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TRADE AGREEMENTS

TPP Countries Prepare to Regroup in Wake of Hawaii Meeting

The 12 Pacific Rim countries working to reach a sweeping trade deal are gearing up with an eye to resuming – and possibly concluding – their negotiations in the coming weeks, officials say, after their ministerial-level meeting in late July that failed to yield a highly-awaited agreement.

Japanese Economy Minister Akira Amari told reporters last Friday that "momentum is gathering gradually" among countries to hold another ministerial meeting on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, as the proposed deal is known.

However, the Japanese official has also said in recent weeks that the talks could instead drift should a deal not be reached soon, before elections in certain major TPP countries are held.

If completed, the deal would cover economies that make up 40 percent of global GDP. The agreement would include approximately 30 chapters, spanning areas such as intellectual property, competition, e-commerce, treatment of state-owned enterprises, and labour and the environment, to name a few.

Automobiles, dairy, biologics in focus

The ministerial meet in the US state of Hawaii had led to reports of significant progress on various TPP chapters. However, ministers were unable to reach a final deal after talks broke down over rules of origin for automobiles, dairy and sugar market access, and the data protection period for biologic drugs, which are those derived from a biological background. (See Bridges Weekly, [9 August 2015](#))

In the weeks since, meetings have been held in various configurations to help lay the groundwork for a possible future ministerial and help bridge some of these gaps.

For example, the US and Japan are due to resume their negotiations on automobiles this week, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, together with working-level talks with the US' two partners in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) – Canada and Mexico.

Disagreement between the three NAFTA countries and Japan over the amount of regional content of automobile parts was reportedly one of the key stumbling blocks that emerged during the July talks in Maui, with Canada and Mexico reportedly against a deal that had been reached bilaterally between Washington and Tokyo.

Mexico, for instance, is said to be aiming for rules similar to those in NAFTA – specifically that local content make up 62.5 percent of the net cost in order not to lose some of the gains from that previous trade deal.

Final stages

Despite the failure to reach a deal in Hawaii, some officials have expressed cautious optimism that the TPP talks – long said to be in their “final stages” – might still be concluded this year. However, the nature of the existing agreements, along with the size of the economies involved in those discussions, has kept the fate of the negotiations in limbo.

“We’re 98 per cent of the way there, but there are two big issues that are really more to do with the NAFTA countries and Japan,” said Australian Trade Minister Andrew Robb in a 26 August [interview](#) with Bloomberg TV.

The Australian official added that if those issues do get resolved, the TPP countries “would be two days away – two days of negotiations – from finishing; we’re that close.” However, he qualified, these two areas of automobiles and dairy are “quite substantive” for some of the large economies involved in the trade talks.

Meanwhile, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said this Tuesday that one last ministerial meeting would suffice to conclude the TPP talks, according to comments reported by Reuters.

Others have been more cautious in their predictions, such as Malaysian Trade Minister Mustapa Mohamed, who recently said that when the 12-country talks will be concluded is anybody’s guess, and is unlikely anytime soon.

“There has been progress, but we still have some issues to address. However, when the TPP will be concluded is an open question,” he said, according to comments reported last week in local media. However, the Malaysian trade official added that most countries involved, including his own, are still hoping to reach a final deal in the near-term.

Even with these attempts to regroup, many officials concede that the upcoming elections in Canada this October and the US in November 2016 could risk put the talks in the deep freeze should they drag on for much longer.

The dairy market access issue has already proven to be a politically contentious one for Canada, which uses a supply management system for dairy and poultry, tightly regulating their price and production via the use of “marketing boards.” New Zealand and Australia have both been among those calling upon Canada to make significant dairy concessions.

IP progress

Despite the disagreement on the length of data exclusivity for biologic drugs, reports from the Maui talks did note some significant progress in other major intellectual property (IP) areas.

According to a [statement](#) released by the Mexican Secretary of the Economy, this includes a tentative agreement on how to treat geographical indications, which are used to denote products with a specific geographical origin and which possess qualities, reputation, or characteristics that are essentially attributable to that same place.

"In the intellectual property chapter, important advances were reached in the outstanding areas, within which the most notable was a deal in principle on geographical indications (GIs)," the statement said.

"The agreed text foresees the application of TPP disciplines to GIs protected in international agreements in cases where those agreements are signed onto by one of the Parties on a date following the entry into force of these disciplines," the Secretary of the Economy document continued. Such new disciplines will primarily deal with the application of opposition procedures and their basis.

Those GIs already recognised in existing agreements will be excluded from the new disciplines under the TPP. Other GIs that will be recognised in the future, but based on those same existing deals, will only face minimal new obligations regarding transparency.

TPP ministers were able to resolve the bulk of issues in the intellectual property chapter of the talks, such as cooperation, trademarks, and internet service providers, while making significant progress in areas such as patents and industrial designs.

Areas such as pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals will likely recover discussion at the ministerial level in the near future, the statement said.

ICTSD reporting; "No conclusion in sight for TPP talks, says Malaysian Trade Minister," TODAYONLINE, 5 September 2015; "Japan, U.S. to resume auto talks Wednesday in Washington," KYODO, 8 September 2015; "Mexico carmakers seek 50 percent regional content in trade deal," REUTERS, 17 August 2015; "Japan PM: One more round of TPP ministers' talks to lead to agreement," REUTERS, 8 September 2015.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

"No Time to Waste," Warns New WTO Farm Talks Chair

WTO members confirmed on Tuesday the formal appointment of Vangelis Vitalis, New Zealand's ambassador to the global trade body, as the new chair of the organisation's agriculture negotiations.

In remarks at the meeting, the new chair [told](#) trade officials that he would work "honestly, fairly, objectively, and transparently with all delegations."

Negotiators have just over three months until the global trade body's tenth ministerial conference in Nairobi, Kenya – where some members would like to see a conclusion of the long-running Doha Round of trade talks. An attempt to reach a work programme on how to do so ahead of a 31 July deadline ultimately failed to reach a result, leaving the road ahead uncertain. (See Bridges Weekly, [30 July 2015](#))

Vitalis warned that there was "no time to waste" before the ministerial. However, sources told Bridges that positions among major trading partners continue to remain far apart.

The New Zealand ambassador told members that he had "neither a magic wand nor a magic draft" to address this problem.

Elusive "thalassa, thalassa" moment

Citing the ancient Greek historian Xenophon, Vitalis told the meeting that members were still "some way from the "thalassa, thalassa" moment" – a reference to the time when a battle-weary contingent of soldiers finally arrived at the sea ("thalassa" in Greek) after a long and onerous journey over land.

The new chair nonetheless remained cautiously upbeat about the prospects for further progress. "I do expect us however – working together – to reach the sea in time for Nairobi," he said.

Trade officials in Geneva told Bridges that it may be too soon to offer any assessment of the chances of a breakthrough in the long-running talks.

Senior trade negotiators from seven major trading powers are due to meet in Geneva on 15 and 16 September, after which some hoped the possible contours for Nairobi might become clearer. Trade sources said that officials from Brazil, Canada, China, the EU, India, Japan, and the US were due to meet to discuss possible ways forward on the Doha agenda.

