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PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENTS

EU-US Trade Talks Press Forward as Leaders' Summit Approaches

EU and US negotiators met in Brussels last week for their fourth round of bilateral trade talks, which saw some signs of progress, albeit limited. Many observers had hoped to see some early indications on how difficult areas – such as the level of tariff elimination or harmonisation of regulations – might be resolved, given next week's bilateral leaders' summit on the trans-Atlantic talks.

The 26 March summit – which US President Barack Obama, European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, and European Commission President José Manuel Barroso will attend – comes just nine months after the start of formal negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP), and will also deal with other diplomatic issues, such as how to approach the situation in Ukraine.

When leaders' agreed a year ago to launch the trade talks, both sides initially said that they hoped to see a deal completed by late 2014, a target that has since been pushed back. In recent months, negotiators have been reluctant to set a formal goal date for finishing the talks, saying only that they hope to make "significant progress" in the year ahead. Some reports have suggested that the EU would like to see a deal in 2015.

Since the talks began last June, the two sides have held four negotiating rounds, including last week's meetings in Brussels. In addition, EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht and US Trade Representative Michael Froman met last month to take stock of the talks so far, and provide some political direction for negotiators as they move forward into the more difficult stages. (See Bridges Weekly, [20 February 2014](#))

"I'm generally pleased with the progress that US and EU negotiators made this week in the major areas of the negotiations," Froman [said](#) after last week's round, which featured discussions on all three pillars of T-TIP: market access, the regulatory cluster, and rules. "We know we have a lot of work ahead of us, but we have a good understanding of the key issues that need to be resolved."

T-TIP supporters have long said that a EU-US deal could provide major gains to both economies, after years of financial struggle, while also strengthening their already-deep diplomatic and political ties. The two sides already have the world's largest trading relationship, and some estimates say that a bilateral pact could yield €120 billion in annual gains for Europe and at over €90 billion for the US.



International Centre for Trade
and Sustainable Development

Tariff elimination

One of the original goals [outlined](#) by the two sides at the start of the trade talks was the elimination of all duties on bilateral trade, allowing some phase-out periods for sensitive products. While tariffs on both sides are already low – at approximately 5.2 percent on the EU's part and 3.5 percent for the US – the high volume of goods traded across the Atlantic means that any tariff reductions are likely to yield huge gains.

The two sides already exchanged initial tariff offers last month, with EU officials saying that the US offer did not match theirs in its level of ambition. However, Assistant US Trade Representative Dan Mullaney, who is heading the US side of the negotiations, assured reporters on Friday that, for Washington, an ambitious and comprehensive deal “means the elimination of all duties.”

“For us, the main focus is the end-point of the negotiation, not these initial steps,” he said. An outline of the US' objectives for T-TIP, released at the start of last week's talks, said that Washington aims to eliminate all tariffs and other duties in agricultural, industrial, and consumer products, though sensitive goods could be subject to transition periods.

EU officials have also noted that there are likely to be some sensitivities, though tariff elimination remains the goal.

“The European Union is fully committed to the ambition of the High-Level Working Group report, which... indicates that, in the course of the negotiations, both sides should consider options for the treatment of the most sensitive products,” EU chief negotiator Ignacio García Bercero said at last week's closing press conference.

Regulations

Analysts and officials alike have long held that the biggest gains of a trans-Atlantic trade deal will come from harmonising regulations and standards. The regulatory dimension of the talks has, however, fostered unease among civil society groups on both sides, which have each cited concerns over whether this might mean the weakening of domestic health and safety policies.

Trade officials, meanwhile, have repeatedly tried to assuage these fears over the past several months, insisting that any advances in regulatory compatibility will not come at the expense of health, safety, and environmental protections.

“EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht has made very clear that the law of the European Union on food safety is in no way going to be compromised in these negotiations,” Bercero told reporters on Friday, a statement that his US counterpart, Dan Mullaney, affirmed on Washington's part.

As the talks unfold, many expect the talks to become substantially tougher as the US and EU tackle long-standing areas of disagreement, such as the EU's legislation prohibiting hormone-treated beef, or the 28-nation bloc's long-standing concerns over genetically modified (GM) crops.

Regarding hormone-treated beef, the US reportedly would like to see it permitted under the bilateral pact. EU officials, however, have said that legislation prohibiting the use of such hormones in beef will not be changed, though that does not necessarily mean that beef itself will be exempted from coverage in the final deal.

