

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

Advancing Free Trade for Asia-Pacific **Prosperity** 

# The 2nd APEC Cross-Border E-Commerce Training Workshop (APEC CBET II)

**APEC Committee on Trade and Investment** 

November 2021



Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

# The 2<sup>nd</sup> APEC Cross-Border E-Commerce Training Workshop (APEC CBET II)

Accelerating Digital Transformation to Achieve Inclusive Growth

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#### **Table of Contents**

I.	Executive Summary	2
II.	Introduction	3
III.	Summary of Workshop	5
	Opening Remarks	
	Welcome Speech	
	Session 1: Challenge and Development of Global Trade Amid Pandemic	
	Session 2: Digital Economy Integration in Asia and the Pacific	
	Session 3: Global Cross-border E-Commerce Trend Amid Pandemic	
	Session 4: How Trade Policy Helps MSMEs Leverage Digital Supply Chain	
	Session 5: Creating Cybersecurity Strategy	
	Session 6: Building a Resilient Supply Chain through Digital Transformation	
	Session 7: Technology Accelerates Global Trade Transformation	
	Session 8: Innovative Finance Boosts Global Trade	
	Session 9: Best Practice: E-Commerce Loan for MSMEs	
	Session 10: Innovative Marketing Trends of Cross-border E-Commerce	
	Session 11: Reconnecting Supply Chain Amid Pandemic	
	Session 12: Logistics Development of Cross-Border E-Commerce	
	Session 13: Best Practice: Enabling Social E-Commerce with Innovative Supply	/ Chain
	Solutions	
	Session 14: Virtual Tour to VisionNav Robotics	
	Session 15: Reopening Borders – Opportunities and Challenges	
	Session 16: Closing Remark	
IV.	Conclusion	27

### Appendix: Workshop Agenda

#### I. <u>Executive Summary</u>

China organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> APEC Cross-Border E-Commerce Training Workshop (APEC CBET II), co-sponsored by Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Peru, and Russia, on September 8, 15 & 22, 2021.

The APEC CBET II focused on topics such as the challenge and development of global trade, the global cross-border e-commerce trend amid pandemic, how to build a resilient supply chain, and create cybersecurity strategy. It provided government officials with ideas and inspiration for digital economy, public policy planning, digital trade transformation, and best practices.

Six recommendations were summarized in this event:

- Public and private sectors shall collaborate to promote technology transformation.
- Companies shall pay attention to data quality, efficiency for identification, enforcement, and risk assessment.
- Governments shall provide transparent policies and regulations for the private sector.
- Human resource are our most important market asset, and how we upscale them and enable them to embrace those technologies is a significant factor in business success.
- The public and private sectors shall provide educational and capacity-building programs to train up students and workforces.
- Companies need to have cyber risk management strategies of the supply chains.

Celebrity guest speakers, including famous scholars and experts, senior executives from trade associations and private sectors, shared unparalleled insights and experience developing the digital economy. Government officials from more than 10 APEC economies, including Canada, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and others, and multiple Ministries and Departments of China and other representatives, a total of more than 150 people, participated in the workshop.

#### II. Introduction

China organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> APEC CBET II, co-sponsored by Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Peru, and Russia, on September 8, 15 & 22, 2021.

COVID-19 has caused tremendous economic loss and unprecedented health crises across the globe. Meanwhile, it has accelerated the shift towards a more digital world. The APEC CBET-II was set to specifically respond to the urgent needs of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) for digital transformation.

Similar to the first APEC CBET in 2019 in Beijing, the online workshop this year aimed to provide participants with insights and key trends related to the surge in digital trade. It could enable trade departments to adjust policies facilitating free and open trade through the digital initiatives and practices in their respective economies and empower MSMEs to embrace the digital transformation during and after the pandemic.

The APEC CBET II covered a broad spectrum of topics, including challenges and opportunities of global trade, the APEC digital economy integration, trends of cross-border e-commerce, trade policies of improving the efficiency and management of supply chain, and reopening borders initiatives. Meanwhile, it also focused on execution, from public policymaking, standard operation, innovative technology adoption, cross-border payments, financial loans, logistics construction, a new style of e-commerce, to the latest marketing trends.

Through keynote speeches, panel discussions, fireside chat, and best practices sharing from guest speakers around the world, the APEC CBET II laid a solid groundwork to facilitate policies in line with the latest digital trade trends, leverage new technologies, Fintech and logistics solutions, and practical marketing tools, to help trading companies, particularly MSMEs doing cross-border e-commerce take advantage of opportunities and deal with challenges during and after the pandemic. Most importantly, the workshop tended to streamline efforts from APEC member economies and navigate the right path to have a successful digital transformation and achieve inclusive growth in the region.

The APEC CBET is an ideal event for sharing the capacity-building expertise. Since its establishment in 2018, the APEC CBET has trained over 80,000 MSMEs across 25 economies.

Government officials from more than 10 APEC economies, including Canada, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and others, over 150 people participated in the workshop.

Meanwhile, this event invited MSMEs to share their voices with government officials, taking their recommendations into their public support. MSMEs from Australia; China; Chile; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Malaysia; Peru; Thailand shared their requests and recommendations in digital transformation, particularly how governments can support them.

In addition to opening and closing parts, the APEC CBET II facilitated 15 sessions:

- Session 1: Challenge and Development of Global Trade Amid Pandemic
- Session 2: Digital Economy Integration in Asia and the Pacific
- Session 3: Global Cross-border E-Commerce Trend Amid Pandemic
- Session 4: How Trade Policy Helps MSMEs Leverage Digital Supply Chain
- Session 5: Creating Cybersecurity Strategy
- Session 6: Building a Resilient Supply Chain through Digital Transformation
- Session 7: Technology Accelerates Global Trade Transformation

- Session 8: Innovative Finance Boosts Global Trade
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- Session 10: Innovative Marketing Trends of Cross-border E-Commerce
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- Session 12: Logistics Development of Cross-Border E-Commerce
- Session 13: Enabling Social E-Commerce with Innovative Supply Chain Solutions
- Session 14: Virtual Tour to VisionNav Robotics
- Session 15: Reopening Borders Opportunities and Challenges

#### III. Summary of Workshop

#### **Opening Remarks**

Mr Yu Belin, Director General, Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs of Ministry of Commerce of China, delivered an opening remark and unveiled the APEC CBET II. He extended welcome to all participants and appreciation to guest speakers.

