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THE POTENTIAL OF GLOBAL ELECTRONIC COMMERCE"

OECD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
"A BORDERLESS WORLD: REALISING THE POTENTIAL
OF GLOBAL ELECTRONIC COMMERCE"

OTTAWA, 7-9 OCTOBER 1998

REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL BODIES:
ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES IN ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

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FOREWORD

This document, prepared by the Secretariat in co-operation with the organisations concerned and finalised following the incorporation of comments by Member countries, was tabled at the OECD Ministerial Conference, "A Borderless World: Realising the Potential of Global Electronic Commerce", held on 7-9 October 1998 in Ottawa, Canada.

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OECD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

**“A BORDERLESS WORLD: REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF
GLOBAL ELECTRONIC COMMERCE”**

**REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL BODIES:
ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES IN ELECTRONIC COMMERCE**

On the occasion of the Ottawa Ministerial Conference on electronic commerce, Ministers recommended the future work outlined in the “OECD Action Plan for Electronic Commerce”.

At the same time, a great number of international and regional bodies have assisted the OECD Secretariat in drafting this “Report on International and Regional Bodies: Activities and Initiatives in Electronic Commerce”.

This report seeks to provide a clear picture of what international/regional bodies are doing in electronic commerce. The aim is to provide a basis for possible future collaborative efforts, not only among international and regional bodies, but also among national initiatives, activities through the OECD, and the efforts of the private sector.

This report has been compiled by the OECD Secretariat on the basis of input provided by the international and regional bodies concerned under their own responsibility. In drafting this report, agreement has been reached with all contributing organisations / bodies that their contributions will not be altered except for minor editorial changes. The contributions made by International Organisations and Regional Bodies do not necessarily reflect the interpretation of members of each organisation/body. As a result, the OECD disclaims all responsibility for the accuracy of the contributing submissions. The inclusion of the work of the international and regional bodies does not imply the endorsement of such work either by the OECD, its Member countries, or their Ministers.

The report is divided into two separate sections, each starting with a general description of each organisation / body, followed by a description of their existing contributions and highlights of some areas of possible future work.

Section I focuses on the following international bodies:

- Bank for International Settlements (BIS);
- International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC);
- International Labour Organization (ILO);
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO);
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU);
- United Nations Centre for Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UN-CEFACT) under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE);
- United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL);

- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD);
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);
- Universal Postal Union (UPU);
- The World Bank.
- World Customs Organization (WCO);
- World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and
- World Trade Organization (WTO)

Section II focuses on the following regional bodies:

- Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC);
- Council of Europe (CoE);
- European Free Trade Association (EFTA);
- European Union (EU), and
- Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)

The information provided by the various bodies is organised along the following lines :

- A. Building Trust for Users and Consumers
 1. Protection of privacy and personal data
 2. Secure infrastructures and technologies, authentication and certification
 3. Consumer protection
 4. Other trust-related issues
- B. Establishing Ground Rules for the Digital Marketplace
 1. Commercial law
 2. Taxation
 3. Financial issues, electronic payment and movement of goods
 4. Trade policy and market access
 5. Intellectual property
- C. Enhancing the Information Infrastructure for Electronic Commerce
 1. Access to and use of the information infrastructure
 2. The Year 2000 Problem
 3. Internet governance / Domain Names System
 4. Standards
- D. Maximising the Benefits
 1. Economic and social impacts
 2. Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
 3. Skills development
 4. Ensuring Global Participation

Each organisation has described its existing contributions and future work in electronic commerce according to the specific issues relevant to its mandate, and may include proposed as well as on-going work.

SECTION I: INTERNATIONAL BODIES

BIS

Bank for International Settlements

<http://www.bis.org/about/index.htm>

The main tasks of the Bank for International Settlements are to promote the co-operation of central banks and to provide additional facilities for international financial operations. The BIS is an important forum for international monetary and financial co-operation between central bankers and, increasingly, other regulators and supervisors. A key aim of this co-operation is to foster international monetary and financial stability. The BIS provides secretariat support for a number of key groups such as the Basle Committee on Banking Supervision and the Committee on Payment and Settlement Systems and host the secretariat for the International Association of Insurance Supervisors. It is also a centre for economic research, particularly on monetary and financial issues. At the same time the BIS is a bank, but one whose depositors are limited to central banks and international financial institutions; a significant portion of the world's foreign exchange reserves are held on deposit with the BIS.

IEC

International Electrotechnical Commission

<http://www.iec.ch>

The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) is the world organisation that prepares and publishes international standards for all electrical, electronic and related technologies. The membership consists of more than 50 participating countries, including the world's major trading nations and a growing number of industrialising countries. The IEC's mission is to promote international co-operation on all questions of electrotechnical standardisation and related matters, such as the assessment of conformity to standards, in the fields of electricity, electronics and related technologies. The IEC charter embraces all electrotechnologies including electronics, magnetics and electromagnetics, electroacoustics, telecommunication, and energy production and distribution, as well as associated general disciplines such as terminology and symbols, measurement and performance, dependability, design and development, and safety and the environment.

ILO

International Labour Organization

<http://www.ilo.org>

The ILO is a specialised agency of the United Nations founded in 1919 and built on the constitutional principle that universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice. The ILO provides the international institutional framework for the formulation of international policies and programmes to promote basic human rights, improve working and living conditions and enhance employment opportunities. This involves the creation of international labour standards backed by a unique system to supervise their application; an extensive programme of international technical co-operation and training, education, research and publishing activities. The ILO is unique among world organisations in that employers' and workers' representatives - the "social partners" of the economy - have an equal voice with those of governments in shaping its policies and programmes. The International Labour Conference meets annually. It provides an international forum for discussion of world labour and

social problems and sets minimum international labour standards and broad policies of the Organization. Every two years the Conference adopts the ILO's biennial work programme and budget which is financed by member States. Between Conferences, the work of the ILO is guided by the Governing Body, comprising 28 government members and 14 worker and 14 employer members. The International Labour Office in Geneva is the Organization's secretariat, operational headquarters, research centre and publishing house. Administration and management are decentralised in regional, area and branch offices in more than 40 countries.

The ILO's general role in electronic commerce is to analyse and monitor the impact of information and communication technologies (ICT), including its use in electronic commerce, on employment (loss and creation of jobs), enterprise development, work organisation, working time arrangements, working conditions and industrial relations. In this context, key issues for ILO policy development are telework, protection of workers' personal data and protection of the rights of categories of workers particularly affected by ICT, as well the role of ICT in globalisation and restructuring of national economies and the opportunities or restrictions created in terms of access and participation in the emerging world economy.

ISO

International Organization for Standardization

<http://www.iso.ch>

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a world-wide federation of national standard bodies. Its mission is to promote the development of standardisation with the view to facilitate the international exchange of goods and services, and to develop co-operation in the sphere of intellectual, scientific, technological and economic activity. The ISO covers all standardisation fields except electrical and electronic engineering, which is the responsibility of IEC. The work in the information technology field is carried out by a joint ISO/IEC committee (JTC 1). The technical work of ISO is decentralised. There are over 2,700 technical committees, subcommittees and working groups. In these committees, representatives of industry, research institutes, government authorities, consumer bodies and international organisations from around the world come together to resolve problems of global standardisation

ITU

International Telecommunication Union

<http://www.itu.org>

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is an intergovernmental organisation, within which public and private sectors co-operate for the development of telecommunications. The ITU adopts international regulations and treaties governing all terrestrial and space uses of the frequency spectrum within which countries adopt their national legislation. It also develops standards to facilitate the interconnection of telecommunication systems on a world-wide scale regardless of the type of technology used. The ITU also fosters the expansion of telecommunications services and infrastructure in developing countries by recommending medium-term policies and strategies to national administrations.

UNCITRAL

United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

<http://www.un.or.at/uncitral/>

The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966. The Commission is regarded as the core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law and the main vehicle by which the United Nations can play a more active role in reducing and removing obstacles to the flow of trade. The general mandate of the Commission is to further the progressive harmonisation and unification of international trade law and to remove unnecessary obstacles to international trade caused by inadequacies and divergence in national legislation affecting trade. The Commission has carried out work in eight different areas of trade

law including: international sale of goods and related transactions; international transport of goods; international payments (Legal Guide on Electronic Fund Transfers, Model Law on International Credit Transfers); international commercial arbitration and Electronic Commerce (Model Law). To develop the preparatory work on topics within the Commission's programme areas, UNCITRAL established three Working Groups currently named the Working Group on International Contract Practices, the Working Group on Insolvency Law and the Working Group on Electronic Commerce.