With GMOs, the EU [allows](#) these to be sold within the 28-country bloc only if they have been approved by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA); if approved, these can be used for food, animal feed, or planting as crops. Member states are also asked to weigh in during this approval process. To date, EFSA has signed off on 52 of these so far.

However, GM products have long been divisive in the EU, and processes to approve these have engendered bitter controversies in the past. US officials have noted that, while some of these biotech products are approved for use in Europe, there are issues for Washington regarding how long this takes, and the process involved.

Investor protections, data privacy

The investment dimension of T-TIP has also come under fire from civil society groups, with many fearing that the inclusion of certain investor protections – such as an “investor-state dispute settlement” (ISDS) mechanism – could lead to lawsuits that may compromise key public policy objectives, such as those relating to the environment or health.

With an ISDS mechanism, foreign investors may file a case against a host country in front of an international tribunal if the company finds that one of its key protections – such as against expropriation or discrimination – has been violated.

Proponents say that dispute settlement mechanisms and other investment protections are necessary in order to ensure that a company's investments are safe overseas, and to avoid instances where foreign companies exploit loopholes in domestic laws.

Last week's meetings did not include any formal discussions on investment, officials said, given that the EU temporarily put that aspect of the talks on hold in January. Brussels is set to publish its negotiating objectives in this area later this month, which will be followed by a three-month period for public comment, before proceeding with the investment talks. (See Bridges Weekly, [23 January 2014](#))

In the meantime, recent media reports have indicated that both Germany and France are now pushing for the exclusion of ISDS mechanism from the trade pact.

For the US, however, a “comprehensive and ambitious T-TIP” should include protections for investors on both sides, Mullaney said. This could include methods for settling disputes in both state-to-state and investor-state contexts, the US negotiator told reporters.

Whether or not to include data privacy provisions in the pact is another question looming over the trade talks. While the EU has said that T-TIP is not the right forum to address these differences, the US maintains that these provisions are essential to build upon existing trade flows.

“The backbone of that trade relationship, in many ways, is the flow of data between our two economies,” Mullaney said on Friday. “So if we're going to negotiate a 21st century agreement that's going to build on those trade flows, build on that investment, we think we do have to have provisions in the 21st century context that can facilitate building on these trade flows.”

ICTSD reporting; “Transatlantic talks hit German snag,” FINANCIAL TIMES, 14 March 2014; “More Hope Than headway So Far in U.S.-Europe Trade Talks,” THE NEW YORK TIMES, 14 March 2014.

CLIMATE CHANGE

UN Climate Talks on 2015 Deal Begin Ramping Up

This year's UN climate negotiations kicked off again last week in Bonn, Germany with delegates dipping their toes into what is expected to become a torrent of negotiations over the coming year. Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have targeted the December 2015 Conference of the Parties (COP) due to be held in Paris, France as the deadline for agreeing to the terms of a new global climate change treaty.

Attended by delegates from over 200 countries, the 10-14 March meetings focused on accelerating formal negotiations under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP). Established at COP 17 in Durban, South Africa, the ADP is tasked with moving negotiations towards a successful conclusion in Paris. (See Bridges Trade BioRes, [19 December 2011](#))

The ADP must also outline actions to close the "ambition gap" between current pledges and the cuts needed to prevent atmospheric warming below the internationally agreed 2°C target. In addition to the core focus of the ADP, last week's Bonn session also convened several technical expert meetings, focusing on renewable energy and energy efficiency respectively, as part of the ADP's second tier focus on pre-2020 ambition.

Contact group established

The beginning of the week-long meeting saw the G-77/China group call for a "contact group" under the ADP to serve as the format for negotiating a draft climate agreement, and lengthy side-debates on this topic reportedly held up establishing the formal agenda.

Over the past two years, negotiations towards the 2015 text have been conducted in "open ended" consultations. The Warsaw COP last November saw the ADP tasked with beginning to elaborate elements of the draft negotiating text for the new climate deal, sparking reflection on the group's mode of operating. (See Bridges Trade BioRes, [24 November 2013](#))

Last week, concerns were expressed by some parties that the contact group format could result in an unwieldy text liable to sink the process. Nevertheless, Parties ultimately agreed to set up a contact group last Wednesday.