In his opening remarks, Director-General Yu said the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the global economy. According to World Economic Forum, the global trade volume declined 8.9% last year, setting the worst record since the economic crisis in 2008. However, the pandemic has catalyzed the visualization of trade. The global cross-border e-commerce was rising against the downturn with a significant increase of 20%.

He highlighted that e-commerce plays a much more crucial role in fostering MEMEs, promoting new business models, upgrading traditional industries, and creating jobs. It has become one of the major engines in stimulating economic recovery and driving sustainable and inclusive growth. MSMEs account for 97% of the total enterprises in APEC. Enabling them to engage in cross-border e-commerce has significance in boosting trading investment.

Director-General Yu said that China owns the largest e-commerce market globally. The crossborder economy is serving as a major pillar of China's international trade. China has been long committed to providing a sound policy environment and facilitating MSMEs in the digital economy and digital transformation. China will keep transforming and upgrading the traditional international trade, promoting bilateral and multilateral cooperation on e-commerce and digital trade.

He expressed his wish for China to share its practice and experiences in developing prosperity commerce with APEC members and jointly foster a favorable environment for integrating this means into global trade and realizing a sustainable role.

#### Welcome Speech

Ms. Diane Wang, Co-chair of Digital Transformation Task Force at B20; Alternate Member at ABAC; Founder, Chairperson & CEO at DHgate, advocated for strong collaboration between the public and private sectors. She also called for all stakeholders to join efforts, including governments and business leaders, and work with multilateral organizations including UN, WTO, and others to help all stakeholders, especially MSMEs, navigate the storm and achieve inclusive growth in the region.

Ms. Wang mentioned that the current situation for MSMEs' digital transformation is not cheerful:

- 43% of reported companies didn't have a clear idea of digitalization's positive impact (source: European SME survey 2019)
- 38.9% of the surveyed companies reported "insufficient understanding of opportunities" as a barrier hindering them from digitalization (source: World Economy Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2020)

 Over 60% of global GDP will be digitized by 2022. Talent is a critical fundamental challenge that companies stepping into digitalization are facing. A total of 55.4% of companies cited "skills gaps in the local labor market" as a perceived barrier. (source: WEF)

Ms. Wang pointed out a significant gap in access and capacity, no matter in any economy. Luckily, many organizations have realized this issue. Last year, the 27<sup>th</sup> APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting also urged to narrow the existing digital and skills gaps, fostering an enabling environment for the development of the digital economy.

# Session 1. Challenge and Development of Global Trade Amid Pandemic (Keynote Speech)

Prof. Bin Sheng, Dean of School Economics at Nankai University, Director of China APEC Academy, presented *Challenge and Development of Global Trade Amid Pandemic*. In the presentation, Prof. Sheng shared his study of the COVID-19's impact on global trade:

- A direct impact on the real economy and international trade by mainly targeting people.
- Result in multiple interactive shocks within the global value chain (GVC) system.
- Trigger worldwide trade protectionism in various forms, including import and export restrictions.

As a result, several economies and customs territories have posed export prohibitions and restrictions:



To address the impacts of COVID-19, Prof. Sheng proposed the following measures:

- Enhancing risk management of global value chain
  - at the international level
    - ♦ monitoring of global trade stability
    - strengthening the compliance of trade and FDI measures through the cooperation among international organizations
  - at the economy level
    - ♦ fostering domestic value chains (DVCs)
    - ♦ formulating the economy's strategy for global supply chain security
    - developing a minimum reserve plan from the perspective of nationwide supply chain security
  - at the firm level
    - ♦ better balancing cost-saving and risk diversification strategies
    - re-planning future strategies of inventory management, logistics and transportation, supplier diversification in terms of geography and quantity, upstream and downstream capacity coordination
    - ♦ from off-shore production to near-shore or domestic production
- Playing the unique role of digital trade and e-commerce
  - enhancing the part and position of service trade through cross-border delivery
  - reducing distance problem by more digital products, digital transmission, and digital platforms
- Avoiding undue trade restrictions and responses against the pandemic
  - maintaining import liberalization and relaxing export control of vaccines, drugs, medical devices, and other anti-pandemic materials
  - ensuring the smooth operation of global logistics networks

#### Session 2. Digital Economy Integration in Asia and the Pacific (keynote speech)

This session introduced various stakeholders and their roles under the cross-border ecommerce ecosystem, including suppliers, industry clusters, buyers, logistic services, global payment, financing, etc.

Dr Witada Anukoonwattaka, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Policy and Analysis Section, Trade and Investment Division, UNESCAP, talked about the digital economy integration through sustainability. Dr Anukoonwattaka's presentation had three parts.

#### 2.1 Digital Economy Integration

Measuring regional integration for the Asia-Pacific region in the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires attention on "digital-economy integration" and "sustainable development"(SDG).

DigiSRII is characterized by a matrix structure including a digital economy and a sustainable integration dimension. While the digital dimension is one of seven distinct sectoral dimensions, the sustainable dimension is mainstreamed through each of the seven sectors, with sustainable integration indicators supplementing the conventional integration indicators.



#### 2.2 The Progress in Asia-Pacific

If we look at the Asia-Pacific region on average by those conventional measurements, thanks to efforts on infrastructure investment and tariff reduction initiatives, the progress looks good.

However, if we look at the region by SDG measurements, then the answer is not sure.

Cybersecurity and the opportunity to access the digital economy by marginal groups (people who live in the rural areas, women, MSMEs), Telecom and Internet, Education, Financial account are not sufficient to support regional sustainability.



#### 2.3 Policy Implications

Dr. Anukoonwattaka defines the policy implications with four dimensions:

- Digital efficiency: Seamless connectivity, lower-cost, increased productivity, economic opportunities
- Digital inclusion: Distribution of digital dividends and access to new opportunities
- Digital security: Trust, interoperability, consumer protections
- Inclusive digital finance: Deployment of the cost-saving digital means to reach underserved populations

She also summarized actions for policymakers, which are regulation to boost the integration, heavy investment, build up the competition, and create cooperation within the regional economies.