UN/CEFACT

**United Nations Centre for Facilitation of Procedures
and Practices for Administration,
Commerce and Transport**

<http://www.unicc.org/unece/cefact/intro/intro.htm>

The scope of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE)'s activities in Trade Facilitation is global and to meet the requirements of these wider responsibilities the work was restructured in 1997 into a Centre for Facilitation of Procedures and Practices in Administration, Commerce and Transport (CEFACT). This new organisation enables participants from all over the world to participate, on an equal footing, to improve business processes and to ensure the effective transfer of trade information.

CEFACT provides a forum for institutional co-operation in formulating and recommending international trade facilitation strategies and for reconciling official governmental and commercial requirements. The Centre will not only extend global participation in its work but also encourage a thorough approach to the technical and policy areas of trade facilitation.

The participation of many private-sector associations in CEFACT's work at the policy level, and of hundreds of private-sector technical experts in CEFACT working groups, is a unique feature of the Centre which is forging new co-operative relationships between private business and public organisations.

The new Centre's vision is "Simple transparent, effective processes for global commerce" and it is dedicated to facilitating international transactions through the development of recommendations and tools that simplify and harmonise information flows. Its ultimate objective being to improve the ability of business, trade and administrative organisations to exchange product and relevant services effectively, thus contributing to the growth of global commerce.

UNCTAD

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

<http://www.unctad.org>
<http://www-partners.unctad.ch/>

UNCTAD was established in 1964 and is the principle organ of the United Nations General Assembly in the field of trade and development. The main goals of UNCTAD are to maximise the trade, investment and development opportunities of developing countries, and to help them face the challenges arising from globalisation and integrate into the world economy. In 1992, UNCTAD launched its Trade Efficiency Initiative. The main objective of the initiative is to facilitate the integration and participation of developing countries and SMEs in international trade. This objective is pursued by simplifying and harmonising trade procedures world-wide and providing traders or potential traders with access to information networks and better business practices. A key component of the Trade Efficiency Initiative is the Trade Point Programme. The programme facilitates access to the latest information and telecommunication technologies by making them available to trade operators in developing countries and to SMEs. The overall objective is to reduce the risk of exclusion and increase the overall participation in international trade.

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

<http://www.unesco.org>

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) constitution was adopted by the London Conference in November 1945, and entered into effect in November 1946. The Organization's main objective is to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication in order to further universal respect for: justice; the rule of law, and human rights. UNESCO's member states have established an intersectoral project on the information society, foreseen in the approved Programme and Budget for 1998-1999. An observatory will also be set up within this project to collect and disseminate data on the major ethical and legal issues related to cyberspace, in particular, questions of access and preservation of digital information, adaptation of copyright legislations and fair use practices, freedom of expression, protection of privacy and violence. At the 29th Session of the General Conference (October-November 1997), Member States have adopted the Resolution 29C/36 inviting the Director-General to prepare a report on a set of principles and guidelines - education, scientific and cultural - applicable to cyberspace. A recommendation on universal access to cyberspace and multilingualism should also be drafted and both instruments will be submitted to the 30th Session of the General Conference in 1999.

UPU

Universal Postal Union

<http://postinfo.upu.org>

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) was founded in 1874 and was brought into relationship with the United Nations in 1948. The UPU unites member countries into a single postal territory and fixes international postal rates. As a Specialised Agency of the United Nations, the UPU aims to organise and improve postal service throughout the world and to ensure international collaboration in this area. Among the principles governing its operation as set forth in the Universal Postal Convention and the General Regulations, two of the most important were the formation of a single territory by all signatory nations for the purposes of postal communication and uniformity of postal rates and units of weight.

The World Bank

<http://www.worldbank.org>
<http://www.worldbank.org/infodev>

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, frequently called the "World Bank" was established in 1944 at the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference. The World Bank's goal is to reduce poverty and improve living standards by promoting sustainable growth and investment in people. The Bank provides loans, technical assistance and policy guidance to developing country members to achieve this objective. The Bank Group comprises of five organisations: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD); the International Development Association (IDA); the International Finance Corporation (IFC); the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA); and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). These agencies raise most of their money on the world's financial markets through selling public or private bonds and other debt securities to pension funds, insurance companies, corporations and other banks, and individuals around the world.

The Information for Development Program (*infoDev*) is a global program managed by the World Bank which assists developing countries and economies in transition take advantage of the opportunities the information revolution offers for accelerating social and economic development—providing a framework for initiating a range of new development ideas to be field-tested. Projects are selected for financing which: promote market-based solutions to development problems; improve education and health; reduce

poverty and exclusion of low-income countries and social groups; promote the protection of the environment; and increase the efficiency, accountability and transparency of governments.

WCO

World Customs Organization

<http://www.wcoomd.org>

The World Customs Organization (WCO) is an independent intergovernmental body with world-wide membership whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of customs administration for the facilitation of international trade. To fulfil its objectives the WCO establishes, maintains, supports and promotes international instruments for the harmonisation and uniform application of simplified and effective customs systems and procedures governing the movement of commodities, people and conveyances across customs frontiers. The WCO reinforces Members' efforts to secure (through control and enforcement) compliance with national legislation to maximise the effectiveness of Members' co-operation with each other and with international agencies to combat Customs offences. It also assists Members in their efforts to meet the challenges of adapting to changing circumstances, by promoting communication and co-operation among Members and with other international organisations, and by fostering human resource development, improvement in the management and working methods of customs administration, and the sharing of best practices.

WIPO

World Intellectual Property Organization

<http://www.wipo.org>

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is an intergovernmental organisation responsible for the promotion of the protection of intellectual property throughout the world. WIPO administers over 16 multilateral treaties dealing with the legal and administrative aspects of intellectual property.

WIPO's work involves the development of new international treaties dealing with intellectual property and an extensive program of co-operation for development under which technical assistance is extended to developing countries. The Organization's work also involves the provision of services directed to the private sector under international arrangements which provide for simplified and cost-effective means of obtaining international protection for patents, trademarks and industrial designs. The Organization also offers dispute-resolution services for private parties involved in international disputes concerning intellectual property. The fees generated by WIPO in the provision of services to the private sector account for about 88% of the Organization's budget.

WTO

World Trade Organization

<http://www.wto.org>

The World Trade Organization (WTO), is an international body which deals with the rules of trade between nations. WTO agreements provide the legal ground-rules for international commerce. The agreements are binding contracts which are signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations to keep their trade policies within agreed limits. Although the agreements are negotiated and signed by governments, the goal is to help producers of goods and services, exporters and importers conduct their business. The WTO agreements deal with trade in goods, services and intellectual property. It outlines the principles for liberalisation, and the permitted exceptions. WTO agreements include individual countries' commitments to lower customs tariffs and other trade barriers, and commitments to open (and keep open) service markets. It also set procedures for settling disputes and requires governments to make their trade policies transparent.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

A. BUILDING TRUST FOR USERS AND CONSUMERS

As commercial activities in the electronic environment develop, consumers and business will expect that their use of network services is secure and reliable, that their transactions are safe, and that they will be able to verify important information about transactions and transacting parties. Consumers want to have control over the collection and use of their personal data and to have assurance of, and access to, appropriate redress mechanisms. The growth and use of electronic commerce will be encouraged if trustworthy technologies and policies are in place which address potential failures, public education, redress and response to misuses. Building confidence in the digital marketplace will require a broad, collaborative approach by governments, international organisations and, in particular, the private sector.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY AND PERSONAL DATA

A number of initiatives have been undertaken to balance the interest of protecting personal privacy and allowing business access to market information. For example, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has developed standards on privacy techniques for multimedia systems, and has recently constituted with private sector and other international organisations a task force on privacy; the Universal Postal Union (UPU) is establishing a global policy framework for consumer privacy and data protection acts relevant to "Global Trust" service provision.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ILO	- Research and publication of a series of three issues of the ILO Conditions of Work Digest on workers' privacy covering protection of personal data, monitoring and surveillance in the workplace and testing in the workplace; - An ILO Code of Practice on the protection of worker's personal data adopted by a Meeting of Experts on Workers' Privacy in 1996. The Code includes general principles, collection, security, storage, use and communication of personal data, individual and collective rights and employment agencies.	- Production and dissemination of information materials to promote the Code of Practice on the protection of workers' personal data consisting of case studies, examples of good practice and privacy checklists.
ISO	- Proposal to develop an international standard on privacy by the Consumer Policy Advisory Committee; - Work by various ISO Technical Committees on privacy aspects in their area of standardisation (e.g. TC 68 Banking); - Work at ISO /IEC Joint Technical Committee 1 / Subcommittee 27 (JTC1/SC27) on IT security techniques; - Work at Technical Advisory Group 12 (TAG12) on the compatibility of ISO 9000 and ISO 14000.	- Development of IT-enabled aspects as required of such an international standard for privacy for use in electronic commerce; - Work by new ISO TCs on privacy aspects (e.g. TC215 - Health Information).
ITU	- Development of standards on privacy techniques for multimedia terminals (H.235) and digital certificate and certification authority issues (X.509); - Government and industry task force on privacy to search for concrete ways of moving forward private sector commitment and self regulation on privacy to enhance users confidence on electronic commerce.	- Further development of standards for electronic commerce issues including on privacy; - Work with government and industry to create global consensus on personal privacy protection regulation.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
UNESCO	- Organisation of International Meetings on Cyberspace Law including an Asia-Pacific Regional Expert Meeting on "A Legal Framework for Cyberspace" (September 1998, Seoul), an International Expert Meeting on Cyberspace Law (September 1998, Seoul), and an International Congress on the Ethical, Legal and Societal aspects of Cyberspace (INFOethics), covering issues of privacy.	
UPU	- Establishment of a global policy framework for consumer privacy related to the provision of encryption and certification services.	- Continue research and development. - Establishment of a global postal standard framework by September 1999.
WTO	- The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), Article XIV enables Members to take measures necessary to protect the privacy of individuals in relation to the processing and dissemination of personal data, and the confidentiality of individual records and accounts, subject to safeguards that the measures would not constitute discriminatory nor disguised trade barriers.	- The forthcoming WTO work programme on electronic commerce is likely to include the issue of protection of privacy.

