

# BRIDGES WEEKLY

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## PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENTS

### TPP Ministers Report Progress in Singapore, But No Agreement

The twelve countries negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement wrapped up an intensive series of talks on Tuesday, reporting progress but no final deal. Trade observers had been watching this month's Singapore ministerial closely to see if an agreement – or at least a new timeframe for one – might be announced, after participants missed last year's target for finishing the negotiations.

Following the meetings, New Zealand Trade Minister Tim Groser flagged market access issues as the main stumbling blocks for TPP members, noting that these are the "meat and potatoes" of the proposed deal. Without reaching consensus on market access provisions, he told reporters, "we don't have an agreement."

Despite these gaps, ministers remained generally positive about the progress they had achieved, with Australian Trade Minister Andrew Robb telling reporters that the group has agreed on more than 80 percent of all issues. US Trade Representative Michael Froman added that some advances were made this weekend in the areas of telecommunications, food safety, and state-owned enterprises.

Other officials, such as Malaysian Minister of International Trade and Industry Mustapa Mohamed, have flagged intellectual property rights, state-owned enterprises, and the environment as difficult areas where "significant gaps" persist.

"While some issues remain, we have charted a path forward to resolve them in the context of a comprehensive and balanced outcome," TPP ministers said in a joint press [statement](#) on Tuesday, adding that they had agreed on a "majority of landing zones" that they had identified at their previous meeting in December, which was also held in the Asian city-state. (See Bridges Weekly, [12 December 2014](#))

#### Japan – US bilaterals make little headway

One of the main questions looming over this latest ministerial was whether the US and Japan – the two largest economies in the talks – would manage to advance in their discussions on agriculture and automobiles.

When the US agreed to back Japanese entry into the negotiations talks last April, the two sides had committed to conducting a separate set of talks in parallel to the group-wide discussions, which would then become part of the larger TPP framework. (See Bridges Weekly, [19 April 2013](#))



International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development

The current divide, officials say, centres mainly on Japanese tariffs on agricultural imports, along with Tokyo's non-tariff barriers on automobiles. Agriculture – especially with regards to rice, beef, pork, dairy, and sugar – is a particularly sensitive area for the Asian island economy, given the strong political influence of the domestic farm lobby.

Though the US and other agricultural exporters have called for the elimination of agricultural goods tariffs, Japan has repeatedly asked its partners to show more flexibility.

"Letting one nation win all the gold medals is anything but good," Japanese Economy Minister Akira Amari told reporters after the first day of negotiations, in an apparent reference to the agriculture talks.

Despite these differences, officials from both sides stressed that advances are being made. The negotiations "haven't been broken off or set adrift, and we've made good progress," Amari told Kyodo News.

### **Timetable?**

The TPP deal, together with the US-EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) have been watched with growing scrutiny in recent months, both for their potential to advance trade rule-making – especially given the impasse in the WTO's Doha Round talks – and for the sizable market that would be covered under these pacts.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership has been branded by its proponents as a "21<sup>st</sup> century" agreement, one that would go well beyond the disciplines commonly seen in such deals. Along with slashing tariffs on thousands of tariff lines, the final pact would also establish a comprehensive set of rules on subjects ranging from digital commerce and intellectual property to state-owned enterprises, labour, and the environment.

Along with trying to chart new ground in this deal, many members are also dealing with political issues at home, such as agricultural sensitivities in Japan or transparency and income inequality questions in the US.

Meanwhile, the twelve countries that would be covered under the TPP – Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the US, and Vietnam – represent a combined GDP of US \$28.1 trillion, amounting to over 40 percent of last year's global economic output. The potential [gains](#) from the pact have been estimated by some analysts at US\$223 billion a year in additional global income.

