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I. FOREWORD

Within the framework of the UNIDO project “Promote the development of SMEs between China and other BRICS countries through e-commerce development”, several events took place between October and December 2017; the 5th UNIDO-BRICS Cooperation Quarterly Report thus provides an overview of cooperation activities for the last trimester of 2017, and outlines upcoming events in 2018.

II. HIGHLIGHTS OF UNIDO-BRICS COOPERATION

- Consultations with Deputy Permanent Representatives of BRICS countries

On 17 October 2017, Deputy Permanent Representatives of BRICS countries met with UNIDO staff to discuss the Organization’s contribution to events organized under the Chinese BRICS Presidency; to review proposals on additional areas of partnership; and to discuss the implementation of the UNIDO project “Promote the development and cooperation of SMEs between China and other BRICS countries through e-commerce development”.

- Meeting with AliResearch Group

On the sidelines of the 17th Session of UNIDO’s General Conference, on 29 November 2017, UNIDO met with Mr. Hongbing Gao, Director of AliResearch and Vice-President of the Alibaba Group, and with Mr. Cheng Ouyang, AliResearch Executive Senior Expert, to discuss how AliResearch and UNIDO could jointly promote the worldwide adoption of e-commerce.

Mr. Hongbing Gao stated that e-commerce is a great success story for China’s sustainable development: for example, Alibaba helped SMEs gain access to new markets and thus helped create many new jobs. Mr. Gao strongly believes that technology and e-commerce will contribute to an increasing growth in all sectors, and that public-private partnerships with an open approach towards multi-stakeholder collaboration are very much required. Both sides agreed that the successful Chinese e-commerce model should be replicated in developing regions and both stressed the importance of deploying effective payment modalities in developing nations.

Alibaba also strongly supports UNIDO’s ISID agenda and has expressed its strong interest in...
the Programme for Country Partnership (PCP) to build capacity and share ideas.

Knowledge Hub session during the General Conference

During the 17th Session of UNIDO’s General Conference, Knowledge Hub sessions took place, which allowed participants to gain an in-depth perspective and understanding of UNIDO’s ongoing activities. A knowledge hub session on “E-commerce: the new engine for the shared prosperity” took place on 30 November 2017, which updated the audience with the most recent information on UNIDO’s e-commerce project. During the session, UNIDO Representative and Director of the Regional Office in Bangkok Stein Hansen introduced the UNIDO-Thai Strategic Cooperation Framework and stressed the importance of e-commerce for the country. UNIDO Research Associate Xiaodi Zhang introduced the UNIDO-SASS e-commerce report. And UNIDO Consultant Jaidev Dhavle introduced the UNIDO online e-commerce training manual that seeks to help SMEs adopt e-commerce platforms. Senior Partnership Adviser Victor Zagrekov gave more insights on the cooperation between UNIDO and BRICS, while Researcher Hanchun Wang from China’s Academy of Information and Communications Technology presented an overview of the Academy’s role in e-commerce activities in China. All presentations stressed the importance of e-commerce for global business activities and industrial development.

5th China Taobao Village Summit Conference

Hosted by the Department of Commerce of Shandong Province, the Heze government and the Alibaba Group, the 5th China Taobao Village Summit Conference was held from 7 to 8 December 2017 in Heze, Shandong Province of China. More than 2,000 e-commerce providers were in attendance, with Heze Deputy Mayor Yan Jianbo and Shandong Vice-Governor Yu Guo’an delivering opening speeches. Sessions explored the important value of e-commerce in supporting entrepreneurship, employment, poverty alleviation and rural rejuvenation in China.

Start-up and digital Micro-SME and SME

From 18 to 22 December 2017, a UNIDO delegation explored the status of e-commerce in Cambodia as a possible opportunity to be developed within the framework of the new PCP for Cambodia. This mission was very timely, also because of the country’s inclusion as a subject of study in UNIDO’s e-commerce project, and to determine public and private interest as well as to identify potential partners. Facilitated by the UNIDO Country Representative Narin Sok, the mission was received at the highest level, including by H.E. Sok Chenda Sophea, Minister attached to Prime Minister and Secretary General, Council for Development of Cambodia (CDC), as well as by H.E. Kan Channmeta, Secretary of State, Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications of Cambodia & National Institute of Posts, Telecommunications and ICT. In addition, several e-commerce actors were interviewed, including Smart Axiata (mobile service operator), Pipay (e-wallet provider), Joonaak delivery (B2B delivery service
provider), and Khmer24 (e-market platform) to gather different perspectives related to the change process associated with e-commerce. UNIDO also attended the first Tech Start-up and SME Forum organized by the National Institute of Posts, Telecoms & ICT, which aimed at increasing awareness of Cambodia’s digital economy and at offering a platform to local tech start-ups and SMEs to share their information and knowledge. UNIDO Country Representative Narin Sok delivered a keynote focusing on the government’s role and initiatives to support SMEs and e-commerce, which emphasized the benefit for SMEs to tap into international markets through e-commerce and the need for a legislative framework and infrastructure to foster SME development.

III. UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2018

- To prepare training materials on E-commerce with support from partners in BRICS countries
- Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on BRICS E-commerce Cooperation, 19-20 March 2018 in Vienna, Austria
- To co-draft the 2018 e-commerce report with SASS
- Formulation of Phase II of the project (Q1/2018)

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