








WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU COMMERCE
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL COMERCIO

REGIONAL TRADE POLICY COURSE (E-RTPC) FOR ARAB AND MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON DIGITAL TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ARAB AND MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES
24 MARCH 2021 – 10H00-12H00 CET

The process of digital transformation has been changing and shaping the face of economic and social development around the world. The Covid 19 pandemic has accelerated this phenomenon in ways and to an extent that could not have been imagined only a year ago. Digital trade, as part of that process, has acquired increasing importance with expanding opportunities for small and medium size enterprises, including in Arab and middle eastern countries. It nevertheless has also given rise to considerable challenges. In particular, the widening digital divide and the urgent need for policy and regulatory reforms. It also highlighted the critical role of international trade cooperation.

This Roundtable will look into current trends and developments in the region, focusing on digital trade/e-commerce. It will bring together different perspectives from an international regional organization, national policy and regulatory authority, private sector the latest developments in the WTO.

This Roundtable will also mark the conclusion of the WTO Regional Trade Policy course organized for Arab countries, Members and Observers in the Organization.

Session & time	Program and topics of discussion	Speaker
10:00 – 10:10	Introductions	RTPC Unit
10:10 – 10:20	<u>Introduction of the topic:</u> Digital Trade and Economic Development of Arab and Middle Eastern Countries	 <u>MODERATOR</u> Mr Hamid MAMDOUH Senior Counsel, King & Spalding LLP
10:20 – 10:30	<u>Topic 1</u> The impact of Covid 19 and growth of digital trade on traditional economic activity in the Arab and Middle East region. Current challenges and future trends	 Dr. Heba Abdel MONEM Chief, Studies and Statistics Division Economic Department Arab Monetary Fund
10:30 – 10:40	<u>Topic 2</u> The importance of digital trade in the economic diversification of Arab and Middle East economies. Challenges and opportunities	 Ms. Rima Younes El KHATIB Deputy-Director Head of International Relations Division Foreign Affairs Department Central Bank of Lebanon
10:40 – 10:50	<u>Topic 3</u> Digital solutions for financial inclusion- a private sector perspective	 Mr Amr Kamal ABOU ELAZM Chairman and CEO Tamweely Micro Finance
10:50 – 11:00	<u>Topic 4</u> E-commerce, digital trade and the WTO. What's at stake for Arab and Middle Eastern countries	 Dr. Maha GABBANI Legal Advisor Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the WTO
11:00 – 11:55	Moderated questions and answers session	Moderator and panelits
11:55 – 12:00	Closing	RTPC Unit