

# ABAC 1999 – Background Papers

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## E-COMMERCE

### DRAFT PRINCIPLES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCE

- The development of E-Commerce should be led primarily by the private sector in response to market forces.
- Business and governments must work together to expand the reach of electronic commerce and ensure that all benefit from this tool, with special focus on the needs of small and medium enterprises. Economies are disparate in terms of economic development and the Ecotech Agenda will be important in this context.
- For e-commerce to meet its full potential it must be accepted and enabled worldwide. Business and governments need to assure that technological resources are available to facilitate access to the infrastructure supporting E-Commerce.
- Economies working through both officials and the business sector should agree to review existing domestic legislation and make it technology-neutral. Where there is a need for legislative or regulatory action relating to E-Commerce, it should be minimalist in nature, be technologically neutral, transparent and predictable.
- APEC economies should, where appropriate, work towards harmonizing their existing laws. Governments should ensure that any new laws take E-Commerce into account.
- Business needs to be involved in government deliberations on issues of E-Commerce taxation, jurisdiction, intellectual property protection, and judicial and legal infrastructures.
- Minimalist approaches must be taken using E-Commerce as a source of government revenue. Taxes should be consistent with existing domestic practice for non-electronic transactions. The practice of not imposing customs duties on other charges on electronic transmissions should be continued.
- For e-commerce to succeed it must be adopted by companies and consumers as a forum for trade in which they have trust and confidence. Economies should take reasonable steps to encourage this trust and confidence. Business needs to work with governments to assure credible and effective self-regulatory models.