Others hoped that a 5 October meeting in Turkey of trade ministers from the G-20 group of major advanced and emerging economies could also provide further impetus for progress in the talks.

Low ambition lowering further?

Some trade sources told Bridges that a number of major trading partners were seeking to lower the level of overall "ambition" in the talks – either to avoid having to make concessions which would be difficult for domestic constituencies to accept, or because they suspected other WTO members would be in such a situation.

At the same time, officials have repeatedly acknowledged that least developed countries (LDCs) in particular expect that the WTO's first ministerial conference in sub-Saharan Africa delivers meaningful outcomes on a package of "development" issues.

"No one is contesting this issue," one trade source said.

Negotiators said the package could include, among others, progress on cotton; on duty-free, quota-free market access; rules of origin; and operationalisation of the LDC services waiver.

"No one wants to go to Kenya and leave behind a dead Doha," one delegate said, who argued that it was in no one's interests for the conference to be seen to fail.

Developing countries outside the LDC grouping cautioned that they also expected the Nairobi outcome to achieve progress on issues they saw as relevant to the "development dimension" of the talks.

A stripped-down Doha deal

Several trade sources told Bridges that the US appeared to be pursuing a conclusion of the Round at Nairobi based on a radically stripped-down Doha agenda, with agreement on a package of measures for LDCs accompanied by a deal on export competition in agriculture and some elements around improved transparency. In this scenario, core negotiating areas such as agricultural domestic support and market access could be left aside.

Others suggested that Washington was merely drawing attention to the fact that there was more consensus in the export competition pillar than in other areas of the talks.

In recent months, the US has called for China in particular to make concessions on agricultural domestic support as a precondition for any reciprocal reductions in its own farm subsidy ceiling. (See Bridges Weekly, [25 June 2015](#))

Beijing has meanwhile emphasised that this issue is a "red line" for them in the talks.

"US messaging will be very important in determining what happens next," one developed country negotiator observed.

Both developed and developing country negotiators nonetheless told Bridges that they doubted there would be widespread support for any attempt to conclude the Doha Round without addressing core areas such as farm subsidies or agricultural import tariffs.

Use time efficiently

The chair told delegates at this week's meeting that he was determined to use the existing time available efficiently.

"It was a quick meeting – only five minutes!" one delegate told Bridges afterwards.

Another confirmed that trade officials had respected the chair's invitation to refrain from delivering speeches welcoming him to his new role at the WTO.

"The welcome I would most appreciate would be your cooperation in a problem-solving spirit," Vitalis told the meeting. He is expected to now hold a number of informal consultative meetings with delegations in order to begin charting possible ways forward.

ICTSD reporting.

TRADE AGREEMENTS

Controversy Builds in Australia over China Trade Deal

Efforts to build support in Australia for a recently signed trade deal with China have erupted in controversy in recent weeks, ahead of the impending ratification vote required to bring the agreement into force. The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, otherwise known as ChAFTA, was formally signed in June by the two countries following a decade of negotiations.

In the months since, however, questions have grown in Australian political circles and among the public over the deal's safeguards for domestic labourers, sparking multiple protests and heated debate as the domestic legal procedures for eventual ratification get underway. (See Bridges Weekly, [25 June 2015](#))

Canberra, for its part, is currently awaiting a report from a joint parliamentary committee regarding the FTA, which is due in mid-October. Following the report, the government aims to put forward enabling legislation for a vote, with the goal of bringing the agreement into force by year's end.

Robb: China could "walk away" if vote fails

Australian labour unions have been particularly wary of the trade deal, calling for more information to be released about the agreement's potential impacts and questioning the provisions relating to the hiring of workers from abroad and on trade skills assessment.

In this context, Labor Party leader Bill Shorten has tabled various requests that he says are necessary for his party to formally back the agreement. These include passing provisions in the enabling legislation that would help safeguard domestic jobs, such as mandatory labour market testing on projects over A\$150 million, and that Australian wages not be undercut. The former essentially requires companies to first consider hiring domestic workers before extending the search abroad.

Liberal Party officials, in turn, have largely backed the deal as being key toward boosting investment and economic growth, with some officials claiming that certain criticisms that have been raised by major trade unions are inaccurate and potentially border on xenophobia.

Despite the controversy, Prime Minister Tony Abbott has repeatedly confirmed – including at a speech to the Tasmanian Liberal Party State Council on 5 September – that his government "will fight just as hard to say yes to the China free trade agreement as we fought to say no to the carbon tax."

"This is a remarkably good deal for Australia," the premier said, in comments reported by AAP. "It doesn't involve changing workplace relations laws. It doesn't involve changing any migration laws. It doesn't involve reducing existing labour market testing and labour market protection."

Australian Trade Minister Andrew Robb also cautioned last week that China would likely "walk away" if the trade deal fails to pass a vote in Parliament – a move that could have both economic and diplomatic ramifications.

"They would [walk away]. After 10 years of negotiation, they have presented Australia with the best deal that they've ever done by a country mile," Robb told The Australian newspaper. The trade chief has [also said](#) over the past week that various current and former Labor leaders are indeed in favour of the pact, and has strongly urged Shorten to back the agreement publicly.

In response to questions over whether the deal could potentially be re-opened for additional negotiations, Australian Treasurer Joe Hockey, told reporters following a meeting with Chinese finance minister Lou Jiwei in Turkey this past weekend that "it was made explicitly clear that the free trade agreement will not be renegotiated."

While much of the opposition to date has come from within the Labor Party, spokesperson Penny Wong said last month that the party will consider and confirm its formal stance on the legislation when it goes before Parliament.

"Labor is committed to examining the agreement through current parliamentary committee inquiries," Wong told the Sydney Morning Herald. "We want to make sure safeguards are maintained to ensure its potential benefits are realised."

ChAFTA, regional impact

The signing of the bilateral trade agreement was a landmark event for both parties, marking part of a broader push by Canberra to deepen trade ties with various key Asian economies. Australia has already signed deals with both South Korea and Japan in recent years. Negotiations are also currently underway with India, with the next round of talks scheduled for later this month. (See Bridges Weekly, [25 June 2015](#))

Among other provisions, the China-Australia deal will make 85 percent of Australian exports duty free upon entry into force, moving to 95 percent over time. Agriculture was one of the most difficult parts of the agreement to close, given Australia's interest in receiving comparable terms to those that China offered New Zealand in a separate FTA.

The agreement also included significant concessions on services, with Australia due to receive increased access to those markets. Provisions in the deal include legal, education, tourism, financial services, telecommunications, health, and aged care services. Any future improvements in market access that China offers to its other trading partners in select services sectors will also be extended to Australia.

ICTSD reporting; "Labor hardens its stance on China-Australia free trade agreement," SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 12 August 2015; "China will walk away from FTA if Labor votes it down, Robb warns," THE AUSTRALIAN, 31 August 2015; "Next round of India-Australia free trade pact talks in Sep," PTI, 27 August 2015; "Tony Abbott vows to fight for free trade deal with China," AAP, 5 September 2015.

SERVICES

WTO Members Notify Preferential Measures Under LDC Services Waiver

Over the past few weeks, Turkey, the US, and Mexico have joined the list of WTO members who have notified the Council for Trade in Services (CTS) their preferential measures in support of least developed countries' (LDCs) services and services suppliers.

