



# Briefing Paper

## E-Commerce in the post- COVID-19 Era

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### Summary

This briefing paper presents the impact of the covid-19 crisis on e-commerce. It highlights that the opportunities raised by the pandemic were unequal, and maps a possible way forward for developing countries to create a conducive, wider digital ecosystem. It is derived from a study on “Fast Forward E-commerce: How can developing countries leap e-commerce barriers in the post-Covid 19 Era?” by Yasmin Ismail available at <https://bit.ly/37F6lo9>.

## Introduction

### The Covid-19 disruption: A Quantum Leap for Digital Economy

For the past few months and as of this writing, the world continues to grapple with the coronavirus disease (covid-19) pandemic and the various measures adopted by governments to contain it, from the enforcement of mask-wearing to confinement and shut-down of economic activity. The ‘unprecedented’<sup>1</sup> health crisis hit ‘in the context of sluggish global trade that has been dragging on since the 2008–2009 financial crisis’<sup>2</sup>. Amid the extreme uncertainty about its path and duration, as well as its non-uniform spill-over effects, the pandemic has been generating social and economic disruptions and posing multifaceted challenges to households, businesses and governments.

Due to the pandemic, physical movement of goods and people was widely restricted, remote working became the rule, and digital platforms the primary mean for safe communication, online ordering and transactions.

The social distancing and confinement measures led to a surge in the demand for internet and mobile data services. According to the OECD<sup>3</sup>, ‘The COVID-19 crisis accelerated an expansion of e-commerce towards new firms, customers and types of products. (...) Some of these changes in the e-commerce landscape will likely be of a long-term nature, in light of the possibility of new waves

of the epidemic, the convenience of the new purchasing habits, learning costs and the incentive for firms to capitalise on investments in new sales channels’.

However, the acceleration of digitalisation and e-commerce is ‘a privilege not enjoyed by all’<sup>4</sup>, and ‘countries with lower incomes show lower usage of technology as part of their response to COVID-19’<sup>5</sup>. The pandemic’s digital stress test magnified existing cross-country digital divides and economic inequalities.

### Covid-19 E-commerce Acceleration: An Unequal Opportunity

The digital acceleration during covid-19 has demonstrated that digital economy and e-commerce are double-edged swords. While they are promoters of resilient supply chains and sustainable businesses and trade in times of crisis, they also can be exacerbators of inequalities, digital gaps and needs of the vulnerable that remained unaddressed<sup>6</sup>.

The crisis has significantly pushed up online shopping, and leading e-commerce platforms and online marketplaces report a substantial increase in demand. JUMIA’s 1<sup>st</sup> quarter financial report of this year indicates that the year over year increase of annual active consumers reached 51%<sup>7</sup>. Consumers also became more open to trying different e-payment methods, although in LDCs,

<sup>1</sup> The Covid-19 Pandemic was widely described as “unprecedented” in several reports by International Organisations like the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, as well as news and Media articles.

<sup>2</sup> ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). (2020). The effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on international trade and logistics, COVID-19 Special Report, No. 6, Santiago, July. Available at: [https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45878/1/S2000496\\_en.pdf](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45878/1/S2000496_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> OECD. 2020. E-commerce in the time of COVID-19, 7 October 2020, OECD Publishing. Available at: [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=137\\_137212-t0fjgnerdb&title=E-commerce-in-the-time-of-COVID-19](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=137_137212-t0fjgnerdb&title=E-commerce-in-the-time-of-COVID-19)

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Secretary-General. (2020). Report of the Secretary-General Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, June 2020: United Nations. Available at:

[https://www.un.org/en/content/digital-cooperation-roadmap/assets/pdf/Roadmap\\_for\\_Digital\\_Cooperation\\_EN.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/digital-cooperation-roadmap/assets/pdf/Roadmap_for_Digital_Cooperation_EN.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> IFC. 2020. The impact of COVID-19 on Disruptive Technology Adoption in Emerging Markets. IFC, World Bank Group. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/20954816.2020.1839166>

<sup>6</sup> Ismail, Y. 2020. Trade and Digital Africa: Innovating for Inclusive and Sustainable Continental Integration, 28 September 2020, Geneva Trade Week 2020, Geneva: CUTS International, Geneva.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/press-releases/2020-05-13/jumia-reports-first-quarter-2020-results>

they remain keen on using cash-on-delivery<sup>8</sup>. In developing countries more generally, several factors stand against the growth in digital payments, such as access to connectivity but also trust issues and privacy concerns<sup>9</sup>.

