

Preface

This publication is the result of a project on the Harmonization of e-commerce Legal Systems in Asia and the Pacific (Phase I), implemented by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, with technical and financial support of the Government of France. ITC UNCTAD/WTO also contributed significantly to the project.

This publication is a compilation of papers presented or prepared for the Regional Expert Conference on Harmonized Development of e-commerce Legal Systems in Asia-Pacific held at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand, from 7 to 9 July 2004. Documents related to the Expert Round Table on Capacity-building Needs for Harmonized Development of e-commerce Legal Systems, held on the last day of that Conference, have also been included.

Part One provides an overview of the e-commerce laws and regulations in some of the subregions of Asia and the Pacific, including Central Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific islands. The last paper in this part focuses on the e-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) legal framework and its challenges.

Part Two is a selection of papers presented by experts during the conference on topics ranging from legal issues related to electronic contracts and security to jurisdiction and privacy protection issues. The first two papers in this section are country papers that discuss the status and challenges of e-commerce legal system development in two countries at different stages of development.

Part Three focuses on the capacity-building needs for harmonized development of e-commerce legal systems in Asia and the Pacific. It begins with a review of short country papers submitted by selected government officials and experts prior to the conference, with a focus on capacity-building needs. The conclusions and recommendations of the expert round table and related documents, including training programmes for lawmakers, regulators, lawyers and judges, are also presented.

The full text of this publication, as well as related documents, are available for download on the web site of the ESCAP Trade and Investment Division (www.unescap.org/tid/).

Mr. Roland Amoussou-Guenou, Regional Expert on Legal Cooperation in ASEAN (Embassy of France in Thailand), visiting lecturer (Asian Institute of Technology) and Mr. Yann Duval, Economic Affairs Officer (ESCAP TID) were responsible for project design and implementation, while Mr. Kiran Pyakuryal and Mr. Ravi Ratnayake, Section and Division Chiefs, respectively, were responsible for the overall supervision and management of the project. Useful inputs were provided by Ms. Maria Margarethe van Doodewaard, Mr. Guennady Fedorov and Mr. Shahid Din, Regional Advisor, Section Chief and Economic Affairs Officer (ESCAP ICSTD), respectively. Their contributions and suggestions are gratefully acknowledged.