SECURE INFRASTRUCTURES AND TECHNOLOGIES: AUTHENTICATION AND CERTIFICATION

Work is underway to enable cross-border transactions in both the public and private sectors in the areas of electronic signatures, cryptography, authentication and certification. For example, work is continuing at the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) to develop a secure legal environment for electronic signatures and to develop a common framework for certification practices. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has developed standards on communication system security for multimedia systems. The Joint Technical Committee (JTC1) on Information Technology of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) in conjunction with the ITU is working on standards-based solutions for interoperable and secure infrastructure. The UN/CEFACT provides a forum to examine interoperable standards for electronic data interchange.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ISO/IEC	- Development of standards for electronic signatures, cryptography, authentication and certification forming part of the infrastructure.	- Development of criteria for mutual acceptance of certification authorities, trusted third parties(TTP) and infrastructure for their management and use on an international basis.
ITU	- Development of standards on communication system security for multimedia terminals (X.235).	- Further development of standards for e-commerce related infrastructure and security.
UN-CEFACT	- provides the only international standard for electronic data interchange "UN Electronic Data Interchange for Administration Commerce and Transport (UN/EDIFACT)".	- Working with industry groups to ensure full interoperability between industry standards, UN/EDIFACT and emerging electronic commerce activities.
UNCITRAL	- The Working Group on Electronic Commerce is tasked with the preparation of uniform rules on the legal issues of digital signatures and certification authorities, in recognition of the importance of, and the need for working towards the harmonisation of law in that area. The uniform rules would follow the media-neutral approach, and while not discouraging the use of other authentication techniques, the focus would be placed in the first instance on the issues of digital signatures.	- A revision of the draft uniform rules is currently in preparation, for consideration at the next session of the Working Group in February 1999.
UNCTAD	- Secure Electronic Authentication Link (SEAL) is designed to facilitate the electronic exchange of trade information and it constitutes a secure framework for the cross-certification and interchange of data between national certification authorities. - Development of a draft operating model that seeks to define a global protocol under which the SEAL system would operate.	- Pending approval by the United Nations (in particular regarding the legal structure within which partnerships with the private sector could be established) the SEAL project could become the core product of the Global Trade Point Network (GTPNet), and be progressively extended to all Trade Points.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
UPU	- Development of a global framework for data security (encryption services) and completion of a notional encryption policy that all posts will use as a template; - Agreement on minimum specifications for global compatibility of encryption services, and pilot project to test compatibility; - Development of a global framework for digital signature compatibility as well as face to face authentication through world wide postal outlets, and - Agreement on minimum specifications for global digital signature compatibility and recognition and pilot project to test compatibility.	- Establishing a global postal standard for encryption services interface and standard suite of related policies and procedures by September 1999. - Additional and more comprehensive pilot tests are being planned. - Establishing a global postal standard for digital signature services interface and standard suite of related policies and procedures for certification and face to face authentication processes by September 1999. - Additional and more comprehensive pilot tests are being planned.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Consumers using electronic commerce need to be afforded a transparent and effective level of protection. While the issues surrounding consumer protection are not included in the terms of reference of any particular organisation, many organisations raised the need for efforts to develop awareness and knowledge among consumers.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ISO/IEC	- Identification by the ISO/IEC JTC1 Business Team on Electronic Commerce (BT-EC) of key consumer requirements in electronic commerce and which are recommended for standardisation activities.	- Prioritisation of consumer related standardisation activities and allocation of work to appropriate standards committees.
UPU	- Development of a Consumer protection policy framework as part of the global Postal Trust Infrastructure.	- Continue research and development. - Establishments of a global postal standard framework by September 1999.
WCO	- Promotion of WCO Recommendation on the acceptance of electronically transmitted customs declarations (including digital signatures) in courts of law.	- Promotion of risk management based control techniques to maintain effective social and environmental controls but at the same time facilitating legitimate trade to the maximum possible extent.

OTHER TRUST-RELATED ISSUES		
Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
UNESCO		- Proposal to create a World Observatory on Paedophile Crimes, reacting to recent revelations about existing paedophile rings operating internationally, notably on the Internet.

B. ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES FOR THE DIGITAL MARKETPLACE

As users begin to take advantage of electronic commerce opportunities, a number of organisations are engaged in work to remove barriers and to establish ground rules regarding legal and commercial frameworks which are effective in the context of electronic commerce.

COMMERCIAL LAW

A number of fora offer governments and industry the opportunity to examine various aspects of commercial law. One notable example of efforts in this area is the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)'s "Model Law in Electronic Commerce", an internationally adopted model to enable electronic signatures and remove impediments to electronic transactions.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
UN-CEFACT	- Work on a contractually based model agreement for electronic commerce for use in international trade.	- Exploring the feasibility of developing a convention covering electronic commerce legal issues working together with UNCITRAL and other relevant bodies.
UNCITRAL	- Model Law on Electronic Commerce adopted by UNCITRAL in 1996, offers national legislators a set of internationally-acceptable rules as to how a number of legal obstacles to the communication of legally significant information in the form of paperless messages, including uncertainty as to their legal effect or validity, may be removed, and how a more secure environment may be created for electronic commerce. The Model Law can also be used as rule of interpretation for interpreting existing international conventions and other international instruments that create obstacles to electronic commerce.	- refer to work under "Interoperable and Secure Infrastructure".
UNCTAD	- Working document "Electronic Commerce: Legal Considerations" examines the legal dimensions of electronic commerce and proposes joint work with UNCITRAL.	- Joint work has been proposed with relevant with relevant international bodies such as UNCITRAL.
World Bank (infoDev)		- Funding of study on Regulatory Issues in Electronic Commerce (in co-operation with ITU).
WIPO	- The WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center has developed an Internet-based, on-line dispute-resolution system that can provide a neutral, speedy and cheap means of resolving disputes arising out of electronic commerce without the physical movement of persons and things. Although developed particularly for disputes concerning domain names and trademarks and, more generally, for all intellectual property disputes, the system has advantages for the swift and cheap resolution of any international commercial disputes arising out of electronic commerce.	- Promotion of confidence in system and further elaboration of the system to include Internet-based video-conferencing as bandwidth improves.

TAXATION

There is a need to ensure that taxation does not act as a barrier to the further development of electronic commerce and that this new form of doing business does not undermine the tax base. Issues to be resolved include: taxpayer service, tax administration, tax treaties, transfer pricing and consumption tax.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
World Bank	- On-going policy advice in building proper tax legislation, including issues of taxation related to electronic commerce.	

FINANCIAL ISSUES, ELECTRONIC PAYMENT AND MOVEMENT OF GOODS

In the context of the emerging global electronic marketplace, several international fora are exploring financial issues such as electronic money, payment systems, and the transborder movement of goods. Organisations such as the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the World Customs Organizations (WCO) have been fora for discussion of these important aspects of electronic commerce.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
BIS	- Analytical Paper on "Security of Electronic Money" (1996). - Analytical Paper on "Implications for Central Banks of the Development of Electronic Money" (1996). - Analytical Paper on "Risk Management for Electronic Banking and Electronic Money Activities" (1998).	- Continuing to monitor the development of electronic money and to analyse its implications.
ITU	- Providing electronic commerce applications and services that support online secure credit card payments to other international organisations and to the private sector in developing countries.	- Expand secure payment services to other international organisations and to public and private entities in developing countries.
UNCITRAL	- Legal Guide on Electronic Funds Transfers (1987) identifies the legal issues arising from the transfer of funds by electronic means and discusses possible approaches for dealing with those issues.	
UNCTAD		- Proposals to conduct quantitative studies on the impact of trade, duties, and investment flows (of Internet-based transactions) on the developing world.
WCO	- Examination of parcel consignment issues particularly related to the development of new and transparent procedures to deal with purchases of goods over the Internet/WWW.	- Evaluation and promotion of best practice Customs procedures dealing with the international movement of goods purchased over the Internet / WWW.
WTO	- The GATS provides a legal framework for all trade in financial services, including that conducted electronically. 102 Members have undertaken binding commitments under the Agreement, which covers both cross-border and establishment trade.	