"The challenge is...to shift from an informal mode of work to a formal, transparent, and participatory negotiating process...the time for that is now," said Naderev Sano of the Philippines, speaking on behalf of several developing country negotiating groups.

Procedural issues have been a point of contention since ADP's inception, with the spectre of the failed 2009 Copenhagen negotiations – where high-level meetings behind closed doors largely shaped the final document – haunting these latest talks.

Divisions over responsibilities continue

This latest ADP session also saw old divisions open up again over "nationally determined contributions" (NDCs), slated as the building blocks of the new deal. A last-minute

inclusion during the ADP plenary in Warsaw, analysts later deemed the reference ambiguous in relation to the binding and universal targets of the new agreement.

Parties are expected to submit their NDCs by the first quarter of 2015. The EU – which has in the past pushed for tougher language in this area – reiterated its position that these NDCs would need to be mandatory given the aim of the overall agreement.

Although the world's largest emitters, the US and China, have pledged to work closely together on the process, their individual formal submissions ahead of the March meeting seemed notably discordant over whether to place different levels of responsibility for reducing emissions on developed and developing nations.

Washington [has called for](#) countries to move beyond past disagreements, while Beijing [emphasised](#) that developed countries should continue to “take the lead” in mitigation, and “undertake commitments on economy-wide targets for absolute quantified emission reduction below their 1990 levels in accordance with their historical responsibilities and as required by science.”

China's submission also requested that developed countries do more to promote, facilitate, and finance the transfer and access to technologies to developing countries, including by removing obstacles related to intellectual property rights (IPRs).

Under pressure

Parties are now set to begin more formal discussions under the contact group at the UNFCCC's annual mid-year Bonn negotiating session from 4-15 June. UN climate chief Christiania Figueres welcomed the shift, while warning that the timing would be tight to deliver the main elements of a potential Paris deal by December's COP in Lima, Peru.

“The next nine months will require all nations to raise their eyes beyond business-as-usual in order to counter the threats and deliver the multiple opportunities from moving rapidly towards a cleaner, healthier, low carbon world,” Figueres said.

Other participants called on the world's largest emitters to end their protracted stand-off.

“The US and China should see that they're the worst bad boys around, and everyone knows that, so they should try to make amends,” said the Marshall Islands' UN Ambassador Amatlain Kabua. “The big countries have a bigger role because they have the means, they have the resources. In the Marshall Islands, we have only fish to trade with.”

The intersessional meeting in June will include the participation of ministers, which commentators suggest may prove a litmus test of political will. Other parallel events have been set up to help spur momentum toward both Lima and Paris, including the UN Secretary-General's highly anticipated Climate Summit in September.

ICTSD reporting, “U.N. climate talks make shaky start to year as procedures questioned,” REUTERS, 11 March 2014; “Trust deficit blocking progress at UN climate talks,” RTCC, 17 March 2014, “Bonn Climate Change Conference,” EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN, 17 March 2014.

DISPUTES

WTO Hears Appeals in Seal Ban Dispute

The high-profile debate on the EU's seal products ban returned to the WTO this week, with the organisation's Appellate Body hearing appeals from Canada, Norway, and the EU on the subject. The case has received widespread notoriety both due to its emotive content and also since it deals with the thorny topic of how public morality goals relate to international trade rules.

At issue in the case is a 2009 European Commission [regulation](#), which bans the imports and sale of seal products within the 28-member trade bloc. Citing the inhumane nature of seal hunting, the EU has said that the ban is necessary on grounds of public morality, a move that has been widely endorsed by animal rights activists.

Last November, a WTO dispute panel ruled that the EU's seal regime did restrict international trade, but granted Brussels a partial victory by finding the public morality justification valid. (See Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest, [30 January 2014](#)).

Appeals were filed shortly thereafter by both Canada and Norway – the complainants in the case – and the EU, in order to clarify certain points of law in the panel's ruling. Under WTO rules, the Appellate Body can review aspects of law – such as legal interpretation – but generally will not interfere with the factual findings of the original panel.

Disagreement on exceptions

Within its seal ban, the EU has carved out three significant and controversial exceptions, including a loophole for seal products obtained through sustainable resource management programs (SRMs) and the traditional hunts of indigenous communities (ICs). (See Bridges Trade BioRes, [2 May 2011](#))

During the three-day hearing, which was open for public viewing, the exceptions to the regulation proved to be one of the key areas of disagreement. While neither side disputes the panel's initial finding of trade restrictiveness, both the complainants and the respondent focused on the issue of whether the trade restriction is justified according to WTO rules, and how the ban's exceptions affect the validity of the overall regime.

