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EUROPEAN UNION

European Commission Proposes Future Trade, Investment Strategy

The European Commission debuted its highly-anticipated proposal for a future trade and investment strategy on Wednesday, outlining a series of steps aimed at building or deepening the 28-nation bloc's web of trade relationships, as well as plans to address the ongoing public debate over trade.

"We've listened to the debate," said EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström in a press statement, adding that the document tries to strike a balance between the need for jobs, growth, and investment and concerns over ensuring core principles, such as human rights and sustainable development, are upheld.

"Trade policy must become more effective, more transparent, and more in tune with our values. In short, it must become more responsible. That's what we're doing today," the EU trade chief said.

The news comes after months of consultations with EU member states, parliamentarians, and various trade stakeholders on the subject.

The 40-page document, dubbed "Trade for All," presents trade as an essential driver of the European economy, one that was key in limiting the ramifications of the global economic recession. Looking to the future, the EU executive argues that trade still has a key role to play in shoring up any recovery in the long-term.

"Approximately 90 percent of global economic growth in the next 10 to 15 years is expected to be generated outside Europe. Economic recovery will need to be consolidated through stronger links with the new centres of global growth," the report says.

Going forward, the bloc's trade and investment policy must be in line with a specific set of "values," the Commission said. This includes greater focus on sustainable development measures, as well as those geared towards ensuring the protection of human rights and fair trade; clarifying the bloc's commitment to safeguarding regulatory protection and reforming investment policy; and negotiating anti-corruption rules in upcoming trade deals.

TTIP, CETA

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) currently being negotiated with the US has captivated public attention in the two years since the talks began, amid persistent questions from some stakeholders over what the talks could mean for domestic policy priorities in other areas.

The debate has been particularly pronounced on the EU side of the Atlantic. Participants in an anti-TTIP protest held in Berlin just days ago numbered in the hundreds of thousands, with demonstrators citing concerns over consumer and worker rights, among others.

In light of the controversy, the Commission has taken steps over the last several months to increase the transparency surrounding the deal, publishing all EU negotiating proposals online as well as position papers, the EU executive's mandate, and factsheets. (See Bridges Weekly, [16 October 2014](#))

The "Trade for All" report proposes that the transparency provisions that have been applied to TTIP be extended to all other EU trade talks. Furthermore, the Commission would like to publish the text of trade deals as soon as these are completed, given the delay seen otherwise in the legal review process, and ask that the Council publish its negotiating directives for new trade deals as soon as such directives are adopted.

Regarding the content of the TTIP talks themselves, which are undergoing their eleventh round in Miami, Florida, the report also indicated a series of areas where it would like to see results.

"TTIP is the most ambitious and strategic trade negotiation that the EU has ever undertaken," the Commission said.

On the EU side, such a package should therefore include an "ambitious and balanced" package in market access, along the lines of what Brussels reached in its negotiations with Ottawa; a new regulatory cooperation approach that also respects domestic levels of protection and autonomy; and updates in trade rules, including in sustainable development.

The Commission says it also plans to submit the EU trade agreement with Canada – known also as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) – to both the Council and the European Parliament "for approval as early as possible in 2016."

The EU-Canada trade negotiations, also controversial for both participants, were completed in August 2014, with the two sides having reached an agreement in principle in October of the year before. (See Bridges Weekly, [24 October 2013](#))

Investment

The report also features a section on "promoting a new approach to investment," another area that has drawn significant public scrutiny, particularly in the context of the both the EU-Canada and TTIP negotiations.

Just last month, the Commission released its draft proposal on a possible "investment court" and appellate mechanism, which the EU executive argues could replace the controversial investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism. (See Bridges Weekly, [17 September 2015](#))

The initial model, officials explained at the time, could be in the context of the TTIP talks. The 28-nation bloc would also aim to work with other "like-minded" countries on developing a permanent, international version of such a court system.