Achieving such a high level of ambition across a group of this size, however, has proven difficult, with members missing previous deadlines to conclude the talks in 2012, and again in 2013. The group's participants – while hinting that they hope to reach a deal this year – have not publicly set a new target date. (See Bridges Weekly, [12 December 2013](#))

"The substance of the negotiations should determine the timetable" for concluding the TPP, Froman told journalists on Tuesday. Officials have stressed in the past that, while keeping up momentum in the talks is key, the agreement should not be watered down just to reach a quick resolution.

No dates have been set for the next round of meetings, the US official said. The next major date on the TPP calendar is likely to be US President Barack Obama's [trip to Asia](#) in April, where he is expected to stop in Japan to meet with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the trade negotiations, along with other subjects.

ICTSD reporting; "TPP members give up agreement in Singapore, new goal eyed in May: source," KYODO NEWS, 25 February 2014; "TPP conclusion rests on Japan-U.S. tariff issue," THE JAPAN NEWS, 23 February 2014; "Pacific Trade Talks End Without Pact on Market Access Issues," BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK, 25 February 2014.

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## POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

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# UN Group Chairs Outline Priorities for Sustainable Development Goals

The co-chairs of a UN group tasked with drafting a blueprint for sustainable development goals (SDGs) released a list of [19 focus areas](#) on Friday, following a year of discussions. The effort is part of a broader process to develop a post-2015 development agenda that would replace the current Millennium Development Goals, which are soon set to expire.

The plan to develop a set of SDGs – stemming from an initiative originally tabled by Colombia and Guatemala – was a key result of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Discussions in this area have since been held under the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals, which was established in January 2013 by the UN General Assembly.

For the working group, UN member states decided to use a constituency-based system of representation, meaning that most of the seats in the group are shared. In order to remain inclusive, the group was instructed to develop modalities to engage stakeholders, civil society, and the scientific community.

An accompanying [letter](#) penned by OWG Co-chairs Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya, and Csaba Kőrösi, Permanent Representative of Hungary, indicates that these 19 focus areas represent a summary of input provided by member states and stakeholders during the group's eight thematic discussion sessions.

The duo also suggests that poverty eradication, inequitable international development, and environmental protection "were among the most pressing sustainable development challenges facing humankind this century."

"It is our view that the international community could realise greater impacts of the much sought transformative change if further actions are taken in these focus areas of sustainable development. This is necessary to build prosperous, peaceful and resilient societies that also protect the planet," their letter read.

### Not a zero draft

Each of the 19 focus areas in Friday's report highlights the inter-linkages to other issues, in accordance with the internationally agreed-upon objective to create a set of universal development goals that integrate and balance environmental, social, and economic concerns.

The co-chairs' letter emphasises that these focus areas do not constitute a "zero draft" or a first working version, indicating that the topics included were not "exhaustive." Given the international community's intention to have a limited set of goals, experts suggest the 19 areas will presumably need to be whittled down. One option, for instance, would be to assimilate complementary topics.

Friday's release also included a [progress report](#) outlining in detail the substance of the thematic discussions. The text reveals that, initially, the group sought to formulate a vision and narrative to frame the selection of proposed goals, but later moved to pin these down directly, including identifying associated targets.

Commenting on the process, Saskia Hollander, a research editor for NGO The Broker, [suggests](#) that international divisions remain on targets and associated finance. "While the North opts for a clear and negotiable list of goals and targets, the G-77 is reluctant to already commit itself to goals and targets and stresses that the issue of finance needs to be solved first," she wrote.

Hollander also speculates as to whether the emerging economies will continue with this rhetoric or instead move away from the conventional development model towards alternative finance paradigms – such as South-South cooperation to harness trade and investment.

### **Trade as an enabler of sustainable development**

Among the topics and targets listed for consideration, the focus areas document mentions the broad role of an open rule-based trading system in fostering sustainable growth, and as a means of implementation. More specifically, this includes references to addressing damaging subsidies, although ideas are also put forward around the need for policy space to support industrial development, as well as promoting new industries.