Canada, Greenland, and Namibia – a third party in the dispute – account for 60 percent of seals killed annually worldwide, according to EU [statistics](#). Canada and Norway argue that under the IC exception, Greenlandic hunters, who are overwhelmingly indigenous Inuit, have been able to substantially increase their market share as a result of the diminished competition caused by the ban. Although it is not a part of the EU, Greenland is an autonomous territory of Denmark, an EU member.

Meanwhile in countries that have lost market share, the impact has been significant on seal hunters who depend on sealing as a "vital economic activity," said Leona Aglukkaq, Canada's Environment Minister, ahead of the WTO appeals hearing.

The original panel took into consideration the compatibility of the exceptions with WTO law. Some 80 percent of Greenland's population is Inuit, giving the Arctic island an upper hand in seal products trade. The panel ruled that this exception was discriminatory in relation to Canadian and Norwegian-caught seal.

Furthermore, the design of the IC and SRM exceptions were found to lack “even-handedness,” in the context of the legislative history of the EU’s seal regime. In last May’s dispute panel hearing, Canada questioned EU officials as to how the IC exception had been developed, noting that its native Inuit were on record stating they had not been “meaningfully consulted,” and were unhappy with the measure. (See Bridges Trade BioRes, [May 2013](#))

Public morality policy objective under scrutiny

In a move that has now become the heart of the dispute, the panel also found that the objectives of these exceptions were separate from the regime’s overall goal of promoting public morality with regards to animal welfare.

During this week’s hearings, Canada and Norway objected to the legal framework and factual findings used by the panel to evaluate the ban’s contribution to protecting public morality, given the exceptions inherent in the EU seal regime.

In oral arguments on Monday, the two seal-harvesting countries argued that the original panel failed to assess the EU Seal Regime as a whole and also failed to take into account the negative impact of the IC and SRM exceptions, as well as other implicit exceptions.

In its opening statement, Ottawa put forward that the dispute panel had ignored its own finding that the IC exception – which effectively grants Greenland access to the single market – detracted from the objective of addressing EU public concerns regarding animal welfare.

“Pursuant to these exceptions, EU consumers are exposed to and may, in fact, unknowingly purchase seal products derived from seals killed inhumanely,” said Aglukkaq, who flew to Geneva to read her country’s opening statement.

For its part, the EU has also urged the Appellate Body to reconsider what it calls the panel’s legally “erroneous characterisation” of its “public morality” objective.

According to the EU, the IC exception fits within the same moral standard that the ban seeks to uphold, because that standard is the protection of animals from suffering “without sufficient justification,” rather than the absolute protection of animals from suffering.

A technical regulation?

Also on the table is the question of whether the EU regime counts as a technical regulation at all, which would put it under the WTO’s Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).

In its third-party statement, the US – which has its own seal-product import ban – agreed with the EU in suggesting that an outright prohibition, which does not prescribe a product’s characteristics, cannot be deemed a technical regulation. In its original report, the panel had found that the EU’s ban and its exceptions did indeed constitute a technical regulation under the TBT Agreement.

Last stand

In their closing statements, all parties stressed the responsibility and significance of the WTO’s decision on this case, which sits at the sensitive intersection of international trade and public policy objectives.

Canada stated that the potential reach of a case in relation to public morals rendered the global trade arbiter's interpretation ever more important, adding that the vague and subjective nature of public morals makes them particularly susceptible to protectionist misuse.

For its part, Norway reiterated that its interest in the dispute addressed policy areas other than animal welfare, noting that the EU's regulation had frustrated their sustainable management of marine resources.

Brussels, meanwhile, concluded that the EU "would have preferred to ban all trade in seal products. But legislators were mindful of the important contribution of seal hunting to Inuit communities."

The Appellate Body has ninety days from the "notice of appeal" in which to render a decision on the case. As the WTO's forum of last resort, neither side will be able to appeal the final ruling.

ICTSD reporting.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

ITA Talks Remain Stalled, with Some Eyeing APEC for Breakthrough

Four months after talks were suspended, efforts to update the list of products covered in the WTO's Information Technology Agreement remain stalled. However, some participants – including the US – are now calling for a breakthrough in time for a May meeting of Asia-Pacific trade ministers.