These new submissions come on top of the notifications made by the end of July by eleven WTO members of the preferential measures that they would offer as part of efforts geared towards the operationalisation of the global trade body's LDCs "Services Waiver" adopted in 2011.

To date, the other notifying members include Canada, Australia, Norway, Korea, China, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei, Singapore, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Japan. The European Union and Chile reported in July that their notifications would be submitted as soon as their domestic procedures are completed.

Once the Council has been notified, members can implement preferential treatment related to market access. Preferential treatment regarding any other measure must receive approval by the Council.

Other members are being urged to notify their preferences, particularly ahead of the WTO's Tenth Ministerial Conference, which will take place in Nairobi, Kenya in December, with many LDCs saying they hope to see the implementation of the outcomes of the wider "Bali Package" approved at the last ministerial two years ago.

Some commentators say that once a "critical mass" of notifications have been secured, the next step will consist in translating the offers into real LDC services exports.

"Turning these preferences into real market opportunities will require LDCs to confront their supply side capacity constraints and reform their domestic regulatory framework," commented one observer.

"Market access alone will not generate the desired results from the waiver. It should be accompanied by policy and regulatory reforms on the part of the LDC and changes in domestic regulation of preference granting countries," said Darlington Mwape, Senior Fellow at the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development. (Editor's note: ICTSD is the publisher of Bridges Weekly.)

On the table

United States

The US has indicated that it will provide more favourable treatment to LDCs in a number of business services, such as foreign legal consulting services, accounting, auditing, engineering services, research and development, technical testing and analysis services, and other business services including translation and interpretation services. Also included in the 4 September notification are mailing services, special design services, entertainment production and distribution, environmental services, physical well-being services, road freight transport, and cargo handling services with the exception of maritime or air transport services, among others.

In all of these sectors and subsectors, the US would allow the supply of services “without limitations” from the territory of an LDC into the US or directly to a service consumer in the US. Subject to certain conditions, the supply of services could be operated through commercial presence in the US or through the presence of natural persons in the US for the purpose of the service.

While some sectors/subsectors are notified on a country-wide level, others are covered on a state-by-state basis. For example, foreign legal consulting services granted access without limitations in some states, while permitted only subject to an in-state office requirement in others or not permitted at all.

China

China, [reiterating](#) in its notification the great importance it attaches to LDC development, says that it will provide preferential treatment to LDCs in the following areas: capacity building and comprehensive assistance; authorised destination status; and market access.

Under capacity building, China has announced the intensification of training programmes on medical services, tourism services, and software and information technology services. China will also continue to assist LDCs in the construction of their services facilities as well as infrastructure essential to services, including roads, ports, railways and telecommunication networks.

Regarding market access, this has been expanded under Mode 3 and Mode 4 to allow for the entry of “business visitors” for up to six months and the establishment of wholly foreign-owned enterprises and joint venture enterprises.

Norway

Norway [announced](#) that its preferential treatment is being made in sectors and modes of supply across the board, including areas of particular export interest to least-developed countries, as set out in the [LDC collective request issued a year ago](#). It refers to expanded access for business visitors, contractual service suppliers, and independent professionals. Norway will further allow access to a number of specific services sub-sectors including computer-related services, communications, finance, education, transport, and construction and engineering related services, among others.

Canada

[Canada's](#) treatment for least developed country services and services suppliers in areas identified in the LDC collective request are extensive. It covers the temporary movement of natural persons, otherwise known as Mode 4, providing temporary entry for certain categories of business persons free from economic needs and labour market tests. As part of capacity building efforts, it makes reference to the facilitation of students through work permits and scholarships. Canada also provides LDCs with more extensive liberalisation commitments in the area of financial services. Other provisions cover the cultural sector, double taxation and tax refunds, transport, and logistics-related services and intellectual property.

Singapore

Singapore, in its notification to the CTS, [announced](#) that it will provide preferential treatment by way of market access for Mode 2 (consumption abroad) and Mode 3 (commercial presence) in the following sub-sectors: laundry collection services, textile and fur product cleaning services, dry cleaning services, pressing services, and dyeing and colouring services.

The other members that have made submissions to the CTS have notified similar preferences, including expanding access for the temporary movement of business people (Mode 4) from LDCs for a range of services professions and occupations; waiving fees for business and employment visas for LDC persons; not imposing economic needs and labour market tests for LDC members; and extending the duration of stay of LDC professionals in the markets of preference-granting members.

Enhancing LDC participation in world services trade

These notifications build upon the outcome of a high-level meeting held in Geneva this past February, where 25 WTO members indicated concrete sectors and modes of supply under which they intend to provide preferential treatment to LDCs' services and services suppliers. It was decided that indications of preferences stated then would have to be followed up by formal notifications to the CTS specifying the actual preferences.

Members agreed in February that they should endeavour to do this by 31 July at the latest, though preferably at the earliest possible opportunity. (See Bridges Africa, [9 February 2015](#))

The LDC Services Waiver, adopted in 2011 at the Eighth Ministerial Conference in Geneva, Switzerland allows developing and developed country members to provide preferential treatment to services and service suppliers from LDCs. This effectively permits them to derogate from the Most-Favoured Nation principle as provided for in the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services, where members are obligated to provide non-discriminatory treatment to services and service suppliers of other WTO members. The waiver will expire in 2026 – that is, 15 years from its adoption on 17 December 2011.

However, as no member made use of the LDC services waiver between 2011 and the Bali Ministerial Conference in December 2013, WTO members were further encouraged in Bali to "operationalise" the waiver so that least developed countries could effectively harness potential economic benefits from the waiver.

In July 2014, the LDC Group submitted a collective request regarding the preferential treatment it wanted to see for LDC services exports. The collective request featured various types of requests, ranging from horizontal measures to very specific sectoral ones. These included, among others, measures in the areas of tourism, banking, transport, education, information and communication technology (ICT), business process outsourcing (BPO), and creative industry services. (See Bridges Africa, [25 July 2014](#))

The role of trade in services in global trade is growing exponentially, with WTO figures [suggesting](#) that it accounts for over 70 percent of global GDP, 45 percent of global employment, and around 40 percent of foreign direct investment. Analysts note that the reality is an altogether different one for LDCs, which constitute roughly 0.6 percent of global services trade. However, at the national level services' contribution to GDP is significant, accounting in certain cases to more than 50 percent of GDP.

ICTSD reporting.

CLIMATE CHANGE

UN Officials to Prepare New Text for Paris Climate Accord

The co-chairs of talks geared towards hammering out a new, multilateral climate regime have been given a mandate by nearly 200 governments to produce a new draft negotiating text. Meeting in Bonn, Germany from 31 August-4 September, parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed that the document should be "concise," outline "manageable options," and be based on a "Geneva Negotiating Text" (GNT), taking into account discussions held throughout the week.

Ahmed Djoghla of Algeria and Daniel Reifsnyder of the US, the officials charged with steering the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), will release the text at the beginning of October in time for the next negotiating session later that month. The co-chairs have also proposed that negotiations be held in an open-ended drafting group in the next session, marking a shift from smaller, thematic breakout groups that have characterised previous rounds.