The section on marine resources, oceans, and seas, for example, suggests eliminating all harmful fisheries subsidies, as well as combatting unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The energy area includes the phasing out of "inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption," while the food security and nutrition headline puts forward addressing "harmful agricultural subsidies."

The progress report, however, for its part notes that OWG members discussed the fact that trade-related issues – such as agricultural and fisheries subsidies – are also being addressed within the framework of the WTO.

The body will now continue with the second phase of its work in five negotiation sessions scheduled from early March to mid-July, and stakeholders have been solicited for input through various liaison platforms. The stated deliverable will be a report containing SDG proposals, to be presented for debate at the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in September 2014.

ICTSD reporting.

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## SERVICES

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# TISA Members Hold First Review of Market Access Offers

Talks for a plurilateral agreement on services trade advanced in Geneva this week, sources confirmed to Bridges. The latest round, hosted by the EU mission over a period of eight days, was the first in which participants reviewed initial market access offers.

The proposed deal, dubbed the Trade in Services Agreement – or TISA – aims to lower barriers in services trade, given the prolonged impasse in the services negotiations being conducted multilaterally under the WTO's Doha Round. The TISA talks began in early 2012, and have moved forward quickly in the two years since, with the core provisions of the draft text already being relatively stabilised.

Of the group's 23 participants, all but Pakistan and Paraguay had tabled initial offers in time for the past week's discussions. Two of these – those of the US and Japan – were submitted in September. (See Bridges Weekly, [26 September 2013](#))

The fact that nearly the entire group was able to submit an offer for this month's review was, in itself, welcomed as significant progress. In comparison, the services talks under the WTO's Doha Round struggled to get offers from the global trade body's full membership. As of April 2011, only 71 initial offers and 31 revised offers had been submitted after a decade of negotiations – a small fraction of the WTO's then-153 members.

Sources familiar with the latest round of TISA meetings said that participants generally adhered to the principle of offering the level of access achieved in their "best FTAs," with one delegate noting that the offers – while ranging in the level of maturity – overall reflect notable improvements over anything seen in the past, including in the context of the WTO's Doha Round.

Participants are next set to discuss the offers on a bilateral level among themselves in order to address specific issues, ahead of future group meetings. A couple of the offers were reportedly partial ones, sources say; those are expected to be completed ahead of the next round.

### **Sectoral text**

During the eight-day gathering, participants also discussed a series of proposals that had been tabled for the sectoral part of the TISA negotiating text. The six topics under review during this session were financial services; telecommunications and e-commerce; domestic regulation and transparency; professional services; maritime transport; and mode 4, which involves services provided by foreign nationals abroad.

In some of these areas, such as financial services or domestic regulation and transparency, participants are looking to build upon what is already in the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services. Other areas, however, have not been dealt with at the multilateral level before.

Proponents of the various proposals in these six areas had consolidated these ahead of the meeting. These texts are meant to serve as early building blocks for a draft negotiating text in the sectoral section of TISA, though sources note that none of these are final, but are just meant to serve as a platform for further discussions in this area.

**China, Uruguay membership undecided**

Whether and when China, which expressed an interest late last year, or Uruguay may be brought into the group has not yet been decided. All current participants must agree to allow in new members; sources say some are still conducting their domestic processes in this area.

The group has long maintained that new participants are welcome, as long as they can show that they are willing to meet the level of ambition of the current group.

The current 23 participants – with the EU and its 28 member states counted as one – cover over two-thirds of global trade in services. The other members include Australia, Canada, Chile, Chinese Taipei, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Iceland, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Liechtenstein, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Switzerland, Turkey, and the US.

**Next steps**

The next round is set to be held during the week of 28 April, and will be hosted by Australia. Multiple sources have said that there is no set deadline for concluding the talks at this stage, though participants aim to keep good momentum.

ICTSD reporting.

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## GLOBAL ECONOMY

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# G-20 Finance Chiefs Set Two Percent Growth Goal

Finance ministers and central bank governors from the Group of 20 major industrialised and emerging economies agreed to aim for a two percent – effectively US\$2 trillion – increase in their collective GDP over the next five years, with the coalition's leaders set to release national plans for reaching this goal when they meet in Brisbane in November.