#### Session 3. Global Cross-border E-Commerce Trend Amid Pandemic

#### (Panel Discussion)

Moderator: Sam Han, Head of Communications & Marketing of DHgate

Panelists:

- Ms. Christine Wong, Vice President, International Affairs and Strategic Development, JD International
- Mr Andy Li, Senior Vice President, LazGlobal

Ms Christine Wong said, during the pandemic, JD.com has achieved rapid growth in the field of cross-border e-commerce, as many overseas' consumers changed their shopping behavior from offline shopping malls or supermarkets to online. According to research by Deloitte and Google, in 2019 and 2020, overall online sales in major European economies, the United States, Asia Pacific economies have experienced rapid growth of more than 15%. And globally, the mature markets represented by the United States, UK, Spain, Germany, and France have spent decades developing the thriving e-commerce ecosystem. So the user penetration rate, the user number growth rate, and GDP per capita of these economies remain at the world-leading levels. In addition, the Southeast Asia e-commerce fundamental foundational infrastructure has been multiplying, showing its enormous potential. European, American, and Southeast Asian markets have become the ideal prospective markets for Chinese cross-border e-commerce companies.

Under the continuation of the pandemic, the trend of overseas online retail is accelerating. It is not only about the number of new online consumers but also about production diversification. Consumers search for numerous products, particularly women's clothing, men's clothing, computers, shoes, mobile phones, etc. On the other hand, global online consumption has

gained momentum due to the pandemic. Yet, the competitive landscape of the e-commerce battlefield is changing, bringing new opportunities to China.

Mr Andy Li added that in the past, people always bought electronics online, but during the pandemic, consumers also bought daily use products, educational tools, toys for kids online. Some economies are interested in branding, for example, Japan, but consumers care more about the price in some economies.

Both Ms. Wong and Mr Li highlighted the importance of talent who understand foreign languages, cultural differences, the know-how of cross-border e-commerce, new technology, Fintech, logistics solutions, etc. They said, although e-commerce business looks easy, to support the rapid and sustainable growth of digital trade, MSMEs should receive regular training programs on how to open online shops, arrange logistics, and deploy cross-border payment tools, and other mechanisms to enhance business performance in particular for those under-developing economies. Looking forward, to support the sustainable growth of digital trade, governments should consider facilitating educational programs to train up professional e-commerce business people.

#### Session 4. How Trade Policy Helps MSMEs Leverage Digital Supply Chain

#### (Panel Discussion)

Moderator: Sam Han, Head of Communications & Marketing of DHgate

Panelists:

- Huimin Wang, PhD, Deputy Director, Credit Institute, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation
- Ms. Winnie Wang, Executive President, Shenzhen Cross-Border E-Commerce Association

When talking about the significant changes in China's cross-border e-commerce practice, Dr. Wang Huimin said that overseas warehouses established by Chinese companies played an active role in responding to supply chain disruptions during the pandemic. The rapid development of building overseas warehouses has become essential support for cross-border e-commerce. Storing retail e-commerce products in a warehouse close to consumers in advance can reduce the risk of uncertainty and logistics costs, effectively solve the problem of products' returns and exchanges, and ultimately enhance consumers' online shopping experience.

Dr. Wang also introduced her study on the future business format and models of international trade, which need to strengthen integration and innovation further, enhance the digital level of enterprises, build a resilient supply chain, and enhance the ability to respond to risks. For example, cross-border e-commerce platform companies and foreign trade comprehensive service companies will integrate to provide R&D, design, trading, logistics, warehousing, finance, manufacturing, and other resources to serve the needs of MSMEs.

Looking forward, China needs to optimize further its policies, supervision methods, and procedures to adapt to the ever-changing international trade environment. Policymakers need

to pay attention to risks such as intellectual property rights and trade security and improve risk management capability.

Ms. Wang Xin, from the perspective of the trade association, highlighted the critical role of policies in cross-border e-commerce business. She said that many economies have introduced encouraging policies, such as China, Belgium, the UAE, etc. These policies have played a vital role in promoting the industry and have given cross-border e-commerce a lot of confidence. For example, Bahrain is the first to cancel the guaranteed system. People from all over the world do not need a guarantor when they are doing business in Bahrain. They can open a company directly with a passport. The taxation scheme and the meager personal income tax is a sharp contrast to those heavily taxed economies in the world.

Currently, more and more MSMEs are doing cross-border e-commerce. MSMEs have encountered various challenges in consulting, taxation, talents, law, capital, and credit when going global. However, many policies are in favor of large enterprises. MSMEs cannot enjoy the dividends brought by policies. Ms. Wang calls for the attention of policymakers from APEC economies to create favorable policies from the perspective of MSMEs.

#### Session 5. Creating Cybersecurity Strategy (Panel Discussion)

Moderator: Sam Han, Head of Communications & Marketing of DHgate

Panelists:

- Daniel Pellathy, PhD, Assistant Professor of Operations & Supply Chain Management, Grand Valley State University, Michigan, USA
- Richard Zhao, PhD, Chief Operating Officer, International Business, NSFOCUS

Prof. Pellathy specifically highlighted that companies who invest heavily in their cybersecurity but ignore their supply chain partners should be aware that attacks may go to the weakest links of the entire supply chain. Companies should understand the supply chain and focus on identifying critical assets and simplify and streamline the process. However, numerous cyber risk management frameworks are not well integrated and consistent with their suggested approach. Companies need to be careful when they choose those frameworks across their supply chain.

## **Concluding Thoughts**



Dr. Zhao shared his recommendations on creating a cybersecurity strategy, which is consisted of six parts as follows:





Dr Zhao emphasized that every link within the supply chain means potential attack surface or potential cyber-attack. Nowadays, all supply chain is automated. Data transfer through API (Application Programming Interface) cannot be guaranteed 100% safe. Attacks are hard to test and monitor, so companies need to be alert.

Furthermore, Dr. Zhao strongly recommended that the security team have an on-time data storage option on the Cloud.

#### Session 6. Building a Resilient Supply Chain through Digital Transformation

#### (Keynote Speech)

Mr Peter Liddell, Partner of KPMG, presented *Building a Resilient Supply Chain through Digital Transformation*. Mr Liddell said longstanding critical supply chain issues within their operations or infrastructure. Still, it's been bought to the forefront by the pandemic and other trade challenging situations. On the positive side, now there is an unprecedented window of opportunity.

For many businesses to move to a more modern, future-ready supply chain that's resilient and effective against these future unpredictable, quite dramatic events. So it'll be a supply chain that's enabled by a robust digital backbone. Quality data and processes allow them to pivot, respond, and adapt rapidly to both known events and unforeseen events.

Over the past three to four years. KPMG has been observing leading global and regional organizations make both strategic and operational adjustments to respond to these four key trends.