TRADE FACILITATION AND MARKET ACCESS

Issues related to the applicability of existing international trade rules, and obligation to digital goods and services, are the subject of intense discussion. The 1998 WTO Ministerial Conference called for the creation of a WTO work programme to consider all relevant aspects of electronic commerce and report to the next WTO Ministerial in late 1999. A number of other international bodies are involved in the area of trade facilitation, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) through its Trade Efficiency Initiative; the World Customs Organization (WCO) through its revised customs convention and a new plan to facilitate the international movement of goods purchased over the Internet; the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), through its technical assistance to developing countries to facilitate the set up of electronic commerce operations to enhance market access worldwide. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) through the Centre for Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport (CEFACT) also plays a major role in developing trade facilitation and electronic commerce solutions that create predictability, stability and trust.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ITU	- Provide technical assistance and support to facilitate the set-up of electronic commerce operations in developing countries to open markets abroad for local products.	- Broaden existing technical assistance initiative to other countries.
UN/CEFACT	- Of the currently 26 UN/CEFACT Trade Facilitation Recommendations, five have become ISO standards. All are reviewed and updated on an on-going basis. Some of them have as their purpose to reduce the complexity of existing procedures, while other strive to harmonise transaction data or the methods used for transmitting the data.	- Analysis of current process; the identification of best practices related to those processes with an emphasis on public and private sector international trade procedures; and the proposal of appropriate changes to those business processes that have been analysed; development of simple electronic commerce solutions.
UNCTAD	- Trade Point Programme – key component of the trade efficiency initiative which facilitates access to the latest information and telecommunication technologies by making them available to trade operators in developing countries and to SMEs. - UNISTE recommendations for enhancing the ability of developing countries to implement cost reduction measures in trade supporting sectors including: trade facilitation, trade information, customs, transport, financial services, and telecommunications.	- The Trade Point Programme is expected to continue its expansion in 1998-99; priorities should be on secure trade transactions (SEAL) and assistance to (1) Africa and the Least Developed Countries in building their local capacities for participation in electronic commerce, (2) SMEs in all countries (including Eastern and Central Europe), with a focus on business-to-business electronic transactions. - The follow-up to, and continued development of, UNISTE recommendations.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
WCO	- Revision of the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonisation of Customs procedures (the Kyoto Convention). - Promotion of the "Express Clearance" guidelines. - Development of a common set of data elements for Customs clearance formalities.	- Completion and promotion of revised Kyoto Convention. - Complete common set of data elements work and promote implementation. - Development and promotion of new highly facilitative procedures to deal with the international movement of goods purchased over the Internet / WWW.
World Bank (<i>infoDev</i>)	- Dissemination of best practices and lessons learned with regard to liberalisation of markets, development of network infrastructures, global connectivity and convergence, etc.	- Continued awareness raising seminars and dissemination of results and best practices.
WTO	- The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) provides a legal framework for trade in all services, including telecommunications and other network services. 69 WTO Members (ratified by 61) made GATS commitments on basic telecommunications in the negotiations concluded in February 1997. - Under the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) of March 1997, 40 countries representing over 90 % of world trade in information technology products agreed to remove tariffs and customs duties on a wide range of such products by the year 2000. - In the Declaration on Global Electronic Commerce adopted at the WTO Ministerial Conference in May 1998, WTO Members agreed to refrain from imposing custom duties on electronic transmissions. This understanding will be reviewed by Ministers at their conference in 1999.	- Work programme on trade-related issues arising from electronic commerce begins September 1998. The work programme will cover issues arising from trade in services, trade in goods, the protection of intellectual property rights and enhancement of participation of developing countries including their small and medium sized enterprises. - Negotiations on a Second phase of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA II) were suspended in July 1997. - A new round of trade liberalising negotiations covering all service sectors will begin at the end of 1999.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Protection of intellectual property plays a key role in encouraging creativity, investment, and the availability of a critical mass of content necessary to enable electronic commerce. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is the intergovernmental organisation responsible for developing international agreements to ensure the protection of intellectual property and for the administration of various multilateral treaties. The World Trade Organization (WTO)'s Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) is the most comprehensive agreement covering all forms of intellectual property including copyrights, trademarks, patents, and undisclosed information (i.e. trade secrets and test data).

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ILO	- Ongoing monitoring of the impact of digitalisation on the protection of the rights, performances, works and remuneration of performers and journalists. - Servicing of the Intergovernmental Committee of the International Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organisations (the Rome Convention), as part of the ILO/UNESCO/WIPO joint secretariat.	- Studies to be published in 1998 on the social situation of artists in Africa, Asia and Latin America and on the impact of digitalisation, technological and market convergence on actors and the international production industry. - World Survey on the Social and Economic Status of Freelance Journalists during 1998-99.
UNCTAD		- UNCTAD, in co-operation with WIPO, will work to develop awareness and understanding of IP issues in developing countries.
UNESCO	- Organisation of international and regional meetings on the protection of intellectual property rights in the digital environment .	
World Bank	- Hosting of TechNet seminars and discussion groups on promoting and strengthening Intellectual Property Rights protection in developing countries.	
WCO	- Development of a technical manual to help front-line customs personnel in IPR work.	

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
WIPO	- Copyright Treaty (WCT, adopted December 1996) - Performance and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT, adopted December 1996) The treaties introduce a number of adjustments to copyright law, the rights of performers in <i>aural performances</i> and the rights of producers of sound recordings that are necessary in the digital age. - The 1996 Diplomatic Conference at which the WPPT was adopted resolved that preparatory work should continue with the objective of extending the coverage of the WPPT through the adoption of a protocol on the <i>audiovisual aspects of performances</i>. In accordance with that resolution, a WIPO committee of experts considered the possible content of a protocol to the WPPT on the audiovisual aspects of performances in June 1998. A further preparatory meeting will be held in November 1998. - The agenda of the 1996 Diplomatic Conference at which the WCT and WPPT were adopted included a draft treaty on a sui generis system of protection for databases that envisaged the protection of the rights of makers of databases in respect of the utilisation or extraction of the contents of both original and non-original databases, under certain conditions. The Conference recommended further preparatory work on the draft treaty. - Preliminary examination of the need for international harmonisation and the updating of existing norms relating to the rights of broadcasting organisations and the rights of distributors of cable-originated programs. - Ongoing work in WIPO Standing Committees on the examination of existing industrial property norms (covering patents, trademarks and, in particular, the definition of famous marks) to ascertain the need, if any, to adjust them or to develop new norms to deal with the impact of electronic commerce.	- Promotion and Implementation of WCT and WPPT. Each of the WCT and the WPPT must be ratified or acceded to by 30 States to enter into force. As of September 15, 1998, the situation of ratification or accessions was as follows: WCT: four (4) WPPT: two (2) - The convening of a diplomatic conference by WIPO to adopt a protocol to the WPPT on the audiovisual aspects of performances in 1999. - The further examination and, ultimately, the adoption of protection for the rights of makers of databases that goes beyond the protection of original databases by copyright that is already provided by the Berne Convention, the WTO TRIPS Agreement and the WCT. - Further preparatory work to determine the need for a new international instrument on the rights of broadcasting organisations and of the distributors of cable-originated programs. - Continuation of this work.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
WTO	- The comprehensive Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (the TRIPS Agreement) came into effect in 1995. It covers all main IPRs - copyrights and related rights (i.e. protection of performers, producers of phonograms and broadcasting organisations) trademarks, geographical indications, industrial designs, patents, layout-designs of integrated circuits and undisclosed information (i.e. trade secrets and test data).	- The WTO Work Programme on Electronic Commerce adopted by the General Council on 25 September 1998 provides that the Council for TRIPS shall examine and report on the intellectual property issues arising in connection with electronic commerce. The issues to be examined shall include -protection and enforcement of copyright and related rights; -protection and enforcement of trademarks, and -new technologies and access to technology.

C. ENHANCING THE INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

The growth of electronic commerce relies on universal and affordable access to the information infrastructure. Effective competition in telecommunications markets can ensure a sustained, long-term trend towards lower costs, increased quality and, thus, expanded access to information infrastructures and services.