Meeting in Sydney this past weekend, the officials said that this increase is part of a broader effort to ensure that the global economic recovery remains on firm ground. The group warned that – recent improvements notwithstanding – growth today is still far under the levels needed to “get our citizens back into jobs and meet their aspirations for development.”

“There is no room for complacency. Addressing these challenges requires ambition,” they said in their final [statement](#), pledging to take a series of “concrete actions” aimed at increasing investment, employment, trade, and competition.

“These actions will form the basis of our comprehensive growth strategies and the Brisbane Action Plan,” the group added, referring to the planned outcome document for their November leaders’ meeting.

To meet this two percent collective goal, “each country will take to the Brisbane summit its plan for economic growth overall,” Australian treasurer Joe Hockey told reporters. “We don’t have central planning out of the G-20 for individual countries.”

This year’s leaders’ summit will come at a time when the global economy is seeing slow signs of a rebound, following a prolonged crisis. The G-20, which represents over 75 percent of global trade and 85 percent of global GDP, declared itself the “premier forum” for global economic cooperation during the early years of the financial slump, though some have since questioned how effective the coalition’s commitments have been in practice.

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, whose country holds this year’s rotating G-20 presidency, has said that increasing trade, combatting tax avoidance, increasing infrastructure investment, reducing unemployment, and improving financial sector resilience are going to be key topics for the November gathering, which he insisted would be “more than a talkfest.” Of these topics, he said in January in Davos, “trade comes first.” (See Bridges Weekly, [30 January 2014](#))

### Monetary policy

The move by some developed economies – most notably the US and Japan – to take on monetary easing programmes in an effort to achieve domestic policy objectives, such as reducing unemployment or combatting deflation, has come under increasing scrutiny in recent years. Emerging economies in particular had raised concerns over the effects these policies could have on their markets – including the potential for such moves to affect exchange rates, and in turn, trade.

The expected reduction – or removal – of such easing policies, however, has incited additional concerns, should these be downscaled too quickly and create new spillovers.

In this context, G-20 finance officials pledged to “consistently communicate our actions to each other and to the public, and continue to cooperate on managing spillovers to other countries, and to ensure the continued effectiveness of global safety nets.”

The document also included a recognition of the need to keep monetary policy “accommodative” in many advanced economies, a reference that officials from these countries said was an affirmation of their approach.

“By ending prolonged deflation, Japan can benefit not only its economy but the global economy as a whole,” Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda said after this weekend’s meeting. “We’ve explained this in various international gatherings, and I think our view has been recognised by the G-20 members.”

### **IMF reform**

Another topic that is expected to feature on the G-20 agenda this year is the pace of instituting a series of reforms to the International Monetary Fund, mainly to shift more power to developing and emerging market countries in order to reflect their growing weight on the world stage. The planned [changes](#), which were agreed in 2010, would also double the IMF’s quota overall to US\$734 billion.

That commitment was dealt a body blow early into the new year, when the US Congress agreed on a long-awaited budget deal that failed to include IMF funding, despite efforts by the White House and the US Treasury Department.

“We deeply regret that the IMF quota and governance reforms agreed to in 2010 have not yet become effective and that the 15<sup>th</sup> General Review of Quotas was not completed by January 2014,” the finance ministers’ communiqué said, adding that ratifying these reforms was a matter of “highest priority.”

“We urge the US to [ratify these reforms] before our next meeting in April,” they added, noting that the upcoming spring meeting – also at the finance officials’ level – will be a chance for them to take stock of progress toward this goal and of completing the 15<sup>th</sup> General Review of Quotas by next January.

The G-20 includes Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.

ICTSD reporting; “HIGHLIGHTS-Comments from policymakers after G20 meeting in Sydney,” REUTERS, 23 February 2014; “US fails to approve IMF reforms,” FINANCIAL TIMES, 14 January 2014; “U.S. Congress again rebuffs IMF funding request,” REUTERS, 13 January 2014.