A flurry of media activity greeted the move last Friday, with some key stakeholders welcoming the development as [evidence](#) of progress, while other commentators suggested otherwise. Parties have committed to securing a universal emissions-cutting deal in time for their meeting in December in Paris, France. The agreement should come into effect at the end of the decade, upon the expiry of the current Kyoto Protocol, while also outlining efforts to boost climate action before that time.

Uneven progress

Climate negotiators were [tasked](#) last week with producing a clearer understanding and articulation of elements for the planned Paris deal. The complex talks were aided by an 83-page document released by Djoghla and Reifsnyder in July as an informal tool to help organise the plethora of textual proposals captured in the GNT. (See BioRes, [28 July 2015](#))

Several areas saw progress in Bonn, with some parties and groups submitting textual proposals for discussion, clarifying concepts and positions, and identifying key aspects for the deal. However, this momentum was not uniform across all areas or represented final landing zones, according to several sources.

Reports also suggest that parties' visions for the structure of the final Paris deal continue to differ, with some suggesting that more content should go into an international "agreement" that would be more permanent, while others would see more emphasis placed on "decisions" adopted by parties to complement and operationalise the agreement.

Shared climate action

A spin-off group from the mitigation talks saw parties narrow down the thorny concept of "differentiation" between countries' ability and responsibility to take climate action, leaving Bonn with three possible [interpretations](#), including self-differentiation, reference to the Convention, and differentiation based on categories of parties as developed and developing countries.

A mitigation spin-off group on response measures, which deals with the impact of unilateral climate action on poorer nations, reached an understanding on possible options for inclusion within an agreement – focused on what parties would like to achieve on the issue – and potential elements for decisions, focused on how to achieve them. An option for no arrangements on response measures has also been kept.

Under the agreement, parties are considering strengthening existing or new institutional arrangements, poverty eradication, and food security, among other areas. The decision might address topics such as a permanent forum on response measures, modalities for international cooperation on the issue, or recommendations for specific actions.

Another spin-off group on market mechanisms saw several parties support using carbon markets as a mitigation option. These highlighted the need for an explicit mention in the agreement that market mechanisms allowing for the international transfer of mitigation units may be used, as well as for a work programme to develop guidelines for consistent accounting and standards for ensuring environmental credibility. However, some differences persist on the concrete functioning of market mechanisms, the extent of implementation details, and on several related definitions.

Discussion on a long-term emissions cutting goal reportedly covered aspects such as its placement within the deal, whether it would call for peak or zero net emissions, and timing. G7 leaders in June called for a decarbonisation of the global economy over the course of the century, while other nations would see this occur sooner, and still others resist the concept altogether. (See BioRes, [11 June 2015](#))

Delegates also discussed arrangements for reviewing countries' "intended nationally determined contributions" (INDCs), in other words, the individual pledges parties have decided will form the building blocks of the post-2020 climate regime. While many parties agreed that this should be a key element for consideration in the final deal, some nations warned against using a "naming and shaming" approach.

In the technology talks, a proposal by the African Group of negotiators for a framework for enhanced action on technology development and transfer gained some traction, although disagreement surfaced over its placement in the agreement or decision. Parties also discussed a possible global goal for technology but did not move to convergence or draft text. Related discussion on whether the Paris deal should address intellectual property rights also proved inconclusive.

In the finance discussions, parties did appear to move towards consensus on continuing to use the institutional arrangements under the current financial mechanism for the new deal.

In connection with adaptation, developed and developing nations put forward different proposals for dealing with loss and damage linked to climate change-related disasters. The G77 and China are pushing for richer nations historically responsible for a large portion of climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions to support a climate change displacement coordination facility.

Ministerial engagement

Shortly after the Bonn talks, ministers and senior officials from 57 countries gathered in Paris from 6-7 September for an informal consultation led by France focused on climate finance, adaptation, and loss and damage. While not part of the official negotiations, several players have said that such political engagement is important to help navigate tougher areas.

The meeting saw ministers from developed countries that have pledged to scale up US\$100 billion a year in climate funds by 2020 release a [joint statement](#) on Monday

outlining a common methodological framework to track progress towards this goal and present a definition of climate finance to include both public and private-leveraged funds. On Tuesday, a French [press release](#) indicated that the Organisation for Co-operation and Development (OECD) has been asked to prepare a report on climate finance figures and methodologies in order to help bring further clarity to the talks.

Some sources expect ministers to agree to a “finance package” to feed into the Paris deal on the margins of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank annual meetings scheduled to be held in Lima, Peru on 9-11 October. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, meanwhile, is due to host a meeting of heads of state on the sidelines of a high-level summit to adopt a post-2015 development agenda in New York from 25-27 September. A set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which form part of the new framework, call for urgent action on climate change and its impacts.

National contributions

Fifty-eight countries covering around 63 percent of territorial emissions, with the EU counting as one, have submitted INDCs so far. The UNFCCC secretariat is due to release at the beginning of November a synthesis report of INDCs submitted by 1 October, including estimates for aggregate mitigation impacts in 2025 and 2030.

Many of the current INDCs hint at long-term economic and energy shifts that would prompt changes in production and consumption patterns. Divisions over the pace of these shifts and perceived costs have, however, at times stymied ambitious positions in some countries.

ICTSD reporting; “Summary of the Bonn Climate Change Conference: 31 August-4 September 2015,” IISD REPORTING, 6 September 2015; “UN climate talks inch forward as countries agree path to Paris,” RTCC, 4 September 2015.

DISPUTES

EU Parliamentarians Vote to Revise Seal Import Ban as WTO Deadline Draws Near

EU lawmakers voted on Tuesday to revise the 28-nation bloc's ban on the sale of products derived from seals in an effort to bring the legislation in compliance with global trade rules ahead of an impending deadline.

A year ago, the WTO's Appellate Body confirmed that the EU's seal import ban, while justified on public morality grounds relating to animal welfare concerns, was in violation of global trade rules due to the way it was applied. Specifically, WTO judges found that the policy resulted in "arbitrary and unjustifiable discrimination" against Canada and Norway due to certain exceptions included in the ban. (See Bridges Weekly, [28 May 2014](#))

The EU Seal Regime bans the sale of seal products in all EU member states, subject to the above-mentioned exceptions. The ban specifically targets commercial sealing operations, such as those in Canada and Norway, which launched the WTO case in 2009 ([DS400](#), [DS401](#)).

Those three exceptions specifically included the sale of products derived from hunts carried out by indigenous peoples (IC), products from hunts that were conducted for the sustainable management of marine resources (MRM), and products brought in by tourists.

It was these first two exceptions that WTO judges particularly took issue with in their rulings. The EU, they explained, failed to show how the different treatment of seal products derived from IC hunts – versus those derived from "commercial" hunts – can be reconciled with the 28-nation bloc's objective of addressing public moral concerns regarding seal welfare.

The same animal welfare conditions prevail in all countries where seals are hunted, the Appellate Body noted, and therefore "the same animal welfare concerns as those arising from seal hunting in general also exist in IC hunts."

WTO judges also found the "subsistence" and "partial use" criteria of the IC exception to be ambiguous, and may result in seal products derived from what should, in fact, be properly characterised as "commercial" hunts gaining entry into the EU market.

