

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Digital Trade</b>
<b>Topic</b>	The WTO's Digital Trade Initiative: Implications for Asian Policies
<b>Brief Overview</b>	<p>At the Eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017, 71 WTO members agreed to “initiate exploratory work together toward future WTO negotiations on trade-related aspects of electronic commerce”. Since then, more countries have joined the “Join Statement Initiative” that is seeking to agree a negotiation document, and regular meetings have been held to try and sort out the many complex issues involved. However, the effort has been slowed by the COVID crisis, the postponement of the Ministerial meeting to 2021, the battles associated with current US trade policy, uncertainties over the selection of a new WTO Director General, and a variety of other factors. In addition, much of the digital trade discussion has been redirected to the single and now divisive issue of the WTO moratorium on the application of customs duties to digital transmissions. Nevertheless, negotiators will eventually return to the broader agenda and the wide range of issues that could be impacted by a legally binding agreement on global digital trade. Whether the discussions will succeed and produce an historic deal or break down amidst divergent visions of the proper governance of the global digital economy remains unclear, but either way the stakes for global Internet governance are significant. Taiwan and other countries like Singapore, Japan and Australia have taken a proactive stance in the negotiations and have sought to balance national policy objectives regarding cross-border data with promoting the open flow of data and digital trade. In parallel, countries like China have favored outcomes that lean more toward the former objectives than the latter.</p>
<b>Policy Questions to be Discussed</b>	<p>How successful will the initiative be on these and other scores?</p> <p>How might an agreement, or the failure to reach an agreement, impact Asian policies, as well as stakeholders from across the region in all sectors?</p> <p>How would a new agreement interface with the multitude of bilateral and regional trade deals agreed in recent years that contain digital trade provisions?</p> <p>What would an agreement or a failure mean for the wider evolution of the</p>

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	<p>global digital economy, global Internet governance, and the balance between national/global and commercial/noncommercial objectives?</p> <p>These are just some of the questions to be explored in this session.</p>
<b>Agenda</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Topic Introduction by the Moderator (10 min.)</li><li>2) Multi-stakeholder Discussion on the Reports (60 min.)</li><li>3) Open Discussion with the Audience (15 min.)</li><li>4) Wrap-up (5 min.)</li></ol>
<b>Moderators</b>	<p>Dr. William Drake (International Fellow and Lecturer, Department of Communication and Media Research, U. Zurich, Switzerland)</p>
<b>Panelists</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Ms. Erika Mann (Senior Advisor of Covington &amp; Burling LLP and former Member of the ICANN Board of Directors)</li><li>● Ms. Neha Mishra (Postdoctoral Researcher at Center for International Law, National University of Singapore)</li><li>● Mr. Roy Chun Lee (Deputy Executive Director of the Taiwan WTO and RTA Center, Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research (CIER))</li><li>● Mr. Prof. Tsai-Fang Chen (Associate Professor at National Chiao Tung University)</li></ul>
<b>Organizers</b>	<p>Ms. Ken-Ying Tseng (Partner, Lee and Li Attorneys-At-Law) – Private</p>