ACCESS TO AND USE OF THE INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Governments and industry are working to identify infrastructure requirements for electronic commerce, including high speed core network capacity as well as local loop access. Review of regulatory issues which affect infrastructure development is also underway in various international fora. Organisations such as the World Bank offer financial assistance to help build information and communication infrastructures in developing countries. The World Bank, through the full range of its financial instruments, provides assistance to developing countries for both the development of information and communication infrastructure as well as legal and regulatory reform in the telecommunications sector to support a modern, competitive telecommunications environment which promotes growth, encourages private sector participation and the introduction of and access to a broad range of affordable services. The World Trade Organization has done much to liberalise world trade in information technology products.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ISO/IEC	- All standards for use of information technology including information interchange and use must support the JTC1 strategic directions of portability and interoperability.	- Strategic direction of "cultural adaptability" added by JTC1 to be incorporated in all standards development work.
ITU	- Development of standards on overall architecture of the Global Information Infrastructure. - Provision of spectrum for the new generation satellite and cellular technologies that will provide wireless access to electronic commerce services - Providing fora where government and industry discuss key policy and regulatory issues in telecommunication. - Active programme of policy research and analysis on the implications of Internet, multimedia, and telecommunication developments for electronic commerce.	
UNCTAD	- By stimulating interest and awareness of electronic commerce in developing countries, UNCTAD contributes to the identification and mobilisation of the 'critical mass' of potential users of advanced telecommunications infrastructure.	- In assessing the extent to which developing countries and their enterprises can participate in e-commerce, UNCTAD has a responsibility to evaluate and measure connectivity and accessibility to information networks and infrastructure (see for example document TD/B/Com.3/16, to be issued late September 1998).

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
UPU	- Providing global network services for the postal community. - Providing the following electronic commerce related products and services: - Web services - EDI services - Tracking services - Financial services - Intranet - Archival and directory services.	- Development of standards in the areas addressed, electronic commerce and "Global Trust" service provision. - Establishment of a global postal communication infrastructure. - Continues service provision and further global expansion to all post offices.
World Bank	Operations encouraging sector development include: - Funding for information and communication infrastructure development; and - Funding for legal and regulatory reform promoting <i>inter alia</i>: - fair and transparent regulation in a competitive environment; - investor and user confidence; - affordable, cost-based services; - private sector participation in the introduction of new services; - access to services - Dissemination of experience, good practice and knowledge through publications, participation in international <i>for a</i> and co-operation with other international institutions such as ITU, UNCITRAL and WTO.	- Continue operations focus in developing markets on legal and regulatory reform encouraging sector development including new technologies and applications. - Continue knowledge dissemination and co-operation with other international institutions.
(infoDev)	- Development of tool-kit containing cost-benefit analysis and case studies demonstrating the rationale for liberalising Internet services. - Dissemination of best practices and lessons learned with regard to liberalisation of markets, development of network infrastructures, global connectivity, convergence, etc. - Establishment and enhancement of electronic communication networks and information support services.	- Continued awareness raising seminars and dissemination of results and best practices.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
WIPO	- Approval by Member States of WIPO of project to construct a dedicated global information network (WIPO net) linking all industrial property offices of the world.	- Completion of construction of WIPO net, making available on the network intellectual property digital libraries (patent databases, databases of intellectual property laws and treaties), providing secure network for on-line filing of patent and trademark applications and assistance to industrial property offices of developing countries in establishing and maintaining web sites.
WTO	- Commitments under the GATS on the liberalisation of trade in basic and value-added telecommunication services will ensure better access to the essential infrastructure for electronic commerce (see Trade Facilitation and Market Access). - Under the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) of March 1997, 40 countries representing over 90 % of world trade in information technology products agreed to remove by the year 2000, tariffs and customs duties on a wide range of such products, thus reducing costs and improving access to the basic equipment of the infrastructure.	- Negotiations on a Second phase of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA II) were suspended in July 1997. Consultations on their resumption began in September 1998. - A new round of market opening negotiations on services under the GATS, will begin in 1999. These negotiations will cover all services including telecommunications and network services.

YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

Broad attention at the international level is focused on the impact of the year 2000 upon the applications and hardware, which make up the global information infrastructure. Several International Bodies are working to raise awareness, develop standards, and co-ordinate activities to address the Year 2000 problem. These include the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) task force; a joint Year 2000 Council with the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), IAS, and IOSCO; and organisations such as the World Bank in assisting governments share information and best practices.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
Joint Year 2000 Council (BIS, IAS, IOSCO)	- Creation of Joint Year 2000 Council and External Consultative Committee which have been meeting regularly to increase awareness and co-ordination within the financial and insurance industries.	- Continue to update the BIS website with (1) information on Year 2000 developments in each country, (2) papers drafted by the Council addressing the scope and impact of the problem, testing issues, contingency planning and further supervisory guidance, and (3) guidance published by financial regulators and supervisors world-wide.
ISO	- Development of international standard, in 1988, ISO 8601 Representation of Dates and Times which anticipated and addressed the Y2000 problem with respect to information interchange.	- Re-issuance of revised ISO 8601 standard and greater awareness raising.
ITU	- Creation of Year 2000 Task Force for telecommunications-related issues.	- Distribute through membership, outcomes of Task Force work.
UN-CEFACT	- UN/CEFACT - updating standards for electronic data interchange.	
UPU	- Developing a directive to ensure the compatibility of postal systems.	- Publishing the directive.
World Bank (infoDev)	Y2K Initiative - Organisation and hosting of 20 regional seminars to deepen understanding of the Y2K problem, share information and best practices and create networks for technical & professional co-operation. - Provision of grants to assist governments in the design of national plans and the implementation of remediation activities.	- Co-sponsorship of Global Y2K summit in London in November. - Participation in awareness-raising events. - Proposed media campaign to continue the awareness raising events of the regional seminars on a global level.

INTERNET GOVERNANCE / DOMAIN NAMES SYSTEM

Among the various efforts at the international level to examine issues surrounding the growth and governance of the Internet, including the Domain Names System, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), has undertaken to develop recommendations for issues related to trademarks/domain name disputes and the addition of new Generic top level domain names (gTLDs).

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ITU	- Active participation in Internet governance arrangements (MoU on gTLD, CORE, new IANA).	- Continue active consideration of issues at the forthcoming Plenipotentiary Conference (12 October - 6 November 1998).
UPU	- The UPU is following the development in this area with a strong position advocating the introduction of new gTLD's. - The UPU had several contacts with IANA, IAHC (now iPOC), ISOC and GIAW.	- Continue advocating the introduction of new gTLD's, including ".POST" to facilitate the mapping of physical access, for consumers and businesses to post offices world wide, with digital access.
WIPO	- WIPO has initiated an international process to develop recommendations regarding certain intellectual property issues associated with domain names, including dispute resolution. The process covers, in particular, recommendations on a uniform dispute-resolution system in the generic top level domains (gTLDs), particularly to prevent cybersquatting; a mechanism to protect famous marks; and an evaluation of the effects of adding new gTLDs. The process involves Internet-based consultations (see http://wipo2.wipo.int) and regional physical consultations. - Independently of the process mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center administers an on-line expedited arbitration system for disputes in certain country code top level domains (ccTLDs) by arrangement with the registries of those ccTLDs.	- The presentation, by March 1999, of the report containing the recommendations to the New Corporation that is being formed to manage the domain name system. - Further promotion of the use of WIPO's on-line arbitration service in the ccTLDs to facilitate cheap and effective resolution of domain name disputes which have an international dimension and to deter cybersquatters.