Moreover, the Appellate Body was not persuaded that the EU has made "comparable efforts" to facilitate the access of the Canadian Inuit to the IC exception as it did with respect to the Greenlandic Inuit.

Following the result, the EU, Canada, and Norway [agreed last September](#) that a "reasonable period of time" for Brussels to bring the WTO-inconsistent parts of the ban into compliance would be 16 months from the adoption of the reports – in other words, 18 October of this year.

Under the terms approved by parliamentarians on Tuesday, products derived from seal hunts conducted by Inuits will still be allowed on the EU market, but only when they come from traditional, subsistence hunts that are conducted with due regard to animal welfare. Meanwhile, another exception that had been deemed illegal by the global trade arbiter – that involving seals culled for marine resource management purposes – would be removed entirely.

The European Commission will also need to inform the public and customs officials about the changes and the IC exception, with the EU executive being tasked to issue a report in 2019 on the new rules' implementation with a specific focus on how it is affecting Inuits.

The [vote passed](#) with 631 lawmakers in favour and 31 against, with 33 abstentions. Along with the European Parliament's signoff, the changes must also be approved at the European Council level.

News of the vote drew a warm welcome from animal welfare groups such as the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), with EU Regional Director Sonja Van Tichelin [calling it](#) "a fantastic decision."

"It ensures WTO compliance for the EU trade ban in commercial seal products, which has already helped to save more than two million seals from a cruel death by the commercial seal hunt," Van Tichelin said. According to IFAW, 35 countries – including the EU's 28 member states, as well as the US and Russia – now ban trade in seal products.

Another key issue in the WTO case had been whether the EU had made "comparable efforts" to ensure that Canadian Inuits have the same opportunity to use the IC exception as Greenlandic Inuits. While Greenland is not part of the EU, it is an autonomous territory of Denmark, which is one of the bloc's 28 member states.

During a [status report](#) provided at a 31 August meeting of the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body, the EU confirmed that it has been working with Canada to establish an "attestation mechanism" that would facilitate Canadian Inuits' use of the IC exception. According to their statement, the European Commission approved on 30 July a decision that will now recognise the Government of Nunavut – a Canadian territory – as an "attestation body" under the EU Seal Regime.

ECJ ruling upholds ban's legality

In related news, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) – which is the bloc's highest court – [ruled last week](#) that the EU regulation on trade in seal products is indeed legally valid under European law, responding to an appeal by an association representing the interests of Canadian Inuits on the subject.

While both involving the EU seal import ban, the ECJ case addresses very different legal questions from the WTO dispute, and was brought by various associations rather than states.

The appeal filed at the ECJ by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and several other groups – including seal product manufacturers and traders – had argued that the ban lacked a basis in EU law. The appeal had been filed in response to a 2013 ruling by the EU's General Court – a lower court – which had dismissed the associations' complaints.

Specifically, the appellants claimed that the "basic regulation" that put the EU-wide Seal Regime in place was illegal due to the allegedly "wrong choice of Article 95 EC as the legal basis for adoption of the basic regulation, of breach of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, and of breach of fundamental rights," according to a summary of their positions provided in [the ECJ ruling](#).

Article 95 EC is meant to resolve instances where rules determined by EU member states at the national level differ, in turn affecting the bloc's internal market. Part of the move to adopt the EU-wide ban in 2009 was in response to various individual member states enacting their own individual bans on trade in these goods, with others in the process of doing so.

The differences in these provisions were deemed to be adversely affecting the functioning of the bloc's internal market, which the European Court of Justice confirmed last week was justification for resorting to Article 95 EC in order to harmonise the internal rules.

Furthermore, the appellants had argued that the European Commission had "misused its powers" when adopting the basic regulation governing EU seal trade, an argument that was also struck down by the court.

Other findings from the court included the statement that Article 19 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, encouraging UN member states to obtain prior consent of such peoples before taking on any measures that could impact them, lacks binding legal force in itself – therefore meaning that the "basic regulation" does not need to comply with it. Regarding the appellants' arguments on the protection of property rights, the ECJ also said that the claimants "have pleaded only the mere possibility of being able to market seal products in the EU, and have not specified the rights which the basic regulation is said to compromise."

ICTSD reporting.

CARBON MARKETS

China Signals Plans to Expand Carbon Market Scope

China is reportedly considering bringing emissions generated by automakers and paper manufacturers into a national carbon trading scheme due to be launched in late 2016 or early 2017.

Officials in Beijing last February already tentatively identified six sectors as main candidates for carbon emissions cuts including power generation, metal and nonferrous-related metal production, building materials, chemicals, and aviation. (See BioRes, [16 February 2015](#))

Some commentators have hailed this possible expansion of sectoral scope in the planned national scheme as an indication of China's recent push towards using market-based mechanisms as a way to meet planned mitigation goals. The nation is also considering deploying other tools such as creating a legal framework to cap coal consumption.

China has said it will peak carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 or sooner, lower emissions per unit of GDP by 60 to 65 percent from 2005 levels by the same year, as well as increase the share of non-fossil fuels in the energy mix from 15 percent in 2020 to 20 percent. Details on the country's climate ambition were unveiled in a contribution submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as part of a global effort to curb climate-warming emissions. (See BioRes, [2 July 2015](#))

Timeframes

The Asian giant became the first developing country to utilise a cap and trade programme when it initiated a process to build seven regional pilot schemes four years ago. Over the next few months officials will continue working on rules aimed at transitioning to a national market.

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), China's top policy body, has been charged with the task. According to recent reports, the detailed rules of the national carbon market should be decided by the end of this year, with trading to start no later than early 2017.

"There is a lot of work to be done if we are to get the market running by 2016, and the launch date depends on the progress we make," said Wang Shu, a climate change official with the NDRC, when asked about when the national scheme will be in place.

Many government representatives and international observers are hoping for a fully functioning Chinese national market by 2019, according to sources, which might also then expand to cover more companies and polluting industries. A potential carbon tax might also be considered for implementation at the end of the decade, though no further specifics have been revealed to date.

Some studies [suggest](#) that carbon permits in the national scheme when launched might initially trade around US\$6.12 equivalent and rise to US\$8.7 equivalent in 2020.

From regional to national

Once launched, China's national scheme would be the world's largest, surpassing the EU's carbon market, regulating some three to four billion tonnes of carbon dioxide a year by the end of the decade. Some analysts estimate that China's scheme would create a domestic carbon trade worth up to 400 billion yuan (US\$65 billion).

As of last March, approximately 17 million allowances worth US\$100 million had been traded in all seven pilot schemes combined, according to a World Bank [report](#).

There are still many hurdles to overcome before the creation of a national market, several experts have cautioned, given that the seven pilot schemes currently in operation act independently of one another. This has resulted in differences with regard to, among others, the number of sectors included, the methods for allowance allocation, the means for monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV), and compliance.

For example, the pilot scheme in the Guangdong region covers four sectors, compared to 26 sectors and 197 buildings covered in Shenzhen. In order to foster credible climate action, China must ensure that each unit of emissions reductions is reliable and comparable among sectors and across regions, among other challenges.

