and the private sector, and why this takes a higher level of urgency and importance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hon. Minister Soraya M. Hakuziyaremye, Minister of Trade and Industry, Rwanda
HE Mr. Albert Muchanga, Commissioner for Trade and Industry, AUC
Ms. Dorothy Tembo, Executive Director ad interim, ITC
Dr. Elsie S. Kanza, Head of Africa and Member of Executive Committee, WEF Africa
Mr. Henri Monceau, Directeur de la Francophonie Économique et Numérique, OIF

Moderator: Mr. Stephen N. Karingi, Director, Regional Integration and Trade Division, UNECA
Welcome: Ms. Aissatou Diallo, Senior Portfolio Manager, ITC – AfCFTA Coordinator

E-commerce: inclusivity and economic recovery*

This session will explore how e-commerce can be relevant in offering widespread and accessible opportunity to disadvantaged communities in Africa and beyond. Speakers from the private sector will explain how e-commerce firms and entrepreneurs have reacted to the crisis and offer recommendations for navigating the post crisis period.

H.R.H. Princess Abze Djigma, Special Envoy of the President of Burkina Faso for SDGs and Climate Change, Chair H.R.H. Princess Abze Djigma Foundation
Mr. Jamie Alexander MacLeod, Trade Policy Expert African Trade Policy Centre, UNECA
Mr. Daniel Yu, Founder & CEO, Sokowatch, Kenya
Mr. Francis Nkurunungi, COO and Co-founder, Xente, Uganda
Mr. Daniel Annerose, CEO, Manobi, Senegal
Ms. Esther Asante, Managing Director, OTI, Ghana
Mr. Rezwanul Haque Jamil, Head of e-commerce, EK Shop, Bangladesh

Moderator: Mr. James Howe, Senior Adviser Marketing, Branding and E-commerce, ITC
Welcome: Mr. Anders Aeroe, Director, Division of Enterprises and Institutions, ITC

Organized by the International Trade Centre (ITC) with United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)/ Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP)/African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC)

All webinars are scheduled in Central European Time
*Simultaneous translation into French available
ecomConnect Day
Thursday, June 4 2020

Afternoon: technical workshops

13.30-14.00 (CET)
ITC ecomConnect

E-commerce response to COVID-19: practical responses from the ecomConnect community
This session will present key findings from a worldwide survey conducted through the ecomConnect platform and consultation with a selected group of experts and entrepreneurs on the lessons and immediate recommendations for small businesses.

14.00-15.00 (CET)
Carmen Gerea
UX Researcher & Service Designer

Market research for e-commerce: find profitable niche markets through keyword research
This session will help you understand where to find information on niche markets with a high demand and relatively low competition for your products or services.

15.00-16.00 (CET)
Rashina Gajjar
Copywriter and Messaging Strategist

E-commerce content strategy: ensuring that your company and its products are attractive to customers online
Having great content that showcases your company and its products is the basis of all e-commerce. This session will show you how to set up and manage a content strategy for e-commerce: introducing and revising the basics and offering some advanced tips on how to optimize your content for search engines.

16.00-17.00 (CET)
Chris O’Shea
Logistics & E-commerce Expert

E-commerce logistics: opening the potential for effective local and international deliveries
This session considers how logistics and transportation can be an enabler for e-commerce entrepreneurs to deliver goods in domestic and international markets, offer great service including the possibility of returns.

17.00-18.00 (CET)
Famke Schaap
Trade Adviser

International e-commerce: understanding the tax and duty implications of selling goods across borders
We examine how taxes and duties are treated on e-commerce goods and the implications for small business wanting to access international markets. A particular focus is given to the EU and US markets from the point of view of sellers from other regions.

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