### Successful companies will focus in these key areas

However, the major challenge has been that companies or organizations have been lack supply chain visibility. It has been a significant impediment. It doesn't matter whether it's a database or business to business segment or consumer segment.

Mr Liddell highlighted the importance of people, workforce. He said some significant digital innovations substantially impact the workforce, such as intelligent process automation, robotic process automation, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and blockchain. Many organizations that invested millions, tens of millions in leading technology to build resilient supply chains completely forgot about the people's side, and this is where they have all failed. Therefore, we need to understand that people are our most important asset and how we

upscale them. We enable them to embrace those technologies is a significant factor of success.

#### Session 7. Technology Accelerates Global Trade Transformation

#### (Fireside Chat)

Moderator: Cathy Yu, Partner of Objective Communications

Guest Speaker: Dr. Stephen Lam, Chief Operating Officer, GS1 Hong Kong

Standards can facilitate trade among different markets and economies. By implementing and using global standards, the trade sector can accurately trace all the products, sellers, and delivery services.

GS1 Hong Kong is the local chapter of GS1. This global, non-profit organization develops and drives international supply chain standards in 150 economies. Having been operating for more than 32 years in Hong Kong China, GS1 Hong Kong has been developing a range of standards-based platforms, "Go Digital • Go Smart" solutions and services, helping companies to get products to market faster, build consumer trust and enhance the experience, enable supply chain efficiency, and gain insights to make better market decisions.

Dr Lam presented how standards make the goods tracible and visible throughout the entire supply chain. He took food as an example and demonstrated the importance of GS1 standards and a single number for each food product, traced food from farms and food chains to retailers, and ensured food safety for consumers worldwide. During the pandemic, a similar mechanism is applied to vaccines production, transportation, and vaccination tracking.



Dr. Lam also shared four essential pillars to build and establish a resilient supply chain: visibility, flexibility, collaboration, and control. Because of COVID-19, building trust is critical among all stakeholders on the supply chain, particularly for the healthcare industry.

Dr Lam introduced the GDS project endorsed in APEC. In 2013, APEC Trade Ministers endorsed global data standards (GDS) to address supply chain connectivity and complexity challenges, thereby relieving the supply chain choke points identified by the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC).

Dr Lam shared a couple of pilots of the APEC GDS project and their implementing achievements:

- The pilots have demonstrated the potential benefits (and costs) that GDS could deliver.
- Whether these benefits could be further realized in the long- term would be dependent on the stakeholders' adaptation process of using the GDS system.
- Once a stakeholder is more familiar with GDS, it could develop more efficient processes for operating the system and costs could be further reduced, and it may find additional benefits of GDS application in the long-term.

Trade Route	Measurable Benefits
Wine (Australia to Hong Kong, China)	> 38% increase in supply chain visibility
Beef (Australia to USA)	<ul> <li>50% increase in supply chain visibility</li> <li>\$57,000 savings on manual labor</li> <li>~\$14M saved by Australian meat exporters</li> </ul>
Asparagus (Peru to USA)	<ul> <li>100% increase in supply chain visibility</li> <li>20% reduction in 3PL processing time</li> <li>50% reduction in tracking time</li> <li>10% reduction in manual processing costs</li> </ul>
Durian (Malaysia to China & Hong Kong, China	<ul> <li>98% reduction in consignments tracking</li> <li>100% package tracking visibility</li> </ul>
Tequila (Mexico to USA)	30% improvement in processing time

#### **Measurable Benefits**

APEC Guidelines and Best Practices for the Adoption of GDS have been developed by GS1 and published by APEC Committee on Trade and Investment in March 2020. GDS has been widely piloted to support Asia-Pacific Model e-Port Network (APMEN) projects to automate the exchange of container sea- freight data between e-ports, to improve the visibility, integrity, and transparency of cross-border trade within APEC economies. Furthermore, implementation of GDS is ongoing in APEC economies, including Canada, China, New Zealand, Russia, and testing is continuing in the US. APEC Regional Vision for 2040 can be accelerated with GDS.

Meanwhile, Dr Lam highlighted the challenges that the GDS project has encountered and his recommendations. Private sectors expect to generate revenue and profit and easily find business partners. For government stakeholders, they wish to understand better how to facilitate importers' and exporters' businesses. Different stakeholders must have the same ratio on sharing information and business data to feel comfortable agreeing on specific business values together. Government-to-Government standards & data flows are enhanced by private sectors' standards & data flows. Therefore, improving data quality, efficiency for

identification, enforcement, and risk assessment is critical to allow government-private sectors to work together.

#### Session 8. Innovative Finance Boosts Global Trade (Panel Discussion)

Moderator: Cathy Yu, Partner of Objective Communications

Panelists:

- Mr James Yang, WiseFX CEO; General Manager of Tencent Finance & Technology Asia Pacific
- Mr Bill Deng, Founder and CEO, XTransfer

Mr Yang said that Fintech has gone along with the development of human history or economic growth. Fintech is just a new technology coming with the economic development to improve the efficiency of the financial services. From this perspective, Mr Yang highlighted that Fintech is not a privilege for a small group of people or business entities but must serve the daily life of the general public. It is just a service to be available for everyone. Therefore, to educate the whole population of the society to have a neutral view on Fintech is fundamental. It will eventually bring goods to everyone and the economy.

Mr Yang took Tencent F&T's e-invoice as an example. The world's first e-invoice system with blockchain could be a good example for public and private sector collaboration. Just use WeChat Pay to scan code, and people can get all the invoices, less trouble, and the manual is much easier. Big data, the analysis behind it, will undoubtedly enhance good governance, improve efficiency.

Another example is a digital voucher. During the pandemic, the economy slowed down. Governments tried to boost the economy by investing or driving spending by investing money, but how to make it more efficient? Tencent F&T came with an idea to go for the digital voucher. Now, it is the largest platform to help a few economies and markets to deliver digital vouchers. People may not see the immediate tangible or intangible value, but people can see the great convenience first.

Mr Yang believes that those digital financial service solutions can give the whole society a lot of value. It improves the private sector or personal benefits and improves efficiency in the public sector. He calls for more efforts together with industry partners and all the public and private sectors stakeholders.

Talking about the journey to the international market, Mr Yang hopes his company could also promote the value on the international side. He advocates support and collaboration from all stakeholders, including governments, regulators, public sectors, and industry.