While the digital acceleration has been very significant ‘in developed economies and relatively high-income developing economies, where a sound ICT infrastructure, an e-commerce ecosystem and a distribution network are already in place’<sup>10</sup>, LDCs and many developing countries were unable to seize the full potential of the opportunities covid-19 created, as ‘they do not have such an infrastructure, ecosystem or network’<sup>11</sup>. This was mainly due to the persistent divides in crucial e-commerce enablers: connectivity, digital skills and postal capacities.

## Connectivity gap and lack of affordable access to ICT

The connectivity gap between the developed and the developing world remains wide. It is even more significant for Least Developed Countries (LDCs): while developed countries have close to 87% of individuals using the internet, in LDCs, this share only comes to 19%<sup>12</sup>. High income countries have also been more able to adapt their trade structure to the crisis, moving it online, than lower-middle income countries. The former

showed a quarterly growth in internet usage of 12,8% in the first quarter of 2020, when Covid-19 outbreak occurred, as compared to the same period in 2019. The quarterly growth in internet usage in lower-middle income countries only came to 1,3% in that period<sup>13</sup>, showing that not all economies are ready for digitalisation. There is also an affordability gap: while personal computer ownership in middle and higher-income countries reaches 85%, it drops to 21% in low-income countries<sup>14</sup>.

## Language and digital skills gap

The lack of language and digital skills remains a significant barrier to e-commerce acceleration in developing countries. A recent World Bank publication on the future of work in Africa found that only 4 per cent of the labour force among the 27 sub-Saharan African countries use LinkedIn which requires at least some ‘basic’ digital skills as a prerequisite. Based on the data available on LinkedIn, even this small portion of sub-Saharan Africa users has a lower level of digital skills than workers in other regions<sup>15</sup>.

## Postal development and infrastructure gap

The Universal Postal Union (UPU)<sup>16</sup> defines postal development ‘as reflecting the ability of a

<sup>8</sup> UNCTAD. 2020. Covid-19 And E-Commerce Impact On Businesses And Policy Responses, United Nations: Geneva. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2_en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> OECD. 2020. E-commerce in the time of COVID-19, 7 October 2020, OECD Publishing. Available at: [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=137\\_137212-t0fignerdb&title=E-commerce-in-the-time-of-COVID-19](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=137_137212-t0fignerdb&title=E-commerce-in-the-time-of-COVID-19); UNCTAD. 2020. Covid-19 And E-Commerce Impact On Businesses And Policy Responses, United Nations: Geneva. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2_en.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> UNCTAD. 2020. Impact Of The Covid-19 Pandemic on Trade and Development Transitioning To A New Normal, United Nations: Geneva. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osg2020d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osg2020d1_en.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> UNCTAD. 2020. Impact Of The Covid-19 Pandemic on Trade and Development Transitioning To A New Normal, United Nations: Geneva. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osg2020d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osg2020d1_en.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Secretary-General. (2020). Report of the

Secretary-General Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, June 2020: United Nations. Available at:

[https://www.un.org/en/content/digital-cooperation-roadmap/assets/pdf/Roadmap\\_for\\_Digital\\_Cooperation\\_EN.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/digital-cooperation-roadmap/assets/pdf/Roadmap_for_Digital_Cooperation_EN.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> IFC. 2020. The impact of COVID-19 on Disruptive Technology Adoption in Emerging Markets. IFC, World Bank Group.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/20954816.2020.1839166>

<sup>14</sup> World Economic Forum. 2020. Accelerating Digital Inclusion in the New Normal, June 2020, Geneva: World Economic Forum. Available at:

[http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Accelerating\\_Digital\\_Inclusion\\_in\\_the\\_New\\_Normal\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Accelerating_Digital_Inclusion_in_the_New_Normal_Report_2020.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Choi, J., Dutz, Mark., Usman, Z. 2020. The Future of Work in Africa : Harnessing the Potential of Digital Technologies for All. Africa Development Forum. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at:

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32124>  
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<sup>16</sup> Universal Postal Union. 2020. Postal Development Report 2020: Achieving higher performance amid a major crisis, October 2020, Bern: Universal Postal Union. Available at: <https://www.upu.int/UPU/media/upu/publications/2020-Postal-Development-Report.pdf>

country's postal network to perform across a wide range of factors that enable socio-economic development. In this regard, postal networks can be considered as high performing if they offer a reliable service and have good connectivity, a high level of demand from citizens, and operations that are resilient to external shocks'. It comes out that the postal development divide continues to grow between regions and within regions. Based on the ranking, the Africa region has the lowest score of (19.8) followed by Latin America and the Caribbean region (22.6). Both regions face significant challenges. The group of Industrialised Countries is the region with the highest score (70.6), followed by Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (51.2), the Asia Pacific (30), and the Arab region (28.5).