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## AGRICULTURE

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# EU: Trade-distorting Farm Support at New Low

The EU's trade-distorting domestic farm subsidies were lower in the 2010-11 marketing year than in any previous year, according to new figures that the 28-member bloc has reported to the WTO.

Domestic support payments that are classed as distorting trade fell to €11 billion, the EU says – one-sixth of the level they were at a decade ago, before the European Commission introduced successive reforms aimed at “decoupling” farm subsidies from farmers' production decisions.

However, the new figures show that a record €68 billion was also spent on “green box” payments that ostensibly cause no more than minimal trade distortion, and are therefore exempt from any ceiling or reduction commitments under current WTO rules.

Decoupled income support payments accounted for just under half of this amount. Brussels has made these payments the centrepiece of its Common Agricultural Policy since its reforms in 2003.

Although more recent figures have yet to be reported to the global trade body, the latest reform of the bloc's Common Agricultural Policy does not substantially modify farm subsidy trends.

Decoupled income support payments are likely to continue to make up the bulk of EU subsidy payments to farmers. However, under the new CAP these will be made conditional on the fulfilment of new environmental requirements such as crop diversification, maintaining permanent grassland, and safeguarding certain ecological features.

The latest reforms would also allow member states to increase the share of farm support that is allocated to “coupled” farm payments, albeit within certain limits – potentially opening the door to an increase in this type of support in years ahead. (See Bridges Weekly, [27 June 2013](#))

### Farm subsidy breakdown

The €11 billion in trade-distorting support is composed of elements that are treated differently under current WTO rules.

The most trade-distorting types of payments – known as “amber box” subsidies – represented €6.5 billion of domestic subsidies in the 2010-11 marketing year, the new figures show. This includes support that is directly linked to production levels, such as input or output subsidies.

The EU also reported €1.4 billion in “de minimis” payments – equally trade-distorting support that Brussels is allowed to provide on condition that it does not exceed 5 percent of the value of production.

Amber box subsidies are subject to a €72 billion ceiling under WTO rules – far higher than recent spending.

The bloc also provided €3.1 billion in “blue box” payments – production-limiting farm subsidy payments which are exempt from any current ceiling, even though they do distort trade.

A separate subsidy notification from the EU also corrected previous figures for the 2009-10 marketing year. Total amber box payments for that year were actually €10.8 billion, Brussels reported, and not €8.8 billion as previously reported. (See Bridges Weekly, [28 November 2012](#))

€2.1 billion of trade-distorting support payments for barley, which had been omitted from the original report, appeared to be the source of the discrepancy.

### **WTO members return to “core issues”**

The WTO's Doha talks would have created a new ceiling on “overall trade-distorting support,” made up of the sum of amber, blue and de minimis payments. A draft text circulated in 2008 would have set this at €22.1 billion for the EU, and at US\$14.5 billion for the US.

In December last year, trade ministers agreed to revisit the long-stalled Doha agenda at the WTO's ninth ministerial conference, held on the island of Bali in Indonesia.

Trade negotiators in Geneva are currently exploring how best to do so. Agricultural domestic support is seen as one of the “core” negotiating issues which members will eventually have to engage with if they are to conclude the troubled talks.

ICTSD reporting.

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**IN BRIEF**

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## WTO Panel to Review EU-Faroe Islands Dispute

The Faroe Islands' dispute with the EU over restrictions on the archipelago's fishing fleets advanced to the WTO panel stage on Wednesday, after Tórshavn filed a second request with the global trade arbiter.

At issue in the case is a 2013 [prohibition](#) against Faroese-flagged vessels and vessels carrying Faroese-caught fish, which Brussels enacted after the Islands' fishing fleets caught over 100,000 tonnes of Atlanto-Scandian mackerel and herring that year. Under the joint management programme run by Norway, Russia, Island, the EU, and the Faroe Islands, the latter had been allocated a 30,000 tonne catch share.