STANDARDS

Several international bodies support the development and adoption of voluntary, market-driven consensus standards. The Joint Technical Committee (JTC1) established by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), operates with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)'s Telecommunications Standardisation Sector in developing technical standards of importance for electronic commerce. The ITU is also working on the development of standards on the overall architecture of the Global Information Infrastructure.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ITU	- Development of standards in the areas of multimedia communication systems, communication systems and security, privacy techniques for multimedia terminals, technical protocol for electronic commerce, and digital certificate and certification authority issues. (in co-operation with ISO/IEC JTC1).	- Further development of Global Information Infrastructure standards by promoting existing standards in support of electronic commerce and developing new standards where required.
ISO / IEC	- The Joint Technical Committee 1 (JTC1) established by the ISO and IEC is responsible for standardisation in the field of information technology. JTC 1 sets standards in electronic commerce including such items as identification cards(SC17) , security (SC27), data capture (SC31), data management (SC32), and user interfaces (SC35). JTC1 works with ITU on joint standards. - Completion of work identified by the JTC1 Business Team on Electronic Commerce (BT-EC) to resolve four horizontal issues, namely, IT-enablement, localisation, cross-sectorial and cultural adaptability. These issues have been included the work of other ISO Technical committees and public and private sector bodies".	- Incorporation of the JTC1 added strategic direction of cultural adaptability in all standardisation work in addition to the existing strategic directions of portability and interoperability. - Heightened priority on development of new standards or enhancement of existing voluntary, consensus standards to meet particular needs of electronic commerce. - Follow-up work is proposed in the areas of user interfaces and encoding profiles, trading protocols, payment methods, security mechanisms, identification, and definition and encoding of data and other objects.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ISO	- Standards are already developed in areas such as quantities, units and symbols (TC12), terminology (TC37), documentation (TC47), banking, securities and other financial services (TC68), freight containers(TC104), administration (TC154), quality management and quality assurance(TC176), transport systems (TC204), environmental management (TC207), geomatics (TC211), and health informatics (TC215)."	- Review of existing standards in light of added requirements of electronic commerce. Revising existing standards and preparing new standards to meet identified needs.
UN/CEFACT	- CEFACT as part of the UN network of regional economic commissions, i.e. UN/ECE , focuses on the world-wide facilitation of international transactions in particular by promoting UN/EDIFACT (United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport) providing the essential rules for automated data exchange, particularly when data needs to be processed by more than one organisation. Based in part on ISO standards with added implementation guidelines, UN/EDIFACT aims to help organisations harmonise their business data across national, sectorial and organisational frontiers advocating an approach which is independent of hardware or software choices and neutral when communicating data with a variety of national and international partners.	- Identification of techniques and methodologies which could be utilised to enhance the process for the next generation of automated information exchange.
UNCTAD	- Implementation of specific software solutions to promote internationally-agreed standards (e.g. EDIFACT, EU SAD). Enhance the ability of member states to implement and adapt to internationally agreed standards.	- Continue implementation of specific software solutions to promote internationally-agreed standards. - Continue to help developing countries to adapt and implement internationally agreed standards.
UPU	- Establishment of several standards for EDI messaging within the postal industry, currently applied world wide. - Current standardisation effort in addressing data encryption, certification and authentication framework for digital signature verification.	- Establishment of a global postal standard for certification / authentication services by September 1999.

D. MAXIMISING THE BENEFITS

The full economic potential of electronic commerce will only be realised through its widespread use by businesses, consumers, and institutions. Using the information infrastructure and electronic commerce also links citizens to each other and the world and fosters social cohesion. A clear understanding of the needs of enterprises and citizens in both developing and developed countries is needed to ensure that a facilitating environment is fostered.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Maximizing the benefits of electronic commerce requires a deeper understanding of its impact on growth, business, productivity, international trade, and employment. A number of intergovernmental organisations have begun to contribute to the research and analysis in this field. For example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is conducting research on the impact of telework on employment opportunities; the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has undertaken analyses of the role of telecommunications in electronic commerce focusing on the developing world; and The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is organising the first meeting of "Partners for Development" which will look at practical solutions to economic and social development.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ILO	- Organisation of a Symposium on Multimedia Convergence in 1997 to examine social and labour issues arising from the process of digitalisation and convergence of various computer and information technologies. Published report of the Symposium available. - <i>Conditions of Work Digest</i> on <i>Telework</i> examines the extent of telework, the rationale for its introduction and its implications for workers, employers and communities. - Participation in the Global Knowledge Partnership launched by the World Bank and the Government of Canada in 1997. Organisation of a Virtual Working Group on ICT, Jobs and Work: Challenges for Development. The Virtual Working Group met from 18 May to 3 July 1998 bringing together 30 panellists and 660 subscribers from 44 countries addressing four main themes: ICT and jobs: creator and/or destroyer, ICT and work: changing patterns; ICT and enterprise: the new business environment; ICT, development and governance: employers, workers and the state.	- Studies to be published in 1998 on the social situation of artists in Africa, Asia and Latin America and on the impact of digitalisation, technological and market convergence on actors and the international production industry. - Ongoing research on the growth and impact of telework on employment opportunities, work organisation and industrial relations. Co-operation with UNTEC on teletrade and telework with a focus on developing countries, countries in transition and countries with large sparsely populated regions. - Possible future work on a code of practice on telework and on the social and labour impact of information technologies in response to resolutions and recommendations adopted at several ILO meetings.
ITU	- Collecting and analysing data on the current use of electronic commerce in various ITU member countries. - Publication of studies and reports on the regulatory and legal aspects of telecommunications in electronic commerce, and on the development of Internet in developing countries.	- Extension of the benefits of e-commerce to developing countries and economies in transition (analyses, meetings and technical assistance activities). - Increase the number of publications analysing the role of telecommunication infrastructure, services, and regulation in electronic commerce.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
UNCTAD	- Enabling developing countries and economies in transition to benefit from electronic commerce (analyses, meetings and technical assistance activities) - e.g. Columbus Summit (United Nations Symposium on Trade Efficiency of October 1994 and subsequent recommendations).	- (UNCTAD) First Meeting of "Partners for development" (Lyon, France, 9-12 November 1998. The theme of this first meeting will be "Markets and Development" – focus on concrete partnerships and practical solutions to economic and social development.
UPU	- The UPU is currently producing market intelligence reports and studies to facilitate deeper understanding of electronic commerce within the postal community.	- Continue our market intelligence research and facilitation to the postal community.
World Bank (<i>infoDev</i>)	- Provide assistance to countries in the design and implementation of regulations to liberalise their telecommunications markets—highlighting how enhanced information infrastructure can benefit economic and social development.	- Continue to provide grants which promote economic and social development through ICT applications - Annual <i>infoDev</i> Symposiums on ICT for trade & development.
WIPO		- Publication in early 1999 of Study on issues that need to be addressed as a result of the impact of electronic commerce on intellectual property.
WTO	- The WTO Special Study "Electronic Commerce and the Role of the WTO" considers the economic importance of electronic commerce and the main policy challenges, and outlines the way in which WTO Agreements impact on electronic commerce.	- Further analytical work to be carried out by the Research Division. This work will focus on trade data, and issues arising from the substitutability of electronic transmission for physical products.

SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMEs)

Electronic commerce promises a range of economic benefits to Small and Medium Sized enterprises (SMEs) and has potential to be a key force for economic growth in both the developing and developed world. The particular challenges to participation in the digital marketplace faced by SMEs are being examined by a number of organizations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Centre for Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration and Transport (UN/CEFACT), the World Bank, and the WTO.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ITU	- Support of electronic commerce applications by SMEs in developing countries through technical assistance.	- Extend the technical assistance support to a larger number of companies.
UN/CEFACT		- Within the context of UN/EDIFACT, future work will include the promotion of prepared solutions for SMEs that will allow them to participate in electronic business for business-to-business transactions.
UNCTAD	- Trade Point Programme is aimed at stimulating the use of e-commerce by SMEs. To date there are over 100 trade points established around the world.	- The Trade Point Programme is expected to continue its expansion in 1998-99; priorities should be on secure trade transactions (SEAL) and assistance to (1) Africa and the Least Developed Countries in building their local capacities for participation in electronic commerce, (2) SMEs in all countries (including Eastern and Central Europe), with a focus on business-to-business electronic transactions.
World Bank (infoDev)	- TechNet seminars and discussion groups on the practical applications for electronic commerce systems in emerging economies. - Development of tool-kit outlining procedures necessary to increase grass-roots participation in Internet commerce. - Stimulate private entrepreneurship at the micro-level by funding the development of a business plan for the establishment and operation of information service centres.	- Dissemination of lessons learned; continued funding of projects and provision of technical assistance.
WTO		- The forthcoming work programme will examine the development implications of electronic commerce including ways of enhancing the participation of developing countries and their SMEs.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

There is widespread recognition that the use of electronic commerce requires the development of digital literacy and skills by businesses, organisations and consumers. Organisations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), The International Labour Organization (ILO); The Universal Postal Union (UPU), and the World Bank have all started programmes for training and skills improvement. The United Nations Conference on Trade Development (UNCTAD) has also started an initiative for human resource development in the area of electronic commerce.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ILO	- Skills development is a key ongoing ILO concern regarding the impact of information technology on changing skills profiles and the future labour market structure and employment opportunities. Many ILO reports and meetings address this issue.	
ITU	- Training for government officials and private sector entrepreneurs on electronic communication regulation and practices.	- Expand training activities to include telecommunication/e-commerce-related matters.
UN-CEFACT	- working with the other UN Regional Commissions and UNCTAD to develop competencies related to electronic data interchange and trade procedures (e.g. training packages, seminars and brochures.	
UNCTAD	- TRAINFORTRADE/e-trade programme provides interactive training modules for the practitioners of e-commerce – including a distance course on electronic commerce for Arab countries.	- Capacity Building in the Area of Electronic Commerce: Human Resource Development. This initiative will propose ways to mobilise civil society to contribute to the design and dissemination of training and information needs. - Envisage special training on legal aspects of electronic commerce in co-operation with UNCITRAL. - Training seminars and workshops (national and regional) on e-commerce for public and officials.
UPU	- Improvement of the knowledge and skills of the postal community in electronic commerce, logistics and financial services.	- Continue awareness and skill improvements programs.
World Bank	- Funding for general training and capacity building for technical, competition and other specific regulatory functions in the telecommunications sector in developing markets.	- Continue capacity building components of reform and restructuring operations in developing markets.
(infoDev)	- Development of access centres which provide technical training on the use of the Internet.	- Continue provision of grants to projects which develop the skills of individuals in the areas of connectivity, networking, regulation, e-commerce, etc.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
WCO	- Customs Reform and Modernisation (CRM) Programme.	- Promote the application of efficient organisational processes and customs procedures through the CRM programme.
WTO	- The Trade and Development Centre under the WTO Website provides information and training to government officials and business dealers in the developing countries.	- The forthcoming work programme on electronic commerce will address ways of enhancing the participation of developing countries and SMEs by improving access to infrastructure and technology cover the development implications and potential benefits to developing countries including their SMEs, and ways of enhancing their participation, including through improved access to infrastructure and technology and by facilitating the movement of natural persons.