## The Covid-19 stress-test: towards aggravated inequalities

In the context of the above mentioned pre-existing divides across key e-commerce enablers, not all governments, businesses and individuals were able to respond swiftly to the sudden increase of need and demand for online shopping and services.

### The winners are the 'big' and 'wholly digital'

When it comes to businesses, the opportunities were seized by those already performing, if not

leading in e-commerce<sup>17</sup>. Even leading platforms needed some time in their capacity to invest, which occurred a miss out for those platforms on potential new gains<sup>18</sup>.

### More of the vulnerable left behind

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are major players in non-essential and recreational services<sup>19</sup> severely impacted by the pandemic. They represent 90 per cent of businesses worldwide, 50 per cent of global employment and even more in developing countries as well as in LDCs, where they are considered drivers for the economy<sup>20</sup>. However, they have been lagging behind large companies long before the Covid-19 crisis in terms of ICT adoption, digital skills and financial capacities<sup>21</sup>. Thus, they were unable to meet the scalability needed to respond to demand increase, absorb negative impacts of disruption in supply chains and logistics as well as adapt to digital business processes.<sup>22</sup>

Also, in the context of Covid-19, many governments decided to close schools and 90% of Ministries of education adopted policies providing a form of remote learning: internet, radio or television.<sup>23</sup> However, at least 31% of schoolchildren worldwide could not be reached by remote learning programs and over 70% of them live in rural areas with limited household assets and connectivity. Countries of sub-Saharan Africa have the highest share of students who cannot be reached by digital and broadcast means, with at least 48% in West and Central Africa, and 49% in

<sup>17</sup> UNCTAD. 2020. Impact Of The Covid-19 Pandemic on Trade and Development Transitioning To A New Normal, United Nations: Geneva. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osq2020d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osq2020d1_en.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> UNCTAD. 2020. Covid-19 And E-Commerce Impact On Businesses And Policy Responses, United Nations: Geneva. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2_en.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> UNCTAD. 2020. Impact Of The Covid-19 Pandemic on Trade and Development Transitioning To A New Normal, United Nations: Geneva. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osq2020d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osq2020d1_en.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> World Bank. 2020. PPP Legal Frameworks Post-COVID-19, Practice Note, the Infrastructure Finance, PPPs and

Guarantees Group, World Bank Group. Available at: [download \(pppknowledgelab.org\)](http://pppknowledgelab.org)

<sup>21</sup> World Economic Forum. 2020. Accelerating Digital Inclusion in the New Normal, June 2020, Geneva: World Economic Forum. Available at: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Accelerating\\_Digital\\_Inclusion\\_in\\_the\\_New\\_Normal\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Accelerating_Digital_Inclusion_in_the_New_Normal_Report_2020.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> OECD. 2020. E-commerce in the time of COVID-19, 7 October 2020, OECD Publishing. Available at: [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=137\\_137212-t0fjgnerdb&title=E-commerce-in-the-time-of-COVID-19](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=137_137212-t0fjgnerdb&title=E-commerce-in-the-time-of-COVID-19)

<sup>23</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, "Covid-19: Are children able to continue learning during school closures? A global analysis of the potential reach of remote learning policies using data from 100 countries." UNICEF, New York, 2020. Available at: [https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/COVID-19-Remote-Learning-Factsheet\\_English\\_2020.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/COVID-19-Remote-Learning-Factsheet_English_2020.pdf)

Eastern and Southern Africa<sup>24</sup>.

