Future of Investment & Trade Partnership

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

FACILITATING THE DIGITALISATION OF TRADE PROCESSES AND DOCUMENTS

RECOGNISING the transformative potential of digital technologies to streamline trade processes, reduce trade costs, and create new opportunities for our people and businesses, particularly micro, small and medium enterprises;

NOTING that paper-based processes in cross-border transactions can create unnecessary costs and friction;

AFFIRMING our shared objective to foster an open, predictable and interoperable digital trade environment that supports increased productivity and inclusive economic growth;

AFFIRMING the importance of interoperability of digital systems in enabling seamless cross- border transactions, and the role of international standards in facilitating interoperability;

ACKNOWLEDGING the work that has come before, including in the World Trade Organization, World Customs Organization, and the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business and underlining our commitment to building upon this foundation;

RECOGNISING the integral role played by the private sector, including international business organisations in promoting global best practices, advancing interoperable standards, and supporting the transition toward fully digital systems;

RECALLING the establishment of the FIT Partnership as a platform that fosters collaboration between governments and the private sector to incubate solutions and develop practical initiatives to facilitate global trade and investment;

DETERMINED to work closely to identify barriers relating to trade in the digital economy and to facilitate trade through digitalisation.

Declare:

1. We affirm our shared objective to accelerate progress toward the end-to-end digitalisation of trade documents and processes to benefit our businesses and wider economies.

2. We take note of the adoption of legal frameworks that enable electronic transactions, including the exchange of electronic bills of lading and other transferable records.

3. In this regard, we welcome initiatives to explore how countries could maintain or establish domestic legal frameworks that are consistent with the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (2017), including the principle of functional equivalence, as the recognised international standard, while recognising that each Participant has its

own domestic context and may achieve these objectives through different legal and technological approaches.

4. We intend to strengthen engagement with industry stakeholders, including international business organisations on digitalising trade documents and processes, through structured, transparent, and mutually beneficial public-private collaboration across the FIT Partnership.

5. In our respective domestic contexts, each Participant intends to engage regularly with industry stakeholders such as technology providers, financial institutions, logistics companies, and other relevant actors to ensure that digital trade facilitation measures are informed by practical experience and operational realities.

6. We encourage the development, adoption, and use of interoperable systems to support the exchange of data relating to trade administration documents and electronic records used in commercial trading activities. To this end, we recognise the role of international and, if available, open standards in the development and governance of these systems.

7. We intend to advance, through continued cooperation within the FIT Partnership, a digital trade facilitation forward work programme that includes:

    a) Partnering with each other on pilot projects, including trialling exchanges between Participants of electronic records used in commercial trading activities, such as electronic bills of lading, electronic bills of exchange, electronic promissory notes, and electronic certificates of origin, with a view to scaling these pilots up, including through public-private collaboration;

    b) Sharing of information, national experiences and best practices in advancing paperless trade, including in relation to adopting or aligning domestic rules with the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records in our domestic contexts and identifying common challenges to facilitate regulatory interoperability; and

    c) Continuing to collaborate in international fora to make practical and pragmatic progress on digital trade facilitation.

8. We intend to review progress at future Ministerial meetings and continue to push forward joint efforts to unlock the full potential of digital trade facilitation for increased productivity and inclusive growth.

Endorsed by the Ministers and Representatives responsible for trade of the following countries on 17 July 2026: Chile; Costa Rica; Iceland; Liechtenstein; Malaysia; New Zealand; Norway; Paraguay; Peru; Rwanda; Singapore; Switzerland; United Arab Emirates; Uruguay.