

First Global Cross-Border E-Commerce Conference

Beijing Declaration

Beijing, China

10 February, 2018

The growing pace of cross-border e-commerce, dynamically driven by innovative technologies, presents many great opportunities and several challenges to international trade. In order to understand this ever-changing economic landscape and preparing to meet expectations in a sustainable manner, the international community is called upon to work together with all the concerned stakeholders along the supply chain in the various international fora, in particular the WCO and other international organizations.

Against this backdrop, the First Global Cross-Border E-Commerce Conference, held from February 9 to 10, 2018 in Beijing, brought together nearly 2000 representatives from Customs administrations, other government agencies, e-commerce operators, international organizations, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), consumers and academia from various countries and regions.

The Conference, which has provided an excellent opportunity for discussions and information sharing on sustainable development of cross-border e-commerce, recognized the huge opportunity to boost economic competitiveness, provide new growth engines, develop new trade models, drive new consumption trends and create new job opportunities. The Conference also acknowledged the relevance of cultivating transparent digital economy policy making.

Noting that cross-border e-commerce requires new approaches and policy orientations, the Conference called upon all stakeholders to support its balanced, transparent, non-discriminatory and sustainable development, in an inclusive, strategic, innovative and collaborative manner. The Conference also acknowledged the need for proactively addressing current and emerging challenges, linked in particular to revenue collection, the protection of intellectual property rights and the security and safety of citizens.

Enhancing Benefits of E-Commerce through Trade Facilitation

The Conference recognized the increased importance of trade facilitation for cross-border e-commerce and the importance of full implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in order to enhance the contribution e-commerce makes to lowering costs and increasing efficiency in international trade. The Conference encouraged all stakeholders to take effective measures, including collaboration between government agencies, e-commerce operators and other stakeholders, for example in terms of platform interfacing, data sharing expanding the scope of single windows to include all stakeholders, and exploring the use of new technologies to enhance data visibility and risk management. The Conference also took note of various pilot projects, such as the Electronic World Trade Platform (eWTP) and African Alliance for E-Commerce (AAEC).

The global e-commerce boom provides an opportunity to work together to enhance and streamline procedures for revenue collection.

The Conference supported cooperation among international organizations to promote convergence and harmonization of international standards in relation to cross-border e-commerce, so as to enhance fairness, transparency, stability, predictability and security of the online trade environment.

Controlling Safety and Security Risks and Increasing Compliance

The Conference identified safety and security as prerequisites for the sustainable development of cross-border e-commerce.

In this context, all stakeholders were encouraged to implement effective, transparent and proportionate measures to ensure safety, security and integrity of the e-commerce landscape, by leveraging the “electronic”, “data-driven” and “data rich” characteristics of cross-border e-commerce.

The Conference called on participants to exercise due diligence in accordance with their roles and responsibilities in the supply chain, so as to ensure compliance and enhance the transparency along the e-commerce chain.

Being Strategic and Leveraging Information Technologies

The Conference noted the significant role of modern information and communication technologies, especially those relating to mobile devices, in fuelling the development of cross-border e-commerce, and called upon all stakeholders to give their full attention to the revolutionary changes brought about by the integration of cross-border e-commerce with such technologies as the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, block chain, big data and cloud computing.

Stakeholders were invited to evaluate the importance of data and coordinate their efforts in order to achieve data-based intelligent management and make better use of information available in the digital arena, while recognising the need to maintain fair competition and protect data privacy across jurisdictions.

Establishing a sound Ecosystem through Joint Efforts

The Conference emphasized the need to create, through a comprehensive coordination involving all stakeholders, a sound ecosystem, which will enable cross-border e-commerce to flourish.

The Conference addressed the necessity to strengthen cooperation among the international Customs community through the exchange of information, mutual recognition of control and facilitation mechanisms and mutual assistance with regards to law enforcement and facilitation, i.e. by optimizing the platform of the WCO Working Group on E-Commerce. The Conference recognized the importance of enhancing cooperation between the WCO and other international organizations, by exploiting synergies to ensure complementary collaboration in the area of e-commerce.

Promoting Balanced Development through Enhanced Regional Cooperation

The Conference recognized the contribution of cross-border e-commerce in reshaping economic growth models, promoting increased globalization, and ensuring economic recovery and prosperity of developing countries, as well as the growth of MSMEs.

The Conference discussed the role that regional initiatives can play in providing opportunities for the development of cross-border e-commerce. All stakeholders were encouraged to work in the spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, and mutual learning and benefit. It suggested that economic, digital and infrastructural development can be achieved through collective efforts, initiatives and open and transparent legal frameworks. The Conference advocated regional cooperation to enhance transportation, telecommunication, and financial infrastructures, in line with national and regional demands and conditions.

All stakeholders were encouraged to enhance policy dialogues/exchanges, experience sharing and coordination of procedures so as to ensure the smooth flow of information, finance and goods.

Speeding up Standards Formulation to Ensure Sustainable Growth

The Conference recognized the need to expand the scope of cooperation, given the number of stakeholders involved in cross-border e-commerce. Government agencies are encouraged to strengthen dialogue with e-commerce related stakeholders and work together with them to explore and formulate new standards.

The Conference acknowledged the strong message from the international Customs community through the recently issued WCO Communiqué and Resolution. The Conference endorsed, and encouraged all parties to subscribe to, the principles laid down in the WCO's Luxor Resolution on Cross-Border E-Commerce¹.

The Conference highly appreciated the contributions made to date by WCO Member Administrations and other stakeholders towards the ongoing formulation of the WCO Cross-border E-Commerce Framework of Standards. The Conference acknowledged some key elements that would be considered to further develop the Framework of Standards.

Acknowledging the value of this forum, the Conference suggested the Global Cross-border E-Commerce Conference be held every two years in different regions.

The Conference appreciated the valuable contributions from all the stakeholders present, and expressed satisfaction with its fruitful outcomes in terms of this non-binding declaration. The Conference thanked the WCO and China Customs for an excellent organization of the Conference.

¹ http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/about-us/legal-instruments/resolutions/policy-commission-resolution-on-cross-border-ecommerce_en.pdf?la=en