## A risk of further decline in developing countries' postal capacities

In the aftermath of Covid-19, 'postal services in developing countries are particularly at risk'<sup>25</sup>. The pandemic and the unprecedented global recession have added up to countries' economic sufferings. 'The economic and postal development are intimately linked. The more a country is suffering from economic hardship, the more it will find it challenging to build high-performing postal services. (...) Therefore, if e-commerce does pursue its path of growth because or in spite of the COVID-19 crisis, the positive externalities for the postal sector are not at all guaranteed, with a risk of further decline in postal relevance.'<sup>26</sup>

## Means for developing countries to fast forward e-commerce post COVID-19

While many of the previously mentioned challenges existed before covid-19, the pandemic revealed the powerful and crucial role e-commerce played for businesses, individuals and governments at times of crisis and the increasingly strategic role it is taking in the post-covid-19 era. Hence, there is a pressing need for governments of developing countries' and LDCs to rethink existing policy actions, formulate new ones and seek innovative solutions to accelerate

bridging the gaps<sup>27</sup>.

In light of the above, the following three observations are the starting point for the three actions promoted in this study:

- E-commerce in covid-19 grew to become a strategic economic sector and will remain so.
- Developing digital and postal infrastructure and capacities cannot be postponed and will be critical for sustainable recovery and resilience to future shocks<sup>28</sup>.
- The COVID-19 crisis served as an accelerator for greater public-private cooperation<sup>29</sup> and regional cooperation.

## Developing a post-covid e-commerce and digital strategy

According to the participants to UNCTAD's Covid-19 Businesses' survey<sup>30</sup>, having a well-defined e-commerce strategy as well as e-commerce enabling measures in covid-19 recovery plans is really needed. However, 49% of respondents thought that it was not prioritised by their governments. Especially for countries that do not yet have such a strategy, there is urgent need for developing an e-commerce and/or a comprehensive digitalisation strategy, in order to ensure the cross-cutting impacts of Covid-19 are recognised and addressed. This requires both high-level political commitment and engagement of non-governmental stakeholders in series of consultations that will be key in the post-covid-19 to unmask country-specific challenges and ensure objectives are aligned. Eventually, the

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Universal Postal Union. 2020. Postal Development Report 2020: Achieving higher performance amid a major crisis, October 2020, Bern: Universal Postal Union. Available at: <https://www.upu.int/UPU/media/upu/publications/2020-Postal-Development-Report.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Universal Postal Union. 2020. Postal Development Report 2020: Achieving higher performance amid a major crisis, October 2020, Bern: Universal Postal Union. Available at: <https://www.upu.int/UPU/media/upu/publications/2020-Postal-Development-Report.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> OECD. (2020a). E-commerce in the time of COVID-19, 7 October 2020, OECD Publishing. Available at: [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=137\\_137212-t0fjgnerdb&title=E-](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=137_137212-t0fjgnerdb&title=E-commerce-in-the-time-of-COVID-19)

[commerce-in-the-time-of-COVID-19](#)

<sup>28</sup> Ungerer, C., Portugal, A., Molinuevo, M., & Rovo, N. (2020). Recommendations to Leverage E-Commerce During the COVID-19 Crisis, Trade and COVID-19 Guidance Note, World Bank. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1596/33750>.

<sup>29</sup> UNCTAD. (2020b). Covid-19 And E-Commerce Impact On Businesses And Policy Responses, United Nations: Geneva. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2_en.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> UNCTAD. (2020b). Covid-19 And E-Commerce Impact On Businesses And Policy Responses, United Nations: Geneva. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2_en.pdf)

overall objective of the strategy is for the government to create a conducive digital ecosystem for e-commerce businesses to grow.<sup>31</sup>

The UNCTAD eTrade Readiness Assessment Programme initiated in 2017 identifies several challenges facing e-commerce, and formulates national strategies to address them. 25 countries completed the assessment and some of them such as Senegal, Cambodia and Myanmar decided to accelerate the adoption and implementation of their national e-commerce strategies in response to covid-19.<sup>32</sup>

While scaling up physical infrastructure can be very challenging in the aftermath of covid-19, the regulatory framework could be used to build trust and eliminate unnecessary regulatory blockages. Next step would be to build businesses' and consumers' awareness of existing online consumer protection laws and personal information protection laws to build confidence in online payment facilities and increase their adoption. SMEs would also take advantage of that in increasing chances to perform cross-border e-commerce transactions.

Another e-commerce facilitator is the availability of e-government services. In the frame of growing e-governments in the last decade, Covid-19 witnessed a surge in e-government portals and open government data<sup>33</sup>, particularly in e-health and online learning services. Governments adopting and permitting electronic signatures, transactions and records can bring a significant push to cross-border e-commerce<sup>34</sup>.