Another area of concern among several observers is the weak demand for permits resulting from China's recent economic slowdown driven by slackening demand, overcapacity, and falling investment. A surplus of emissions permits has hit the regional markets leading many experts to speculate if, and how, these extra allowances would be incorporated into the national scheme.

If banned from the national market these millions of surplus allowances may become worthless, however, if allowed high-carbon emitters within pilot regions would be given a competitive advantage over emitters in regions without pilot markets.

The national government has also announced that new centralised rules for the eligibility of offset credits would be launched at the same time as the national carbon market, given that the pilot markets currently have different rules regarding the types of climate action eligible for a Chinese Certified Emissions Reductions (CCERs), as these are formally dubbed.

The pilot markets are set to continue trading until mid-2016; however, government officials have said that if the national market is delayed until early 2017 then the pilot markets would be allowed to continue for another year.

International carbon pricing

The deployment and functioning of market mechanisms to cut emissions has been a point of contention in the UNFCCC talks geared towards developing a post-2020 climate architecture. At a recent meeting in Bonn, Germany several countries supported explicitly mentioning the possibility of using market mechanisms that allow for the transfer of mitigation units internationally, but remain divided on how this would work in practice. (See related story, this edition)

Some countries argue that international rules are needed in the event that domestic markets might start to trade internationally in order to avoid double counting and ensure environmental integrity.

Beyond the formal UN process, data from the World Bank highlights the increasing prevalence of unilateral carbon pricing across developed and developing countries alike. As of 2014, a total of 40 national and 20 subnational jurisdictions, representing over a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions, had put in place or were scheduled to put in

place either an emissions trading scheme or carbon tax. The total value of carbon pricing mechanisms is now estimated to be just under US\$50 billion.

Experts suggest that linking various domestic carbon trading schemes could ease competitiveness concerns for energy-intensive domestic industries, since this would create a convergence of carbon price across multiple countries and allow for the most cost-effective mitigation cuts.

Linking enables firms covered by a carbon market in one system to use allowances from another system to meet domestic compliance obligations. Some experts also argue that linking creates a larger allowance market that increases competition while lowering the risk of market manipulation.

Some countries openly support the possibility of linking emissions schemes. Switzerland, for example, is in talks to link its market to the EU's Emissions Trading System from next year or 2017. The US' newest climate policy tool to reduce emissions from power plants is also designed for the future possibility of linking domestic emissions trading schemes with international sources. (See BioRes, [14 August 2015](#))

China, however, has hinted that its national scheme is just a domestic tool to peak its emissions by 2030 and is not looking to link its market.

Other experts have [made](#) the case for a club of carbon markets (CCM) that could see the linking of schemes outside, but in parallel to, the UNFCCC process to enable concrete and faster climate action. Members in a CCM would only accept emission credits from, or allow the transfer of credits to, other club members. They would therefore benefit from exclusive market access.

ICTSD reporting; "China to include automakers, paper mills in national carbon market," ECONOMIC TIMES, 28 August 2015; "China's national CO2 market seen starting late 2016, early 2017," REUTERS, 17 June 2015; "China to streamline offset market with central eligibility rules," CARBON PULSE, 17 August 2015.

DISPUTES

Disputes Roundup: WTO Panels Rule on Compliance in US-China Steel, Brussels-Beijing Fasteners Cases

The month of August proved to be a busy one for the global trade arbiter, with the WTO issuing panel reports on compliance in two trade remedy disputes – the first between China and the US involving steel, the second between the EU and China involving metal fasteners.

Other key items on the past month's agenda include the review of requests for dispute panels during a 31 August meeting of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB), as well as questions from South Korea and other WTO members over delays in dispute settlement proceedings.

Panel finds China non-compliant in steel trade remedies case

Late last month, the DSB adopted the report of a compliance panel which found that China failed to address earlier adverse rulings by the global trade arbiter concerning certain Chinese trade remedies against imports of US-made "grain oriented flat-rolled electrical steel," which is primarily used by the power generation industry in transformers and other large electric machines. ([DS414](#))

The duties were imposed in April 2010 following anti-dumping and countervailing duty investigations by China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) on the imported steel. MOFCOM found that China's domestic industry sustained material injury and that there was a causal link between the injury and the dumped steel imports from Russia as well as the dumped and subsidised imports from the US.

The subsidy that China determined to confer a benefit involved the "Buy America" provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, as well as US state government procurement laws. The Buy American provision mandates that support from the stimulus package may only be given to projects that use US inputs, unless foreign products are substantially cheaper.

The US challenged the duties and investigations at the WTO in September 2010, arguing that those trade remedies violated certain provisions of the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM Agreement) and the Anti-dumping Agreement. Washington cited primarily procedural concerns regarding how Beijing conducted the investigations and its analysis, rather than substantive issues such as whether "Buy American" really subsidises local manufacturers.

Both a dispute panel as well as the WTO's Appellate Body found largely in favour of the US, recommending in 2012 that China bring these measures into compliance with global trade rules. Beijing later conducted a series of re-investigations, after which it chose to keep in place the same level of anti-dumping duties for two major US steel exporters – AK Steel and ATI – while significantly lowering duties for all others. Countervailing duties have also been reduced for all exporters involved.

Chinese officials have said that the result has brought Beijing in line with its WTO obligations; however, the US argued that there are still procedural issues with how these duties were calculated and formally challenged China on its compliance.

A panel then circulated its report on 31 July of this year, finding that China failed to comply with the earlier recommendations and rulings of the dispute panel and the Appellate Body. The report said that China's conclusion that the imports in question caused a suppressive and depressive effect on the prices of the domestic like products had no objective basis.

Taking into account MOFCOM's defective price effects analysis; the failure in explaining how domestic industry's inability to achieve economies of scale is linked to the increased imports; as well as the investigative agency's failure to properly consider the effects of other causes of injury, the panel found Beijing erred in finding that the subject imports caused material injury to the domestic industry.

The panel also agreed with the US that MOFCOM failed to even attempt to provide a non-confidential disclosure of essential facts regarding domestic prices as part of its overall price effect determination. However, the panel rejected other elements of US' claim relating to that same determination.

At the DSB meeting on 31 August, the US welcomed the compliance panel's findings. The US also noted that China has announced the termination of the anti-dumping and countervailing duties on this type of steel, which China confirmed at the meeting.

Panel grants victory to China over EU in steel fastener compliance case

Also last month, a WTO panel said that the EU must do more to bring its anti-dumping measures on Chinese iron and steel fasteners – such as screws, nuts, and bolts – in line with global trade rules.

The case dates back to 2009, when China filed a dispute claiming that the EU's Basic Anti-Dumping Regulation and its fasteners anti-dumping investigation violated global trade rules. The regulation provides that in case of imports from non-market economy countries, the duty shall be specified for the supplying country concerned rather than for each supplier. It also states that an individual duty will only be specified for exporters that demonstrate that they fulfil certain criteria.

China also challenged substantive and procedural aspects of the EU's antidumping measures. In late 2010, a dispute panel supported the bulk of Beijing's claims, with the Appellate Body later confirming most of the panel's findings in July 2011.