Mr Deng shared his experience in winning the trust of customers and bank partners over the past four years, which was not a difficult job, but very time-consuming. Traditionally, many small companies could not open accounts in international banks. With an AI-driving, digitalized, automatic, and Internet-based AML risk infrastructure, XTransfer's has made sure all proofs, the complete profiles of MSMEs that it has brought to its bank partners that XTransfer well handles all AML-related issues and risks. By doing this, its global bank partners can provide stable services to MSMEs. It also allows XTransfer to provide MSMEs financial account opening service globally and locally.

However, Mr Deng highlighted that both Fintech and XTransfer are very new, which means there is not crystal clear rules and policies. Therefore, he expects to have more conversations with regulators from China and economies outside of China. So Fintech companies like XTransfer can have opportunities to present ideas on what they do, how they do, how they monitor performance, and how they win trust from all stakeholders. As this is a new thing, it would be ideal if regulators could be open-minded and have conversations with Fintech companies to make the rules clear so that companies can better understand the regulation change.

Mr Yang also agreed that a clear, transparent communication platform or channels with all kinds of regulators or shareholders would be essential for the Fintech companies. He understands that all the answers cannot be immediately provided. Still, they should have an excellent channel to share their views and jointly create the solution, even if it's an interim or tentative answer.

It is usually the industry or the ecosystem that will develop through phases. So at the early stage, the industry may need specific kinds of supports from governments, especially like the relaxation on the taxation, but that would be something very direct and straightforward to help Fintech grow, even certain kinds of subsidies. Once Fintech becomes mature or going to be, then the education to the general public becomes critical to encourage them to take up those new and going to be mature products, which means the risk is significantly reduced, but the public can enjoy the benefits.

#### Session 9. E-Commerce Loan for MSMEs (Best Practice)

To address the challenge that MSMEs always lack sufficient funds and credit for developing businesses, Tuotuo Digital and China Construction Bank jointly launched a program helping MSMEs get loans for their e-commerce businesses.

Ms Zoe Zuo, Operational Director of Tuotuo Digital, presented the case study. She shared how Tuotuo Digital leverage the neural network-based big data model, Random Forest algorithm, and GBDT model to use millisecond-level operation and massive data from various scenarios to establish an efficient risk control model.



An AI-assisted decision-making system can complete the integration of MSMEs within one second Loan/Repayment business between banks. While greatly simplifying and facilitating loans for MSMEs, it also soundly manages risks.

#### Session 10. Innovative Marketing Trends of Cross-border E-Commerce

#### (Panel Discussion)

Moderator: Cathy Yu, Partner of Objective Communications

Panelists:

- Mr Tim Kroggel, Director, Focus Markets APAC, MessageBird
- Mr Ryan Yan, Content Marketing Lead, DHgate

Content marketing is one of the effective marketing tools for brands. In particular, MSMEs, who usually do not have a budget, should learn to tell a story. A simple story with rich content can make your consumers feel touched.

A couple of attractive new vehicles help brands grow their audience and drive sales and customer loyalty. For example, companies like Google, Apple, Amazon, Facebook, or Flipkart invest heavily in their conversational commerce capabilities. Google probably offers one of the most important pieces of digital real estate with search and maps. What changed recently is that both Products have embedded a powerful functionality of adding a chat into it.

Facebook is a similarly vital channel to reach customers. What is new is that Facebook offers brands to engage with customers via Instagram, Facebook Messenger, or WhatsApp simply over an API directly via messaging. Facebook is pushing the bar to enrich those channels with new functionalities and features.

WhatsApp received new abilities that include catalogs, dynamic reply buttons, list messages, and location-sharing within WhatsApp to help consumers purchase products within the message.

Studies show that brands messaging with consumers are converting more loyal customers, leading to more sales. The study showed that 74% percent of consumers would like to purchase messaging apps.

Brands now can leverage this to their advantage. Google Maps or Search now include the ability to chat with consumers. Brands can now have rich assets like product catalogs into Google chat. Suppose power it with 3rd party software, to include Intent analysis, translation, or workflow automation. In that case, Google Business Messaging becomes a powerful tool in brands' tactical execution.

Also, other channels like Instagram and WhatsApp offer great functionalities. The most significant impact this year was the rollout of WhatsApp promotional messaging. We see customers sending out promotional messages in economies like Indonesia to sell Coffee or Shoes with great success. Brands are able with WhatsApp to cut through the noise and find the consumer directly where they are and making this channel the new Point of Sale. By being omnichannel, you bring powerful functionalities and customer data across all of these channels to provide your customers with a better, more personalized experience.

Messaging Providers have realized that customers don't want to engage with brands anymore on their terms. 80% of consumers say they would prefer not to call a Brand anymore and just simply message. So Messaging Providers are leveraging this to their advantage and building environments that seamlessly offer solutions for customers to engage and buy products through their channel of choice.

We see great success for Brands that enable true Omnichannel strategies to engage with their customers. To share an example, one of the largest e-commerce stores in Asia recently added WhatsApp into their Marketing Mix and increased 7x the click-through rate on the same campaign run before via other channels.

#### Session 11. Reconnecting Supply Chain Amid Pandemic (Keynote Speech)

Prof. Yao Weiqun, Deputy Director of Asia Pacific Model E-port Network Operation Center, presented "Reconnecting Supply Chain Amid Pandemic." He introduced APMEN and Shanghai E-Port, which serves as a third-party, public good to meet business needs since the Initiative of Shanghai Model Port Projects cooperated between public and private sectors of China and the United States in the framework of APEC in 2001.

To help COVID-19 prevention, Shanghai E-port has established a cold chain food monitoring system through big data, which realizes the whole-process dynamic monitoring of cold chain food, cold chain vehicle positioning and tracking, multi-dimensional statistical analysis.

Since January 2021, the high risk of non-cold-chain container goods imported can also be monitored and provides traceable tracking, warning to avoid importing high-risk goods and Reduce the Risk of COVID-19.



Prof. Yao also proposed ways of cooperation:

- Promote standardize system codes in various regions
- Promote International Cooperation through Pilot Projects
- Explore the pilot projects on the cross border end to end traceability for cold-chain food

#### Session 12. Logistics Development of Cross-Border E-Commerce

#### (Panel Discussion)

Moderator: Cathy Yu, Partner of Objective Communications

Panelists:

- Mr Oliver Wan, Head of DHLink
- Mr Andy Zhu, Deputy General Manager, BEST Global
- Mr Hassan Mikail, Head of E-Commerce MAE, Shipa

Impacted by COVID-19, the shortage of cross-border logistics capacity and surging prices have drawn much attention. Mr Zhu and Mr Mikail shared experiences in how their companies mitigated the disruptions and impact of the pandemic.