The "Trade for All" report builds on this idea, with the Commission suggesting to begin by including in bilateral deals "modern provisions" that make clearer the right of domestic governments to regulate.

"EU bilateral agreements will begin the transformation of the old investor-state dispute settlement into a public Investment Court System composed of a Tribunal of First Instance and an Appeal Tribunal, operating like traditional courts," the report says.

The EU executive also acknowledges that there is a need for reform, citing reports by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on the subject, and stressing the bloc's responsibility in taking the lead in this area, given its role as "founder and main actor" of the current international investment regime.

How this proposal for a TTIP-specific court – a formal version of which will still need to be submitted to the US in the negotiations – will be received by Washington is an open question. The issue of ISDS was also prominent in the US' negotiations with 11 other countries for a Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, which just concluded last week. (See Bridges Weekly, [8 October 2015](#))

Though the final text of the TPP is not yet public, trade watchers will be looking to see how the ISDS and other features of this comprehensive new deal are structured, and how these compare with those being negotiated in other major forums.

New trade negotiations on the horizon?

The EU's bilateral and regional trade agenda has grown in prominence in recent years, as the bloc conducts a range of negotiations with both individual countries and with regional groups.

The "Trade for All" report reviews all of the regions where the EU either has trade deals or aims to begin them, giving some indications of new agreements that the bloc aims to pursue or existing ones that it would like to update.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the Commission cites the current talks between the EU and China for a bilateral investment agreement as a "top priority" toward "deepening and rebalancing" the 28-nation bloc's relationship with Beijing. Those talks were launched just under two years ago. (See Bridges Weekly, [24 October 2013](#))

However, the report stopped short of recommending the negotiation of a trade deal between the two economic juggernauts.

"China has suggested further deepening the relationship through an FTA, but the EU will only be ready to engage in such a process once the right conditions are met," the report says, suggesting that these are tied to the implementation of domestic economic reforms in Beijing.

The EU is China's largest trading partner, while the Asian economy is second only to the US in terms of overall trade with the European Union.

The Commission also plans to request a mandate from the European Council to launch trade negotiations with both Australia and New Zealand, while "taking into account EU agricultural sensitivities."

Launching trade negotiations with two more members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is another idea being floated by the Commission, specifically with regards to the Philippines and Indonesia.

Notably, the document does not make specific reference to rebooting region-to-region talks between the EU and ASEAN, despite earlier indications this year that the two sides were considering doing so. (See Bridges Weekly, [7 May 2015](#))

Of the other members of ASEAN, the EU concluded a trade and investment deal with Singapore last year, which now must undergo ratification processes, and an agreement in principle [with Vietnam](#) in August. While talks have already been launched with Malaysia and Thailand, these have advanced little in recent years.

Trade deal updates, advances

Over the past several months, the Commission has already indicated an interest in updating some existing trade deals it has with certain countries, given changing economic realities and other new trade agreements that have emerged.

Back in June, leaders from both the EU and Mexico confirmed that they would be launching negotiations this year in order to revise their 15-year-old "Global Agreement," two years after leaders decided to explore the option of doing so. (See Bridges Weekly, [18 June 2015](#))

Another possible renegotiation could be the EU's trade deal with South Korea, which entered into force in 2011. Investment protection was not covered in the agreement with Seoul, given that at the time this did not fall under the exclusive competence of the EU. (See Bridges Weekly, [6 July 2011](#))

Both this and any implementation issues under the existing FTA could be addressed in an updated version of the trade pact, the report said.

The document also calls for reaching an "ambitious outcome" in trade talks with India, which were launched in 2007 and have since struggled to advance in recent years. The value of EU-India trade last year hit €72.5 billion, according to Commission [estimates](#).

Concluding trade talks with Japan is another "strategic priority" for the Commission, with the Asian archipelago being the EU's second largest trading partner in Asia after China. The thirteenth round of trade talks between Tokyo and Brussels is scheduled for this month.