Following the result, the EU adopted a new regulation and launched a review investigation, which ultimately led Brussels to continue definitive duties on certain imported fasteners at revised rates. China took issue with how the review investigation was conducted, issuing a formal WTO challenge on the EU's compliance.

The compliance panel backed China on its claims that the European Commission broke trade rules regarding the treatment of certain information as confidential, as well as failed to fulfil procedural requirements set forth in the AD Agreement on providing interested parties such as those Chinese producers, at a minimum, information regarding the product groups that will be used as a basis for the price comparisons.

The panel also found that the Commission failed to take into account exports of all product types falling within the definition of like product – a violation of the AD Agreement's requirement for a fair comparison between export price and normal value in the determination of dumping.

In addition, the panel said that the Commission's injury determination, based on the data obtained from an incorrectly-defined domestic industry, violated the AD Agreement.

MOFCOM officials [welcomed](#) the panel decision, adding that the EU should cancel the anti-dumping measures as soon as possible, while acknowledging Brussels' right to appeal the result. The EU submitted on Wednesday a notice of appeal in the case, the WTO confirmed in a [press release](#).

Korea blocks panel request from Japan in SPS dispute

Also at the 31 August DSB [meeting](#), South Korea blocked a first request from Japan for the establishment of a panel to hear Tokyo's complaint over sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures – such as import bans and additional testing and certification requirements for some Japanese food products – introduced by Seoul following the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident in 2011 ([DS495](#)).

The panel [request](#) came after earlier consultations between the parties failed to reach a resolution. (See Bridges Weekly [28 May 2015](#))

In its panel request, Japan claims that Korea has breached its transparency and non-discrimination obligations under several provisions of the SPS Agreement, and that the Korean policy nullifies or impairs benefits that should accrue to Japan. On the transparency side, these include requirements that Seoul publish promptly, explain, and respond to questions regarding the SPS measures.

Japan also claims that the alleged import bans and additional testing and certification requirements violate SPS rules, arguing that these arbitrarily and unjustifiably discriminate between members where identical or similar conditions prevail, or constitute a disguised restriction on international trade. Tokyo also claims that these policies are more trade restrictive than needed to achieve the appropriate level of protection, among other concerns.

While this panel request was blocked by Seoul, WTO rules allow Japan to make a second request later on, in which case a panel would be established automatically.

Panel established in EU-Indonesia biodiesel case

Separately, a dispute panel has now been established to hear Indonesia's complaint ([DS480](#)) against the EU's anti-dumping duties on biodiesel imports, following a second request from Jakarta. A previous request had been blocked by Brussels in July. (See Bridges Weekly, [23 July 2015](#))

These same duties are already the subject of a separate dispute ([DS473](#)) filed by Argentina against the 28-nation bloc. That case is under review by a panel, with results currently due by year's end.

Indonesia, in its complaint, has specifically cited concerns over the EU's "cost adjustment methodology" in the anti-dumping investigation, among other allegations.

Argentina and Indonesia – the world's top biodiesel suppliers – together make up 90 percent of the EU's biodiesel imports, as well as over 20 percent of the 28-nation bloc's market share. The duties at issue were confirmed by Brussels two years ago.

Korea questions dispute settlement delays

Various WTO members at the 31 August DSB meeting also raised concerns over the delays in the dispute settlement process, sources say. The item was placed on the meeting agenda by South Korea, which referred specifically to the news that a WTO panel set up in

July to hear its dispute with the US on anti-dumping measures on certain oil country tubular goods (OCTG) will not begin its work until the end of 2016, at the earliest.

While acknowledging the challenges and constraints that the WTO secretariat faces with its hefty caseload, South Korea said that the delay is "simply unreasonable," sources familiar with the meeting confirmed. South Korea also cited the potential economic ramifications of this delay for the affected industry, given that these allegedly illegal trade measures would remain in place for longer.

South Korea reportedly warned that the WTO's dispute settlement function risks "becoming toothless" unless these delays are addressed.

Seoul's statement drew support and similar questions from a raft of WTO members, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Chinese Taipei, the EU, Guatemala, India, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, and Russia.

The US, which is the respondent in the dispute in question, also supported South Korea in these concerns, while disagreeing with Seoul's specific claims over the harm its companies are facing from Washington's duties.

"That said, for some time the dispute settlement system has been facing significant delays, first at the appellate stage, and now at the panel stage," the US [said](#) in its statement.

Various members asked for additional case-specific information from the secretariat regarding the reason and nature of the delays, noting the potential damage to the dispute settlement system's credibility should these delays persist or worsen.

Members also praised the work of the secretariat and panellists to date, while noting that the solution – including the possibility of increasing the secretariat's resources – needs to come from the WTO membership itself through further discussions.

ICTSD reporting.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming Soon

31 August-16 October, various locations. ANNUAL MEETINGS OF WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEES. The World Health Organization's (WHO) Regional Committees are scheduled to hold a series of meetings during the second half of this year in order to establish policy and approve region-specific budgets and programmes of work. These include meetings of the WHO African Region, South-East Asia Region, the European Region, the Region of the Americas, the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and the Western Pacific Region. For more details, visit the WHO [website](#).

9 September, Washington, US. INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ARCHITECTURE FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY. This event, hosted jointly by the Brookings Institution and the Annenberg-Dreier Commission at Sunnylands, will involve a panel discussion on the evolving nature of the various major international trade negotiations underway. The panellists will also examine the opportunities and challenges these new trade deals pose for addressing newer trade issues, as well as the implications for the WTO's future. To learn more, visit the Brookings [website](#).

10 September, London, UK. ASSESSING THE LEGACY OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS. Hosted by Chatham House, this meeting will feature an expert panel who will reflect on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as they approach their expiry date. The speakers will review both whether the MDGs have been met and what challenges remain unresolved, particularly ahead of the adoption of a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a UN summit that same month. To learn more, visit the event [website](#).

10 September, London, UK. EUROPE AND CHINA: FINANCIAL CONNECTIONS THROUGH THE RMB MARKETS. This Chatham House preparatory workshop will serve as the second in a series of meetings regarding the internationalisation of the renminbi and the possible financial results. The discussions will include the latest developments in the renminbi offshore market, while reviewing how ready the financial infrastructure is in current offshore centres and how these can be improved, given the goal of growing the renminbi as an international currency. More details about this invitation-only event are available [here](#).

10-12 September, Paris, France. EUROPEAN TRADE STUDY GROUP (ETSG) ANNUAL CONFERENCE. This annual event is being hosted by the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, with participation open to any contribution relating to international trade theory and policy. The European Trade Study Group is set up as a forum for academic research in this field among various universities and research centres. Additional information about the conference can be found at the following [website](#).

14-25 September, Geneva, Switzerland. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD, SIXTY-SECOND SESSION. This meeting of the UN Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) Trade and Development Board will review the activities of the international agency, addressing topics ranging from the role of women as catalyst for trade and development to the evolution of the international trading system, considering from a development perspective. More information, including a meeting agenda, can be found at the UNCTAD [website](#).