The ITA eliminates tariffs on a series of information and communication technology (ICT) products, and was agreed in 1996. Unlike the majority of the WTO Agreements, the ITA is a plurilateral pact, and therefore only requires concessions from its participants. The benefits, however, are extended to all WTO members.

Advocates for an updated agreement say that it could serve as a major confidence-booster for the global trade body, given its struggles in advancing the Doha Round talks, which are separate from the ITA negotiations and involve all of the WTO's members.

Furthermore, proponents say, the existing ITA does not reflect the realities of today's ICT trade, with many of the items on the 1996 list having become obsolete due to the advent of new technologies. Some estimates have indicated that an updated ITA could provide an US\$800 billion boost to bilateral trade and US\$190 billion to global GDP.

Focus on China

This latest series of efforts to build upon the existing product list kicked off in 2012, with many hoping that an expanded ITA could be ready in time for last December's WTO ministerial conference in Bali, Indonesia.

However, the ITA expansion talks were suspended last November, after China asked for a series of products – reportedly around 140 tariff lines – to either be excluded from the planned list or be subjected to long tariff phase-outs, out of the total 250 under consideration.

China is currently the world's top exporter of ICT goods, and serves as a manufacturing and assembly base for many of the products covered under the current version of the ITA. The number and types of products China asked to be excluded from the new list, various participants have said, were too extensive to render any final agreement commercially meaningful. (See Bridges Weekly, [21 November 2013](#))

"An outcome where one participant stands to reap the majority of the benefits of a deal, while the rest are left to wait for the next ITA expansion, will not bring us closer to conclusion," US Ambassador Michael Punke [said](#) in Geneva earlier this week at a WTO committee meeting on the ITA talks.

"In November, the US, and others, demonstrated flexibility and a willingness to compromise. We have not yet received a positive response; the ball is squarely in China's court," the US official added.

Others in the group have similarly pressed Beijing to show more flexibility. At the same meeting, the EU also called on China "to do more to join the emerging consensus,"

according to sources familiar with the discussions. Similar sentiments were reportedly expressed by Australia, Canada, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Norway, and Switzerland.

China, in turn, has maintained that slashing tariffs on these products would have massive revenue implications, particularly as it is still a developing country. Beijing has also countered claims that it would be one of the largest beneficiaries of increased ICT trade, given that the Asian economy is on the lower end of the value chain in this sector.

The group negotiating the ITA expansion includes 27 of the ITA's current participants, when counting the EU as one. The ITA's full membership includes 50 participants.

APEC chances?

China will be serving as this year's host of the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders' summit, as well as all related meetings. Trade ministers from the 21-country regional group are set to meet in Qingdao in mid-May.

US business leaders have been pushing for trade ministers to use the APEC meeting to make a breakthrough in the ITA talks, a suggestion that US government officials have openly backed. The successful conclusion of the information technology deal by the May meeting is a "doable goal," Punke said last week.

"We encourage China, as host country, to exercise leadership in helping to achieve this," he said.

However, WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo told US business leaders last week that it would be difficult to predict right now "how quickly and how far we can arrive" to an ITA deal, adding that it would "not be wise for me to try and point to arrival points." (See Bridges Weekly, [13 March 2014](#))

The WTO chief did acknowledge that the ITA could feature in the two-day APEC discussions, given that many of the main players would be present.

ICTSD reporting.

Azevêdo: Consultations on Doha Work Plan Off to “Excellent Start”

Initial consultations on a Doha work programme are off to a productive start, WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo reported to members last week. However, much remains to be done if the 159-member body is to have a plan by December for renewing the multilateral trade talks, now in their 13th year.

“The first quarter of 2014 is almost behind us,” the WTO chief said at a meeting of the General Council, which is the global trade body's highest level of meeting outside the ministerial conference. “In the space of just nine months we must complete this work. It is essential that all members are fully engaged in these consultations,” he said, urging them to redouble their efforts.

Sources say that these consultations are still at a very preliminary stage, with members continuing to debate various possible ways to proceed. The Director-General has said that he will convene a meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) – which is tasked with the overall Doha Round talks – on 7 April with the hopes of providing “for a fuller debate among members on the way forward.”