Tórshavn had argued that the 30,000 tonne limit was not equitable, given the current distribution of fish stocks within its territorial waters. However, Brussels insisted that its sanctions were necessary to protect the long-term sustainability of the fish stocks.

Over the past month, Tórshavn has continued to criticise the Brussels policy. Prime Minister Minister Kaj Leo Holm Johannesen recently [called](#) the prohibitions "coercive measures" causing "significant harm," adding that the EU's economy is "more than 10,000 times bigger than that of the Faroe Islands." Fish products constitute more than 95 percent of Faroese exports.

The panel request, notably, was filed by Denmark, which is not only an EU member, but also a WTO proxy for the self-governing territory of the Faroes, located in the North Atlantic Ocean. The Faroe Islands are not part of the EU, but are members of the WTO through Denmark. As it stands, Faroese ships are banned from Danish ports.

ICTSD reporting.

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## WTO Compliance Panel to Review US-China Steel Row

A WTO panel is set to review whether China has complied with an adverse ruling issued by the global trade arbiter, after the US formally filed a request for a panel to review the case.

In late 2012, the Appellate Body had confirmed that Chinese anti-dumping and countervailing duties on US-made "grain oriented flat-rolled electrical steel" (GOES) were inconsistent with international trade rules, giving China until July 2013 to comply with the ruling. The Appellate Body's findings mainly focused on procedural issues with the trade remedy investigations that led to the duties. ([DS414](#))

GOES steel is primarily used by the power generation industry in transformers and other large electric machines. US officials have said that the duties have cut off over US\$250 million in exports of the good.

Following the 2012 ruling, the Asian country conducted a series of re-investigations, maintaining duties in two cases and reducing them in others. Chinese officials have said that the result has brought Beijing into compliance with its WTO obligations; however, the US argues that there are still procedural issues with how these duties were calculated.

The US first requested consultations with China on its compliance last month. Based on an earlier [agreement](#), China did not block the US' request for a panel. Washington and Beijing have also agreed to work together to enable the panel to issue a ruling within 90 days, with both members reserving their right to appeal. (See Bridges Weekly, [16 January 2014](#))

If the panel finds that China is not in compliance with the WTO ruling, the US may request that the global trade arbiter authorise the imposition of countermeasures.

ICTSD reporting.

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## EVENTS & RESOURCES

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# Events

### Coming Soon

3-7 March, New York City, US. THIRD SESSION OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FINANCING. This intergovernmental committee, established following the Rio+20 conference by the UN General Assembly, aims to find potential sustainable development financing strategies that would facilitate the mobilisation of resources and ensure their effectiveness in achieving sustainable development objectives. Though the committee meeting itself is a closed session, there will be an interactive multi-stakeholder dialogue on 3 March that is open to anyone interested. More information can be found at the meeting's [website](#).

4 March, Geneva, Switzerland. DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE: QUELS EFFETS POUR L'EMPLOI. This series of lectures and debates will discuss under what conditions sustainable development might unify the North and South, as well as aid poverty and the environment. It also aims to address the economic reality of "green jobs." Speakers include Nicolai Bertrand of the UN Environment Programme, Mustapha Kamal Gueye of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and Claude Béglé, CEO of SymbioSwiss. More information can be found at the Environment House [website](#).

5 March, Toronto, Canada. PDAC 2014 – RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MINING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA. This forum, hosted by the World Bank Group, will focus on recent developments in key Latin American mining countries. Topics for discussion include Colombian efforts to restructure the mining sector; Peru's programmes to leverage mining to promote development; and new mining opportunities and challenges in various countries. Speakers will include representatives from government delegations, the private sector, and academia. For more information, visit the World Bank [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.