ENSURING GLOBAL PARTICIPATION

Enabling countries - particularly developing nations - to stimulate innovation and exploit the technology potential of electronic commerce should be a priority for the development of the global information society. International Organisations and regional bodies are helping to facilitate the full participation of the developing world through assistance, special projects and programmes.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
ITU	- Serving as a forum (through workshops, conferences, and seminars) to address policy issues related to electronic commerce in developing countries. - Bringing various partners together to undertake pilot and demonstration projects in developing countries (such as "Consumer Electronic Commerce for Developing Countries") to demonstrate the benefits of electronic commerce to the user communities of these nations. - Offering, organising and co-ordinating technical co-operation and assistance activities specifically oriented to the promotion and development of electronic commerce.	- Adjust workshops, conferences and seminars to take into account the new realities brought by communication convergence and electronic commerce related matters. - Expand technical co-operation and assistance specifically oriented to the promotion and development of electronic commerce.
UN/CEFACT	- A number of UN/CEFACT Trade Facilitation recommendations have as their purpose to reduce the complexity of existing procedures and the harmonisation of the business information exchanged. They can be implemented independently of the technological level of development of the organisation or country and are the prerequisite for effective electronic commerce. - working with UN Regional Commissions, particularly in Asia, and is instrumental in regional projects like the "Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)".	

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
UNCTAD	- Consistent with its mandate UNCTAD enables developing countries to maximise the trade, investment and development opportunities, and helps them to integrate into the world economy. - Assistance to developing countries in the context of their participation in WTO's work on e-commerce.	- Mobilisation of partnerships between public and private sector for the global development of electronic commerce (UNCTAD) First meeting of "Partners for Development" (Lyon, France, 9-12 November 1998). - A major part of the Lyon Summit will be constituted by sessions devoted to major issues regarding electronic commerce and development. Global Electronic Trade UN partnerships (GET UP) initiative that will work towards a development-friendly global framework for electronic commerce. Main themes will include global access, legal dimensions, secure transactions, and trade logistics. In each of these themes, the Lyon meeting will aim at generating partnerships between international institutions, governments and business to enhance the participation of smaller players in global e-commerce.
UPU	- Facilitating user groups and forums of discussions and global development projects. - Work in areas are Financial Services, Advanced Electronic Services & Mail and Parcels Logistics. - Introduction of new technologies within the postal community to improve national and international transaction exchange utilising EDI, Financial services such as International money order and fund transfer and electronic commerce technologies.	- Mandate to propose new project in all three areas and facilitates the management of such initiatives as well as establishing standards where necessary.

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
World Bank	- Providing assistance to developing countries through operational funding of legal and regulatory reform - encouraging the introduction of new services and applications through private sector participation consistent with WTO principles; and - ensuring harmonisation with regional and international normative structures.	- Continue assistance in the areas of legal and regulatory reform promoting WTO principles and harmonisation.
(infoDev)	- Dissemination of experience, good practice and knowledge through publications, participation in international <i>for a</i> and co-operation with other international institutions, such as ITU, UNCITRAL and WTO. - Act as a catalyst and forum for the exchange of ideas—a clearinghouse of knowledge and information). - Share worldwide experience with and disseminate best practices to governments and key-decision makers in public & private sectors. - Initiate projects at the “grassroots”. - <i>infoDev</i> Conference Scholarship Fund (iCSF): assist individuals from developing countries participate in conferences & seminars which address issues related to ICT for trade & development.	- Continue knowledge dissemination and co-operation with other international institutions. - Continue current liaison activities between developed and developing economies and the public and private sectors.
WIPO	- Extensive program of technical assistance to developing countries on all aspects of intellectual property.	- The Member States of WIPO approved the organisation of regional consultation meetings in late 1998 and early 1999 to develop awareness in developing countries of the impact of electronic commerce on intellectual property and the organisation in 1999 of a major international conference in Geneva on intellectual property and electronic commerce.
WTO-World Bank	- The Trade and Development Centre established under the WTO Website provides information and training to government officials and business leaders in developing countries in accessing trade data and WTO documentation.	
WTO		- The forthcoming work programme will address the development implications of electronic commerce.

SECTION II. REGIONAL BODIES

The policy requirements of electronic commerce are of a horizontal nature and therefore necessitate the need for consistency between regional, national and international efforts. The work of regional bodies adds an important new dimension to the development of a global framework -- articulating the regional perspectives on the issues at hand. As such, regional bodies play an important and complementary role in the development of the global strategy for electronic commerce. Following are some of the regional bodies that play important roles in dealing with electronic commerce issues.

APEC

Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation

<http://apecsun.apecsec.org.sg>

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was formed in 1989 and has become the primary regional vehicle for promoting open trade and practical economic co-operation. The Asia-Pacific Region comprises of eighteen member economies of widely divergent economies, political systems, and histories. The APEC forum has dedicated itself to the pursuit of three primary goals: trade and investment liberalisation; trade and investment facilitation, and economic and technical co-operation. The forum's membership seeks to avoid the development of protectionist economic policies. At the same time, it seeks to provide a means of addressing present and future economic conflicts which are common among trading states. In November 1997, APEC leaders agreed to the development of a work plan for electronic commerce. Under the direction of a task force co-chaired by Australia and Singapore, the first phase of the work plan -- consisting of benchmarking electronic commerce development in member economies -- has been completed. The second phase of the programme, to be reviewed by leaders at their meeting in Kuala Lumpur in November 1998, includes the development of electronic commerce principles for promoting the use of electronic commerce in the region, and the development of recommendations for technical co-operation and capacity building, public sector use of electronic commerce, and outreach programmes targeted at small and medium enterprises.

CoE

Council of Europe

<http://www.coe.fr>

The Council of Europe, an international organisation based in Strasbourg, France, was established by 10 countries in the wake of the Second World War, with the signing of its Statute in London on 5 May 1949. Its main role is to strengthen democracy, human rights and the rule of law throughout its member states, and also to enhance Europe's cultural heritage. The CoE acts as a forum for examining a whole range of social problems, such as social exclusion, intolerance, the integration of migrants, the threat to private life posed by new technology, bioethical issues, terrorism, drug trafficking and criminal activities.

EFTA

European Free Trade Association

<http://www.efta.int>

In November 1959, Ministers from seven West European countries that were not members of the European Economic Community approved the text of the Stockholm Convention establishing the

European Free Trade Association. Currently, the EFTA is an international organisation comprising of four states, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, with headquarters in Geneva and offices in Brussels and Luxembourg. EFTA has developed relations with a large number of non-EU countries, many of which have concluded in free-trade agreements. The issue of electronic commerce has hitherto not been addressed in these third country free-trade agreements. Three of the four member states (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) have structured their relations with the European Union in the form of the Agreement on an European Economic Area (EEA) through which they participate in the Single Market. In EFTA's capacity as an interface between its member states and the EU, the various aspects of electronic commerce have been addressed.

EU

European Union

<http://europa.eu.int>

The European Commission has used its role as the source of policy initiative to transform the framework provided by the Union's founding treaties into today's integrated structures. It fulfils three major functions: makes proposals for all new legislation relating to activities including, trade, industry, social policies, agriculture, the environment, energy, regional development, external relations and overseas development; acts as the guardian of the EU treaties to ensure that EU legislation is applied correctly by the Member States and that all citizens and participants in the single market benefit from the level playing field that has been created; and, as the executive body of the Union, is responsible for implementing and managing policy. The EU has made electronic commerce a major priority for the next several years. The European Commission has outlined a number of key issue areas which require immediate attention, including intellectual property rights, the security of transactions, electronic payment systems, data protection, taxation and tariffs. It has also launched several projects on standardisation for electronic commerce.