After this initial round of meetings, sources note that several key questions remain unanswered, particularly on whether to aim for more “early harvests” – such as the one achieved at last December's ministerial conference in Bali – or whether to pursue a solution to the rest of the Doha Round subjects in one go.

Agriculture, NAMA, services

While discussions have been ongoing in all of the Doha Round negotiating groups, these initial months have shown a growing convergence among members on the particular need to revisit the Doha Round's toughest issues: agriculture, non-agricultural market access, (NAMA) and services.

In these three areas, “it came across strongly that our approach should be balanced across all three issues – and that all three should be tackled together, simultaneously,” Azevêdo reported last week.

With regards to agriculture, many have said that there needs to be balance within that area itself, namely regarding market access, domestic support, and export competition. Some members, such as Brazil, have reportedly said that the advances made in agriculture will determine the level of ambition of the Round.

To date, many of the discussions on non-agricultural market access have focused on what exactly prompted the earlier collapses – such as varying expectations on outcome and differing perceptions on balance – and what to do next.

In moving forward, one of the questions that has reportedly come up is whether to use the latest version of the NAMA draft modalities, which dates back to 2011. While many have said that these could provide a good starting point, as they represent years of work, others have reportedly raised concerns over whether it is worthwhile to follow these too closely, given their inability in the past to lead to a successful outcome.

Some members have also reportedly suggested that there is a need for new data, given the years that have passed since some of these areas have seen meaningful advances.

Regarding services, some have warned against "sequencing" the Doha Round talks, while others have said that progress in this area will have to depend on advances elsewhere.

Negotiations on services have long been stalled at the WTO, due partly to difficulties in getting members to submit market access offers, and also a result of the limited progress in the two other areas of the so-called market access trinity.

In recent years efforts have begun outside the 159-member body to liberalise trade in this area. Negotiations for a Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) began in early 2012, and are said to be advancing smoothly, with initial market access being discussed last month. (See Bridges Weekly, [27 February 2014](#))

Initiatives such as the TISA have, however, engendered scepticism from some WTO members, who have warned against the "plurilateral temptation" as a possible distraction from multilateral efforts. Sources familiar with last week's General Council noted that Cuba, South Africa, and Uganda on behalf of the Least Developed Country (LDC) Group were among those to raise concerns over these types of trade deals.

TFA implementation

In parallel, WTO members are also moving to implement the results of December's ministerial conference, particularly the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which was broadly seen as the centrepiece of the so-called Bali Package. Some estimates have placed the gains of the deal – which aims to ease customs procedures in order to eliminate unnecessary red tape at the border – at US\$1 trillion in global GDP.

Over the coming months, the new Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation is set to implement a three-pronged work plan to implement the TFA. The first part will involve a legal scrubbing of the deal, which is a formal process that is not meant to change the substance of the Bali text.

Once that is done, the committee will need to prepare a protocol of amendment to insert the Trade Facilitation Agreement into Annex1A of the WTO Agreement, and begin to receive "Category A" notifications – in trade jargon, notifications of which measures countries would implement immediately upon the TFA's entry into force.

The preparatory committee is aiming to complete this work by 31 July of this year, with the protocol of acceptance then open until the same date next year. The deal will then enter into force upon acceptance by two-thirds of the members.

New chairpersons

Last week's General Council also saw members sign off on new chairpersons for various WTO bodies for the year. Canadian Ambassador Jonathan Fried will chair the General Council, with Ambassador Fernando De Mateo of Mexico and Ambassador Mariam MD Salleh of Malaysia heading the Dispute Settlement Body and Trade Policy Review Body, respectively.

The full list of chairpersons for both WTO bodies and TNC bodies for 2014 is available [here](#).

ICTSD reporting.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming Soon

25 March, Washington, US. GLOBAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS AT A CROSSROADS: HOW DOES LATIN AMERICA FIT IN? This event, hosted by the Latin America Initiative at Foreign Policy (LAI) and the Brookings Institute, will address Latin America's evolving role in the global trade environment, particularly with regards to the Pacific Alliance and Mercosur. This conference will discuss implications of these two blocs' different approaches as the region seeks to position itself in the new dynamics of global trade negotiations. More information can be found at the event [website](#).