Because of the surging rate of air freighters, Mr Zhu said that Best Global overseas' warehouses in Southeast Asia played critical roles. The company has arranged sea and land freight services for customers and then kept and departed the inventory in the Southeast Asia warehouses, which reduced the logistics cost, shortened delivery time, and also improved online buyers' shopping experience.

Mr Mikail said Shipa had to shift priorities and strategies when the pandemic came. The company decided to use freighters and charters during the pandemic to serve the needs of customers. However, the rate is very high as most of the passenger flights grounded.

Mr Wan said MSMEs have been suffering a shortage of logistics capacity, which pushes up the operational cost. He, therefore, called for regular meetings among governments of APEC economies to align policies and supervision of the logistics industry, give the international logistics industry more flexibility and development space in the region and make prices more affordable. The expenses must return to normal as soon as possible, which can help MSMEs and individual practitioners reduce costs and stay alive.

When talking about how digitalization makes the supply chain more efficient and agile, Mr Zhu said, the ultimate goal of running a supply chain is to keep the least possible inventory. However, in the past, we could not imagine all stakeholders in the supply chain. However, with more digital tools, everything is getting easier. People living in the countryside can buy many things online; sellers can know the sales information timely and arrange inventory accordingly; logistics service providers could know how many orders they can receive and then adjust capacity.

Mr Mikail said the pandemic was more of a wake-up call for digital transformation in the middle east, especially GCC. The population is extremely young and has already been digitized with smartphones. However, retailers were still offline. But if we look at that number today versus two years ago, most retailers have finally gone online. They have started a digital transformation journey with no choice but to evolve and stay in the game. In GCC or the middle east, there was a huge fight in digital transformation.

In the last few months, it has become much easier to order domestically and even crossborder because of this transformation to go digital finally. So, this was one of the outcomes of the pandemic. The digital transformation has accelerated exponentially in this region here in the middle east.

Mr Zhu also called for a trade association for the logistics sector, like International Air Transport Association for the airline industry. He believes the trade association will play essential roles in setting standards, KPIs, facilitating conversations with governments and stakeholders, and ensuring the logistics industry's healthy and sustainable development.

Based on customers' feedback, Mr Mikail said customers are looking for new approaches and services. However, they look more accustomed to traditional services or solutions. Technologies will help the logistics sector provide more integrated and simplified services to customers. He has seen this trend and transformation in many markets.

#### Session 13. Enabling Social E-Commerce with Innovative Supply Chain Solutions

#### (Best Practice)

As e-commerce has grown over the last decade, it's also evolved, changed shape, and spawned numerous offshoots. One of those offshoots of the big e-commerce revolution is social e-commerce, and it's making a big splash. Mr Billy Deng, Head of Global Live Streaming, DHgate, shared his best practice on how DHgate has gathered MSMEs in Africa through live streaming, helped them start mini importation from China, leverage the advantage of DHgate supply chain and Myyshop SaaS system, as well as monetize their social connection, subsequently start up their own business with a light budget.



In August 2020, based on its strong technical capabilities and rich experience in the crossborder B2B practice, DHgate launched MyyShop, a decentralized Cloud commerce SaaS solution that aims to help MSMEs, especially entry-level people, start-up online businesses, and monetize their social networks. It provides intelligent selection and distribution services, enabling dropshippers to establish and scale their business environment quickly. It is committed to serving as a one-stop platform providing services ranging from interactive site building, source selection from reliable areas, selection of quality product to drop shipping, the best-in-class distribution system, and customer-friendly after-sales services. It also supports synchronization with users' other social media channels and e-commerce platform accounts to quickly monetize private domain traffic.

Mr Deng said that the pandemic-driven e-commerce boom had accelerated the growth of social e-commerce. MyyShop, as an innovative supply chain solution, is in line with this global trend. So far, MyyShop has helped more than 30,000 African MSMEs in 3 months to start up cross-border e-commerce businesses with a light budget. By 2025, MyyShop is expected to benefit 1.05 million MSMEs and individuals in Africa with this business model, which has strong innovation vitality and can be widely promoted to APEC economies.

#### Session 14. Virtual Tour to VisionNav Robotics

Robotics play a vital role in warehouse automation and continue to address common challenges in supply chain management. Increasing efficiency and cutting expenses are the most apparent outcomes for the companies that are using robot technology. In this session, Mr Don Dong, Partner & Vice President of Global Sales Department, VisionNav Robotics, gave the audience a virtual journey to his robotics world and solutions.

VisionNav Robotics, founded in 2016 and headquartered in Shenzhen, specializes in visionguided vehicles for warehouse and factory operations, helping customers improve logistics efficiency. VisionNav Robotics is the world's leading automated guided industrial vehicle using visual navigation, motion control, robot AI algorithms, etc. It is committed to automated material handling with visual AI technology.

Vision-based navigation uses the camera as the primary sensor to sense the environment via visual information. It saves various environment information as off-line maps. It locates and navigates robots based on information matching between real-time image and off-line maps during robot operations.



When robots forking the goods, 2D laser or 3D TOF camera will observe and identify the pallet and generate an optimal path based on the real-time feedback data to self-adapt itself to fork the goods. This solution allows a quick implementation without an extra limit mechanism. It is an easy-to-operate and user-friendly human-machine collaboration.

#### Session 15: Reopening Borders – Opportunities and Challenges (Panel Discussion)

Moderator: Cathy Yu, Partner of Objective Communications

Panelists:

- Mr Jason Lee, Director, International Policy & Engagement, Singapore Business Federation
- Mr Hou Kan, Regional Director, Airport, Passenger, Cargo & Security, North Asia, IATA

Mr Lee shared preliminary findings from a public-private sector dialogue in May and a survey targeting business travelers in June from 21 economies. Quarantine and testing requirements are business travelers' top concerns. They expected that APEC could have:

- a common framework for vaccinated travelers;
- a harmonized regulatory framework instead of rules for quarantine and testing.
- a trusted and interoperable digital health certificate system.