3 + 5 March: Trade Policy Review Body - Malaysia

### Other Upcoming Events

11-13 March, Jakarta, Indonesia. JAKARTA GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE. This event, organised by the Japanese Environment Ministry's Sustainability Transformation beyond 2015 Project, will address the theme of nexus issues in the urbanisation era. Organisers hope the event will serve as a platform for researchers in the fields of environment and development to review progress toward the Millennium Development Goals, and share lessons learned in the context of efforts to develop a post-2015 development agenda. More information can be found [here](#).

27 March, London, UK. THE ASIA-GULF ENERGY RELATIONSHIP. This debate, hosted by Chatham House, features a presentation by Dr. Valérie Marcel, Associate Fellow in Energy, Environment and Resources, who will examine the emerging trends in the energy relationship between Gulf and Asian states and where this might be headed. Attendance is open to major corporate members and partner organisations of Chatham House. More information can be found at the organisation's [website](#).

5-11 April, Medellin, Colombia. 7<sup>th</sup> WORLD URBAN FORUM. This conference, organised by the UN Global Compact Cities Programme, will focus on the theme "Urban Equity for Development – Cities for Life." This session aims to be a platform for discussing the role of sustainable urbanisation within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda and the upcoming Habitat III, the Conference of Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, to be held in 2016. For more information, visit the event [website](#).

13-16 October, Geneva, Switzerland. WORLD INVESTMENT FORUM 2014: INVESTING IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. This year's World Investment Forum, hosted by the UN Conference on Trade and Development, will focus on the theme "Investing in Sustainable Development." The biennial event traditionally brings together heads of state, ministers, policymakers, global chief executive officers, and thought leaders for a discussion on key emerging investment-related challenges. More information is on the UNCTAD [website](#).

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## Resources

THE GREEN GOODS AGREEMENT: NEITHER GREEN NOR GOOD? By Aaron Cosbey for the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) (2014). This commentary reviews the new environmental goods trade initiative launched at Davos in January by a subset of WTO members. The author assesses the chances that the agreement will achieve significant environmental impacts and argues that the institutional needs of such an initiative have the potential to be unexpectedly challenging. The paper can be found [here](#).

REGULATORY POLICY AND BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS. By Pete Lunn for the OECD. This study offers an international review of the initial applications of behavioural economics to policy, with a particular focus on regulatory policy. The author outlines the extent to which behavioural findings have begun to influence public policy in a number of OECD member countries. The paper can be found [here](#).

OECD ECONOMICS SURVEYS: RUSSIAN FEDERATION 2013. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (January 2014). This 2013 version of OECD's periodic review of the Russian economy examines recent developments, prospects, and policies. The publication includes a set of special chapters that address the potential for boosting productivity through business climate and skills improvements. The review can be found [here](#).

STUCK IN TRANSITION: MANAGING THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LOW-CARBON DEVELOPMENT. By Rob Bailey and Felix Preston for Chatham House (February 2014). This briefing paper addresses the task of decarbonisation in both rich and poor countries, and makes recommendations for government policy. The authors find that avoiding a high-carbon lock-in is a matter of strategic choice rather than affordability. The briefing can be found [here](#).

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*Russian language*

## PONTES

Analysis and news on trade and sustainable development for the Portuguese-speaking world  
<http://ictsd.org/news/pontes/>  
*Portuguese language*

## 桥

Analysis and news on trade and sustainable development for the Chinese-speaking world  
<http://ictsd.org/news/qiao/>  
*Chinese language*

## PASSERELLES

Africa-focussed analysis and news on trade and sustainable development  
<http://ictsd.org/news/passerelles/>  
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International Centre for Trade  
and Sustainable Development  
Chemin de Balexert 7-9  
1219 Geneva, Switzerland  
+41-22-917-8492  
[www.ictsd.org](http://www.ictsd.org)

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Netherlands

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark

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Contributors to this issue are Sofia Alicia Baliño,  
Kimberley Botwright, Benjamin Davis, Jonathan  
Hepburn, Misha Kydd, Milo Madole, and Alice  
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