Finally, the strategy should embed monitoring indicators and tools to measure progress and effectiveness of implementation and state the process for a comprehensive or partial strategy review.

## **Revisiting public-private partnerships to accelerate digital and postal infrastructure developments**

The ever-lasting dilemma between increasing public spending to stimulate the economy, or decreasing it to limit the public deficit is even more intensified in times of crisis. The needed governmental response to the Covid-19 crisis is already increasing calls for public spending in several domains such as digital connectivity, health care, welfare, pandemic proofing of public services, infrastructures.<sup>35</sup>

Addressing those needs can be done along with promoting an increased collaboration between the public and the private sector, which would at the same time bring relief for both companies and individuals. Calls are rising to revisit the role Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) can play in financing digital and postal infrastructure needs of governments. Although before the crisis, both private sector and governments became less interested in PPPs, several countries such as Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and South Africa were successfully able to mobilise PPPs for their infrastructural and digital development.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> UNCTAD. (2017). Maximizing the development gains from e-commerce and the digital economy: Note by the Secretariat, Trade and Development Board Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy First session Geneva, 4–6 October 2017. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdb\\_ede1d2\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdb_ede1d2_en.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> UNCTAD. (2020b). Covid-19 And E-Commerce Impact On Businesses And Policy Responses, United Nations: Geneva. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstictinf2020d2_en.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Guglya, L. Presentation on COVID-19 and E-commerce: What role for the JSI?, TAF2+ Umbrella Grant Geneva Final

Seminar, 15 October 2020, Geneva: CUTS International, Geneva.

<sup>34</sup> Fan, Z., & Gallaher, M. (2020). 5 Ways To Advance Digital Trade In The Post-Covid World. World Economic Forum. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/5-ways-to-advance-modernize-digital-trade-in-the-post-covid-pandemic-world/>

<sup>35</sup> Abadie, R. 2020. COVID-19 and infrastructure: A very tricky opportunity, World Bank Blogs, 15 May 2020. Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/ppps/covid-19-and-infrastructure-very-tricky-opportunity>

<sup>36</sup> World Bank. 2020. PPP Legal Frameworks Post-COVID-19, Practice Note, the Infrastructure Finance, PPPs and Guarantees Group, World Bank Group. Available at: [download](#)

Establishing and rethinking PPPs' legal framework in developing countries and LDCs in the post-COVID-19 era may be the key to overcome financing distresses and catching up with digital acceleration. It will give the relevant context to the objective of new PPPs setup, as well as multi-stakeholder discussions on the unique risks resulting from covid-19 and how best to facilitate mutually beneficial PPPs and leverage them to accelerate e-commerce.

### **Forward-looking trade agreements**

E-commerce and regional trade can catalyse one another. When it comes to cross-border trade, the ecosystem created by e-commerce provides a unique opportunity for developing countries and LDCs to connect their goods and services with potential buyers beyond their borders and access their regions' market (as well as the international market) at lower costs and allow creating regional supply and value chains. Promoting intra-regional e-commerce allows scaling up conducive digital ecosystems and promotes digital societies through cooperation and sharing of experiences. It also increases harmonisation and clarity of rules, thus attracting foreign investments to the region.

Recently, governments have been increasingly engaging in negotiating e-commerce and broader digital economy rules at the regional level, such as United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement which entered into force 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership which was signed on 15 November this year.

## **Conclusion**

The Covid-19 pandemic gave an impulse to a long-term broader use of online platforms and digital transactions. Opportunities were rather taken by big digital marketplaces; developing countries were further exposed to the significant bottlenecks standing against digitalisation and e-commerce expansion, and the crisis magnified the divide separating developing countries and LDCs from the developed world. The acceleration in e-commerce adoption for those who were not ready for it created the risk of exacerbating inequalities, not only between the countries but within countries. Developing countries need to create a conducive ecosystem for SMEs to seize e-commerce opportunities. An e-commerce strategy needs to be part of their recovery plans. Cooperation and consultation with the private sector will be key to striking the right balance between short term facilitation goals and long-term digital development goals. Closing the digital and postal infrastructure gap is an urgency and governments need to explore ways to scale up their networks and infrastructure despite the economic and financial distress the pandemic has caused. Finally, regional cooperation and RTAs can offer opportunities for scalability and the creation of regional digital value chains.



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