Business leaders help shape four areas of recommendations:

1. Allow the resumption of travel to a risk management approach. APEC economies can implement a system to monitor and manage the risk for cross-border travel by classifying travel destinations to high, medium, low-risk categories by using international standards. This could also enable essential business travel and the movement of essential workers;

- 2. Harmonize travel regimes and green links, including protocols for vaccinated travelers. So frequently changing measures, differences across economies, and complicated application processes cause unnecessary burdens to businesses. So we see this is the opportunity for common standards on testing and quarantine for vaccinated travelers. Immigration authorities would then be able to verify the travelers' vaccination data using a digital health certificate.
- 3. Enable knowledge sharing and exchange of information. We can do so by changing information and sharing best practices for economies to spread an importation of COVID-19. APEC can create a comprehensive digital position of information for all travel and borders policies, and finally established APEC resources, working groups with the appropriate mandate, cover issues across appropriate departments, including health, trade, tourism, and cross border mobility.
- 4. Developing this regional framework would be a considerable undertaking as different economies are at different stages of combating COVID-19. Therefore implementing these recommendations would be voluntary compatible with other existing initiatives and frameworks able to accommodate the unique circumstances of each economy.

When talking about travel bubbles between Singapore and other economies, Mr Lee said those initiatives are good for the travel and tourism industry, which has been long-suffering. It is good for businesses in general, good for the economy, jobs, and individual mental health. It is a brave step among economies. Singapore is taking the lead to explore reopening borders and resuming travel until and what it can look like for the rest of the world. The one point in time, soon later, we have to open domestically and internationally. Businesses and jobs cannot survive long lockdowns and closed borders indefinitely. Government offers are also not unlimited.

But Mr Lee said that those open-borders initiatives may need to be reviewed from time to time, as the situation is continuously evolving caused by the virus variants. We do not have much knowledge about the virus and its variants yet.

Mr Hou shared the open borders initiative of IATA (International Air Transport Association), which represents some 290 airlines comprising 82% of global air traffic. To re-open borders without quarantine and restart aviation, governments need to be confident that they effectively mitigate the risk of importing COVID-19. This means having accurate information on passengers' COVID-19 health status is very critical. Meanwhile, informing passengers on what tests, vaccines, and other measures are required by destinations before travel, details on where they can get tested, and giving them the ability to share their tests and vaccination results in a verifiable, safe and privacy-protecting manner is the key to giving governments the confidence to open borders.

To address this challenge, IATA has launched IATA Travel Pass, a mobile app helps travelers to store and manage their verified certifications for COVID-19 tests or vaccines. It is more secure and efficient than current paper processes used to manage health requirements (the International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis, for example). This is important given the potentially enormous scale of testing or vaccine verifications that must be securely managed. Looking forward, IATA Travel Pass can be used by travelers to manage travel

documentation digitally and seamlessly throughout the travel experience, even in the postpandemic era.

Currently, IATA calls for an end to wildly inconsistent COVID-19 travel restrictions that are stalling the recovery of air transport. It urged governments to implement simplified regimes to manage the risks of COVID-19 as borders re-open to international travel.

#### Session 16. Closing Remarks

Mr Song Yang, Director of Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China, made closing remarks.

"CBET Workshop has been an APEC's annual gala for new trends and emerging ideas in ecommerce and digital trade. Senior experts and practitioners shared information, insights, and outlooks on how governments could put forward result-oriented responses to the COVID-19 impacted trading environment and engage more MSMEs into global value chains and supply chains through seamlessly connected cross-border e-commerce. I am also very much inspired that this workshop identified precious take-ways of policy recommendations for boosting ecommerce and digital trade for the region in the context of the pandemic, which will profoundly benefit and shape APEC's future discussions in this regard."

He pointed out that reviving the economy is a daunting task, and realizing inclusive growth along the way is an even more formidable challenge.

Mr Song made three proposals on promoting economic recovery and growth in the Asia Pacific based on the APEC CBET II workshop:

- APEC needs to create a sound policy environment for trade and investment.
- APEC needs to step up the mutual benefit cooperation and policy coordination. In this age of economic globalization, openness and integration is an unstoppable historical trend;
- APEC needs to press ahead with collective action plans. APEC economies need to implement the Action Agenda to Globalize MSMEs, the Economic, Financial and Social Inclusion Action Agenda, and Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap.

#### IV. <u>Conclusion</u>

Overall, through this workshop, the following six points were highlighted.

- 1. **Public and private sectors collaborations**: Innovative technologies represented by artificial intelligence (AI), digitalization, and the Internet are becoming critical driving forces for the development of APEC and even the global economy, and further bolster the paradigm upgrade of global economic growth, which is reshaping organizations, industries, and economic processes. MSMEs are crying out for supports to utilize digital tools and navigate the crisis. It requires a strong collaboration between the public and private sectors, including governments and business leaders, and other multilateral organizations, including the UN, WTO, etc.
- 2. Standards & data harmonization: Private sectors expect to generate revenue and profit. Government stakeholders wish to facilitate importers' and exporters' businesses better. Different stakeholders must have the same ratio on sharing information and business data to feel comfortable agreeing on specific business values together. Government-to-Government standards & data flows are enhanced by private sectors' standards & data flows. Therefore, improving data quality, efficiency for identification, enforcement, and risk assessment is critical to allow government-private sectors to work together.
- 3. **Transparent policies and regulations**: Fintech have dramatically shifted the way people and enterprises use and move money, and that's increasingly impacting the world of e-commerce. As these consumers shift to smartphones and gain access, there's a prominent place for fintech to support e-commerce growth. However, there are yet crystal-clear policies and rules for this industry. The private sector expects to have more conversations with regulators to demonstrate how and what they do to win trust from government stakeholders. The private sector also seeks visibility when regulations change. The private sector also calls for regular meetings among APEC economies officials to grant the logistics industry more flexibility to reduce costs for MSMEs doing cross-border e-commerce.
- 4. **People**: It'll be a supply chain that's enabled by a robust digital backbone. Quality data and processes allow companies to pivot, respond, and adapt rapidly to known and unforeseen events. Almost two-thirds of organizations are changing their operating model, many are embracing cloud technologies, and others are using more specific digital enablers to improve the visibility of the supply chain. Intelligent process automation, robotic process automation, AI, machine learning, blockchain... some significant digital innovations, have a massive impact on the workforce. We need to understand that people are our most important asset, and how we upscale them and enable them to embrace those technologies is a significant factor in success.
- 5. Training and Education: Although e-commerce business is easy to start up with a light budget, to adapt to the rapid changes and achieve sustainable business growth in digital trade, MSMEs should receive regular training programs on how to open online stores, arrange logistics and deploy cross-border payment tools, and other mechanisms to enhance business performance, in particular for those under-developing economies. Looking forward, for governments, to support the sustainable growth of digital trade, they should consider facilitating educational programs to train up professional e-commerce businesspeople who understand cultural differences to improve efficiency.
- 6. **Cybersecurity**: With everything is online, we should pay great attention to potential cyber risks. Those companies who invest heavily in their cybersecurity but ignore their supply chain partners should be aware that attacks may go to the weakest links of the entire supply chain. Companies should understand the supply chain and focus on identifying critical assets and simplify and streamline the process. However, numerous cyber risk management frameworks are not well integrated and consistent with their suggested approach. Companies need to be careful when they choose those frameworks across their supply chain.