26 March, London, UK. UNVEILING ABENOMICS: ABE'S ECONOMIC POLICIES. This event, hosted by Chatham House, will focus on Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's economic policies since taking office. Dr. Motoshige Ito, an economics professor at the University of Tokyo, will discuss the formulation of the different "arrows" of "Abenomics," as well as more generally on Japanese growth strategies and policies. For more information, visit the Chatham House [website](#).

26 March, Geneva, Switzerland. GETTING BETTER: WHY GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT IS SUCCEEDING AND HOW WE CAN IMPROVE THE WORLD EVEN MORE. This book presentation, hosted by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), will feature economist Charles Kenny's recent work on global development progress. *Getting Better* argues against development naysayers by pointing to widespread improvements in areas ranging from health and education to peace and liberty. Kenny proposes that the spread of ideas, such as those involving political rights, and cheap technologies, such as vaccines, have transformed the world and that understanding this transformation can lead to even greater benefits. Kenny will also present some of the key findings of a second book *The Upside of Down: Why the Rise of the Rest is Good for the West*. More information can be found at the WIPO [website](#).

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted [here](#). Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO members and accredited observers only.

21 March: Committee on Agriculture

25-26 March: Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

26 March: Dispute Settlement Body

Other Upcoming Events

28 March, Paris, France. FROM THE PERIPHERY TO THE CENTER: CHINA'S PARTICIPATION IN WTO NEGOTIATIONS. This seminar, hosted by the Institut français des relations internationales (Ifri), will discuss China's 2001 accession to the WTO and its role since in global trade negotiations. The discussion will focus on why Beijing adopted

certain negotiation approaches and how such approaches affected trade negotiating dynamics. More information can be found at the event [website](#).

31 March – 4 April, London, UK. 66th SESSION OF THE IMO'S MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE. This meeting of the International Maritime Organization will discuss further technical and operational measures for enhancing the energy efficiency of international shipping; reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships; and the consideration and adoption of amendments to mandatory instruments, among other subjects. For more information, visit the IMO [website](#).

9-10 June, London, UK. GLOBAL TRADE: A TRADE SYSTEM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY. This forum, hosted by Chatham House, aims to address questions about the future of global trade governance and consider what lies ahead for trade liberalisation in a dynamic and competitive global economy. Speakers will address issues such as challenges and objectives for trade negotiations, non-tariff and behind-the-border barriers to trade, domestic policy choices and implications for trade liberalisation, and the governance of global supply chains. More information can be found at the event [website](#).

Resources

GREENER SKILLS AND JOBS. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2014). This report suggests that skills, education, and training policies should play a key role in the ecological transformation process. The publication is divided into three sections: gearing up education and training for green growth; enterprise approaches for a green workplace; and integrating skills into local development strategies for green job creation. The full report can be found [here](#).

MAIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (February 2014). This latest version of the organisation's monthly Main Economic Indicators (MEI) presents comparative statistics regarding recent international economic developments for the 34 OECD countries, the euro zone, and various non-member economies. The full report can be found [here](#).

IMF REFORM IS WAITING ON THE UNITED STATES. By Edwin M. Truman for the Peterson Institute for International Economics (March 2014). This policy brief proposes that the US Congress and the Obama Administration must make every effort to pass legislation that would enact the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reforms agreed in 2010. The author argues that this must be achieved before the IMF's spring meetings, if the international financial institution is to continue benefitting its members. The full publication can be found [here](#).

SHOULD CANADA SUPPORT TAIWAN'S ENTRY INTO THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP? By Hugh Stephens and Douglas Goold for the Canada-Asia Agenda (March 2014). This article examines Taiwan's expressed desire to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, and its leader's request for Canadian support in this endeavour. The authors conclude that it would be in Canada's interest to support Taiwan's participation under certain conditions, specifically regarding the timing of the Asian country's entry and the ambition of its commitments. Another key condition, the authors say, is to ensure that China is not opposed to Taiwan joining the 12-country group. The publication can be found [here](#).

ENVIRONOMIST CHINA CARBON MARKET RESEARCH REPORT 2014: PROFILING CHINA'S EMERGING EMISSION TRADING SCHEMES. Published by South Pole Carbon (March 2014). This report presents a profile and comparison of all seven Chinese emission trading schemes (ETS). It summarises key aspects across several dimensions for all the pilot programmes, highlights implications of particular policy decisions, and then aims to put these into perspective by comparing them to the EU's own Emissions Trading System. The full report can be found [here](#).

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