FTAA

Free Trade Areas of the Americas

<http://www.ftaa-alca.org>

The effort to unite the economies of the Western Hemisphere into a single free trade arrangement was initiated at the Summit of the Americas, which was held in December of 1994 in Miami. The Heads of State of the 34 democracies in the region agreed to construct a "Free Trade Area of the Americas" or FTAA and to complete negotiations for the agreement by 2005. The goals of the FTAA are to: preserve and strengthen the community of democracies of the Americas; promote prosperity through economic integration and free trade; eradicate poverty and discrimination in the western hemisphere; guarantee sustainable development and conserve the natural environment for future generations. The FTAA has formed the Joint Government-Private Sector Committee of Experts on Electronic Commerce to make recommendations to ministers on how to increase and broaden the benefits of electronic commerce, and, in particular, how electronic commerce should be dealt with in the context of FTAA negotiations. The committee is developing working guidelines and will be delivering recommendations for ministers prior to their October 1999 meeting.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

A. BUILDING TRUST FOR USERS AND CONSUMERS

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA AND PRIVACY		
Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
Council of Europe	- Convention For The Protection Of Individuals With Regard To Automatic Processing Of Personal Data, ETS No. 108 (1981). - Draft Guidelines for the protection of privacy on the Internet (1998).	
EFTA	- Preparations to integrate the EC directive on the protection on personal data into the EEA Agreement.	
European Union	- Directive "Privacy and personal data protection".	

INTEROPERABLE AND SECURE INFRASTRUCTURE

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
APEC	- A Task Force under the Telecommunications Working Group reviews and assemble information about international trends in public administrations with regard to Public Key Authentication. - Database of Existing Certification Authorities (CAs) to monitor the development of CAs in the region and the world.	- The Cybernet/INGECEP (Integrated Next Generation Electronic Commerce Environment Project) aims to help the extension of the global market through the development of new multimedia applications and security systems for electronic commerce. Final report due March 1999.
EFTA	- Following of the standards-related aspects of electronic signatures.	- Integration of the EC directive on electronic signatures into the EEA Agreement, when adopted.
European Union	- Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Directive on a common framework for electronic signatures (proposal of 13 May 1998 - COM (98)297final). - initiative on standards-related aspects in order to facilitate the implementation of the EC proposal for a common framework for electronic signatures. - Communication on "Ensuring Security and Trust in electronic communications: Towards a European framework for digital signatures and encryption", COM(97)503 of 8 October 1997.	

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
EFTA	- Participation in preparations of the rule setting of the EU with regard to creating consumer confidence in electronic communication.	
European Union	- Communication on security and confidence in electronic communication of 8 October 1997 COM(98)297final. - Directive 97/7/EC on protection of consumers in respect to distance contracts.	- Forthcoming proposal for Directive on distance selling of financial services.

OTHER TRUST-RELATED ISSUES

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
CoE	- ORDER No. 514 (1996) for promoting children's causes. - Recommendation 1371 and Document 8041 (1998) on abuse and neglect of children. - Doc. 7659 (1996) Sexual exploitation of children. - Resolution 1099 (1996) on the sexual exploitation of children.	
European Union	- Action Plan on promoting the safe use of the Internet; Initiative to combat illegal and harmful content on the Internet.	

B. ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES FOR THE DIGITAL MARKETPLACE

COMMERCIAL LAW		
Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
EFTA	- Preparation to integrate the EC directive on regulatory transparency mechanism for Information Society services into the EEA Agreement. The EFTA states have also contributed to the discussions in the EC on commercial communications and the Action Plan for tendering conditions for public procurement through electronic commerce.	
European Union	- Directive Proposal on regulation transparency for information society services [COM(96)293final of 30 August 1996]. - Initiative for a Directive related to specific electronic commerce legal issue. - Communication on commercial communications [COM(96)192final of 4 March 1998]. - Initiative for an Action Plan for tendering conditions for government procurement through electronic commerce.	
FINANCIAL ISSUES		
Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
EFTA	- Participation in preparations of the rule-setting of the EU with regard to distance selling of financial services; - Study of the action plan related to fraud and payments counterfeiting with regard to its EEA relevance.	
European Union	- Initiative for a Directive on financial services distance selling contracts between providers and consumers; - Initiative for an action plan related to fraud and payments counterfeiting, including electronic commerce aspects.	

TRADE FACILITATION AND MARKET ACCESS

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
APEC	- The Transport Working Group initiated a pilot Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) programme (APEC Commercial Message Project) to determine future direction in the adoption of electronic commerce throughout the transport sector in the region. - The Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures provides technical assistance to its members to gradually implement electronic commerce environment, in the areas of Express Consignment Clearance, UN/EDIFACT, and the development of a core set of harmonised trade data elements and customs clearance procedures.	- To facilitate the electronic commerce and eliminating the requirement for paper documents for key messages relevant to international transport and trade as soon as practicable within the next ten years. - Study on the utilisation of EDI in all APEC trading area.
FTAA	- Joint Government-Private Sector Committee of Experts on Electronic Commerce — established to determine how electronic commerce and electronic transactions should be dealt with within the FTAA process.	- Joint Committee to deliver recommendations to the October 1999 FTAA Ministerial. The Committee will make recommendations on how to increase and broaden the benefits of electronic commerce, and determine how electronic commerce should be dealt with within the context of FTAA negotiations. - Committee will identify the ways in which the use of electronic commerce can influence the operation of trade obligations, trade policy, security, and confidentiality. - The Committee will keep itself apprised of activities in other fora such as the WTO, the OECD, WIPO, UNCITRAL, UNCTAD, and APEC.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
EFTA		- Integration of EC directive on copyright and related rights in the Information Society into the EEA Agreement.
European Union	- Directive proposal on copyrights and related rights in the information society, 10 December 1997 - COM(97)628.	

C. ENHANCING THE INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

ACCESS TO AND USE OF THE INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
APEC	- Report on Key Elements Necessary for Promoting Business and Private Sector Participation in Telecommunication Infrastructure Development.	
EFTA	- Contributions to the discussions on convergence and the proposed EC directive on the legal protection of services based on, or consisting of, conditional access.	
European Union	- Green Paper on the convergence of telecommunications, Media and information technology sectors and the implication for regulations. - Directive proposal on legal protection of services to conditional access [COM(97)628 of 9 September 1997].	

THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
European Union	- Communication on "The Year 2000 Computer Problem".	

INTERNET GOVERNANCE / DOMAIN NAMES SYSTEM

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
EFTA	- Ministers from the EFTA states took part in the Ministerial Declaration on Global Information Networks.	
European Union	- Ministerial Declaration in the Bonn Ministerial Conference on Global Information Networks.	

STANDARDS

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
Council of Europe	- Motion for a resolution "Standardisation in the field of information and communication technologies which invites the governments of member states, as well as the European Union: - to promote the establishment of European standards enabling networks to be interconnected and applications to be interoperable, with a view to encouraging the dissemination of multimedia products; - to intensify international co-operation, which is essential in order to assure the convergence of these standards.	
EFTA	- EC initiatives relating to standards have been studied with regard to EEA relevance.	
EU, IEC, ISO, ITU	- The Global Standards Conference "Building the Global Information Society for the 21st Century".	
EU	- Reflection paper on the "role of standardisation in self-regulation for electronic commerce". - Initiative to support to the creation of a global inventory of existing standards and technical solutions for electronic commerce, to promote best practices and to support the creation of an open marketplace for industrial sectors.	

D. MAXIMISING THE BENEFITS**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACTS**

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
APEC	- Study to determine economic and social implications of the Asia Pacific Information Society, due September 1998.	
Council of Europe	- RESOLUTION 1120 (1997) 1 on the impact of the new communication and information technologies on democracy.	

SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES)

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
APEC	- Organisation of Electronic Commerce Seminars to help SMEs understand the benefits of doing business electronically. - EDI-Internet Pilot Project to promote the growth of business-business electronic commerce transactions by evaluating readily available hardware and software to make Internet-EDI easy to implement for SMEs.	- A Survey of 3000 SMEs has been tendered to assess penetration and uptake of electronic commerce, with a report to be produced in 1998. - Continue Electronic Commerce Seminars.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
APEC		- The Human Resource Development Working Group proposes to train and capture an overview of electronic commerce activities in the view to empower skilled technocrats and inform governments on relevant issues arising from the use of the new mode of commerce. - Attempt to identify gaps in government policies and strategies to encourage the practice of electronic commerce in business and government in the Asia Pacific region. Project to be completed by May 1999.

ENSURING GLOBAL PARTICIPATION

Organisation	Existing Contributions	Future Work
APEC	- An Electronic Commerce Task Force was created in February 1998 to develop an Electronic Commerce work plan.	
EFTA	- Assisting the EFTA States in their participation in the EC's work on electronic commerce.	
European Union	- Communication on Globalisation and the Information Society – the need for Strengthened International Co-ordination. - Organisation, together with representatives of international industry, of a global industry Round Table on 29th June, which led to the launch, by business, of the Global Business Dialogue.	