#### Appendix: Workshop Agenda

#### AGENDA

#### APEC Cross-Border E-Commerce Training (CBET) Workshop

#### Accelerating Digital Transformation to Achieve Inclusive Growth

#### Hybrid Event:

- Offline @YiGarden, No. 15, Yonghegong Dajie, Dongcheng District, Beijing, China
- Zoom Webinar
- GMT+8

September 8, 2021	Digital Trade Development Amid Pandemic	
9:00am-9:20am	Opening Session	
	Opening Remarks	
	- Mr Yu Benlin, Director-General, Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China	
	Welcome Speech	
	<ul> <li>Ms Diane Wang, Chair, Digital Transformation Task Force, B20; Alternate Member, ABAC; Founder, Chairperson &amp; CEO, DHgate</li> </ul>	
	Video: Make Your Voice Heard	
9:20am-9:35am	Keynote Speech:	
	Challenge and Development of Global Trade Amid Pandemic	
	<ul> <li>Prof Sheng Bin, Dean of School Economics at Nankai University, Director of China APEC Academy</li> </ul>	
	Q&As	
9:35am-9:55am	Keynote Speech:	
	Digital Economy Integration in Asia and the Pacific	
	<ul> <li>Witada Anukoonwattaka, PhD, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Policy and Analysis Section, Trade and Investment Division, UNESCAP</li> </ul>	
	Q&As	
9:55am-10:25am	Panel Discussion:	
	Global Cross-border E-Commerce Trend Amid Pandemic	
	<ul> <li>Ms Christine Wong, Vice President, International Affairs and Strategic Development, JD International</li> <li>Mr Andy Li, Senior Vice President, LazGlobal</li> </ul>	

	Q&As	
10:25am-10:55am	Panel Discussion:	
	How Trade Policy Helps MSMEs Leverage Digital Supply Chain	
	- Huimin Wang, PhD, Deputy Director, Credit Institute, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation	
	- Ms. Winnie Wang, Executive President, Shenzhen Cross- Border E-Commerce Association	
	Q&As	
10:55am-11:25am	Panel Discussion:	
	Creating Cybersecurity Strategy	
	<ul> <li>Daniel Pellathy, PhD, Assistant Professor of Operations &amp; Supply Chain Management, Grand Valley State University, Michigan, USA</li> <li>Richard Zhao, PhD, Chief Operating Officer, International Business, NSFOCUS</li> </ul>	
	Q&As	

September 15, 2021	Technology Transformation of Cross-Border E-Commerce Amid Pandemic	
9:00am-9:05am	Video: Make Your Voice Heard	
9:05am-9:15am	Keynote Speech:	
	Building a Resilient Supply Chain through Digital Transformation	
	- Mr Peter Liddell, Partner, KPMG	
	Q&As	
9:15am-9:45am	Fireside Chat:	
	Technology Accelerates Global Trade Transformation	
	- Stephen Lam, PhD, Chief Operating Officer, GS1 Hong Kong	
	Q&As	
9:45am-10:15am	Panel Discussion:	
	Innovative Finance Boosts Global Trade	
	<ul> <li>Mr Wenhui Yang, WiseFX CEO; General Manager of Tencent Finance &amp; Technology Asia Pacific</li> <li>Bill Deng, Founder and CEO, XTransfer</li> </ul>	

	Q&As
10:15am-10:30am	Best Practice:
	E-Commerce Loan for MSMEs
	- Ms. Zoe Zuo, Operation Director, Tuotuo Digital
	Q&As
10:30am-11:00am	Panel Discussion:
	Innovative Marketing Trends of Cross-border E-Commerce
	<ul> <li>Mr Tim Kroggel, Director, Focus Markets APAC, MessageBird</li> <li>Mr Ryan Yan, Content Marketing Lead, DHgate</li> <li>Q&amp;As</li> </ul>

September 22, 2021	Reconnecting Global Supply Chain Amid Pandemic
9:00am-9:05am	Video: Make Your Voice Heard
9:05am-9:20am	Keynote Speech:
	Reconnecting Supply Chain Amid Pandemic
	- Yao Weiqun, PhD, Deputy Director of Asia Pacific Model E- port Network Operation Center
	- Q&As
9:20am-9:50am	Panel Discussion:
	Logistics Development of Cross-Border E-Commerce
	<ul> <li>Mr Oliver Wan, Head of DHLink</li> <li>Mr Andy Zhu, Deputy General Manager, BEST Global</li> <li>Mr Hassan Mikail, Head of E-Commerce - MAE, Mr Mikail said customers are looking for new approaches and services although they look like more accustomed to traditional services or solutions. Shipa Q&amp;As</li> </ul>
9:50am-10:05am	Best Practice:
	Enabling Social E-Commerce with Innovative Supply Chain Solutions
	- Mr Billy Deng, Head of Global Live Streaming, DHgate
	Q&As
10:05am-10:25am	Virtual Tour to VisionNav Robotics
	<ul> <li>Mr Don Dong, Partner, Vice President of Global Sales Department, VisionNav Robotics</li> </ul>

	Q&As	
10:25am-10:55am	Panel Discussion:	
	Reopening Borders – Opportunities and Challenges	
	- Mr Jason Lee, Director, International Policy & Engagement, Singapore Business Federation	
	<ul> <li>Mr Hou Kan, Regional Director, Airport, Passenger, Cargo &amp; Security, North Asia, IATA</li> </ul>	
	Q&As	
10:55am-11:00am	Closing Remarks	
	<ul> <li>Mr Song Yang, Director, Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China</li> </ul>	