15 September, Washington, US and online. GREENING COMMODITY AGRICULTURE: AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA. This book launch and panel discussion will be held in Washington by the World Bank and EcoAgriculture Partners, while also being webcast online live. The book being launched, "Steps Toward Green," is a collaborative study on agricultural commodity landscapes and environmental policy in East and Southeast Asia. The panellists will include experts in environmental sustainability and agricultural development, who will examine various policy approaches toward promoting environmental stewardship in the region. Details can be found [here](#).

16 September, Brussels, Belgium. BOOSTING INVESTMENT IN EUROPE'S ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURES. This event, hosted by Premier Cercle™, aims to foster discussion on the current EU debate on electricity infrastructures, as well as how to ensure the 28-nation bloc's competitive and sustainable energy goals, including through addressing barriers to investment and energy infrastructure. To learn more about the conference, visit the organiser's [website](#).

18 September, Geneva, Switzerland and online. COTTON TRADE: POLICIES, RULES, AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES. Organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), this meeting will address the impact of policies enacted by key countries on the production, consumption, and trade in cotton. The event is designed for policymakers, trade negotiators, and other actors in this field, and comes shortly ahead of the WTO's Tenth Ministerial Conference this December in Nairobi, Kenya. The event will be webcast live and panellists will be answering questions both from the audience and via Twitter, using the hashtag #ICTSDAG. More information can be found at the event [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.

15 + 17 September: Trade Policy Review Body – Guyana

16 September: Committee on Government Procurement

17-18: Symposium on Government Procurement

Other Upcoming Events

17-18 September, Geneva, Switzerland. REVISED WTO AGREEMENT ON GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT (GPA): AN EMERGING PILLAR OF 21ST CENTURY TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT. This event, hosted by the World Trade Organization and featuring Director-General Roberto Azevêdo as the keynote speaker, will focus on the revised Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) that entered into force in 2014. The event is aimed at enhancing technical cooperation and is being organised for participants from GPA observers and parties, WTO members and observers, and other interested policymakers and analysts. To learn more, visit the event [website](#).

21 September, London, UK. ANTICIPATING AND MITIGATING MAJOR DISRUPTIVE RISKS TO GLOBAL FOOD TRADE. This Chatham House event is part of a larger research project that aims to map key "choke points" in global food trade and identify related vulnerabilities in supply chains and trade routes. This meeting will focus specifically on current and potential trends and weaknesses in global food trade, as well as how to

anticipate and account for potential disruptions. More information about the invitation-only event is available at the Chatham House [website](#).

23-24 September, New York, US. THIRD ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. Held at Columbia University in New York City, this year's conference will be held under the theme "Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Getting Started." The goal of the event, which is being held just ahead of the UN summit where these SDGs will be adopted as part of a larger post-2015 development agenda, is to identify and exchange possible solutions that can support these new goals. The event is expected to attract world leaders, students, and professionals. More information about the event, including a list of confirmed speakers and details on registration, can be found [here](#).

30 September – 2 October, Geneva, Switzerland. WTO PUBLIC FORUM: TRADE WORKS. This year's WTO Public Forum comes as the global trade body celebrates its 20th anniversary. The theme of "Trade Works" will focus on the contribution that global trade cooperation over the past two decades has made to the world economy. An agenda for the forum is now available online. More information on the event is available at the WTO [website](#).

1-2 October, Geneva, Switzerland. TRADE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FORUM 2015: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS. This meeting is being hosted by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and comes one year after the launch of the Trade for Sustainable Development principles – sustainability, transparency, harmonisation, UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Forum will bring together key partners and practitioners in this field to discuss the progress to date and upcoming challenges. To learn more or to register, visit the ITC [website](#).

14-15 December, Paris, France. OECD GREEN GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FORUM. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is hosting this year's forum, with the theme of "Enabling the Next Industrial Revolution: The role of systems thinking and innovation policy in promoting green growth." Topics for discussion include, among others, how to facilitate and encourage the "next industrial innovation," building upon the work conducted by the organisation's various committees. More information is available on the OECD [website](#).

14-17 December, Nairobi, Kenya. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM. This biennial event, organised jointly by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and the government of Kenya, will be held in parallel with the WTO's Tenth Ministerial Conference. The four-day event will include various high-level plenaries, press events, and private roundtables, among other features. Further details can be found on the official event [website](#).

15-18 December, Nairobi, Kenya. WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION – TENTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE. The World Trade Organization will be holding its Tenth Ministerial Conference (MC10) at year's end, with Kenya serving as this year's host. These ministerial gatherings are the highest-level meeting of the global trade body, with members able to take decisions on any matters relating to any of the multilateral trade agreements. These meetings are usually held biennially. More information will be made available through both the WTO [website](#), as well as the Kenyan government's dedicated MC10 [website](#).

Resources

THE 2014 US FARM BILL AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE WORLD MARKET FOR COTTON. By Christian Lau, Simon Schropp, and Daniel A. Sumner for the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) (September 2015). This new paper analyses the 2014 US Farm Bill, with the authors finding that US cotton producers are set to receive significant subsidies which will have trade-distorting effects regardless of future cotton prices. Furthermore, they say, US subsidy programmes are likely to suppress artificially the world cotton price by almost seven percent at a futures market cotton price of US\$ 0.70/lb, leading to approximately US\$ 3.3 billion of loss for cotton-producing countries around the world, most of which are developing countries. The paper can be found [here](#). An information note summarising the findings can be found [here](#).

REFLECTIONS ON THE GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT. Published by UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs' Division for Sustainable Development (UNDESA/DSD) (24 August 2015). This new video features reflections from UN member state representatives, scientists, and UN officials on the latest Global Sustainable Development Report, an intergovernmentally-mandated report released in June. The report focused on the science policy interface for sustainable development, finding that the key challenges in implementing the planned post-2015 development agenda will require scientific understanding of key issues, reliable data in the poorest countries, and effective means to convey scientific findings to policymakers. To learn more, or to watch the video, click [here](#).

DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION REPORT 2015: MAKING PARTNERSHIPS EFFECTIVE COALITIONS FOR ACTION. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (September 2015). This new report examines the potential that networks and partnerships have in creating incentives for responsible action, as well as innovative ways to coordinate stakeholder activity. The report features both an overview of existing partnerships as well as a series of recommendations. The document can be found online [here](#).

AID FOR TRADE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: THINKING FORWARD ABOUT TRADE COSTS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY. Published by the Asian Development Bank (ADB, the World Trade Organization, and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). 31 July 2015. This new report examines how Aid for Trade flows have affected trade costs, particularly given the new opportunities that e-commerce has afforded to women-led and small and medium-sized enterprises in the Asia-Pacific region with regards to trade. The paper also considers possible next steps in order to continue tackling the issue of trade costs. The publication is available [here](#).

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WORLD FURTHER WITH ICTSD'S BRIDGES NETWORK

BIORES

Analysis and news on trade and environment for a global audience
<http://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/biores>
English language

BRIDGES AFRICA

Trade and sustainable development news and analysis on Africa
<http://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/bridges-africa>
English language

PUENTES

Latin America-focussed analysis and news on trade and sustainable development
<http://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/puentes>
Spanish language

МОСТЫ

CIS-focussed analysis and news on trade and sustainable development
<http://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/МОСТЫ>
Russian language

PONTES

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

桥

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

PASSERELLES

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