WTO negotiations

Pursuing bilateral and regional trade deals, the report says, can be a way of "returning the WTO to the central of global trade negotiating activity," given the prolonged stalemate in the multilateral Doha Round trade talks.

With just two months to go before the global trade body's next ministerial conference in Nairobi, Kenya, the report says that the WTO "needs to turn the page on the [Doha Round]," arguing that the 2008 parameters from when the organisation was last close to reaching a deal "did not work."

"Developments since then make it even clearer that it will not be possible to conclude on that basis. WTO members should acknowledge the need for significant recalibration," the Commission document says, affirming the stance that the EU has taken in the global trade talks in Geneva over the past several months.

The document then goes on to outline the EU's post-Nairobi stance for the WTO, namely by three main principles. These involve ensuring that the organisation has a central role in global trade rulemaking and enforcement; taking a "more focused approach" in getting results; and for the EU to propose more plurilateral deals among groups of WTO members on specific topics.

"Implementing these three principles would be in the interests of all WTO members – and, in particular, the smallest and poorest," the report says, also noting that the organisation's membership must still address what were the reasons behind the current Doha Round stalemate.

The European Commission also calls for "rebalancing the relative contribution of developed countries and emerging economies to the system," while acknowledging that that this is a particularly thorny issue politically.

Next steps

While some of the items proposed in the "Trade for All" document can advance quickly, the Commission will have to prepare proposals on others that will then have to face EU decision-making processes.

Coming up on the agenda is a meeting between Malmström and the European Parliament's International Trade Committee today, followed by a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council on 27 November. Discussions are also planned with civil society, the Commission confirmed.

ICTSD reporting; "Berlin protest against TTIP trade deal draws thousands," BBC, 11 October 2015.

GLOBAL ECONOMY

Finance Officials Warn of Increased Risks to Global Economic Outlook

The prospects for the global economy are worse than previously anticipated, confirmed the world's finance chiefs and central bankers following the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Group in Lima, Peru, this past weekend.

The 9-11 October meetings came shortly following news from various international organisations – including the IMF and the WTO – that global trade and economic growth are now set to hit lower numbers than previously expected.

Last week, the Fund revised down its economic growth estimate for this year to 3.1 percent – a decrease from the 3.3 percent projected in July and from the 3.4 percent reached in 2014 – in its latest version of the [World Economic Outlook](#) (WEO).

Estimates for trade growth have also been reduced. Earlier this month, the WTO confirmed that its projections from 2015 and 2016 global trade growth – previously set at 3.3 percent and 4.0 percent, respectively – are now expected to hit only 2.8 percent this year and 3.9 percent during the following. (See Bridges Weekly, [1 October 2015](#))

"The global recovery continues, but growth remains modest and uneven overall," said the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) in its final [communiqué](#). The IMFC serves as the Fund's policy-setting body and represents the institution's 188 member countries.

Among the reasons for such modest growth, the IMFC said, were increases in both financial market volatility as well as uncertainty.

The results prove mixed for both advanced and developing economies. For example, advanced economies are receiving a modest boost from the fall in commodity prices and "accommodative monetary policies," yet inflation remains persistently below desired levels and productivity growth is still weak.

Potential risks

Looking forward, the IMFC's assessment was also bleak, with the group noting that risks have increased across many areas. For example, commodity exporters may suffer from continued drops in commodity prices, particularly given that many of such exporters are low-income countries.

The slowdown in China was another key issue for this year's Annual Meetings. The IMFC welcomed the "ongoing rebalancing toward more sustainable growth," while noting the potential for external challenges that could pose difficulties.

In his statement to the IMFC, Chinese Minister of Finance Jiwei Lou said that the Asian giant's economy is "still developing within the proper range," adding that Beijing is continuing in its work to implement reforms, open up its economy, and transform its growth model.

"It is predicted that China will continue to maintain around seven percent growth in the coming few years with solid economic foundation, sound growth conditions, and sufficient driving power at disposal," the finance minister said.

A year ago, a big source of risk to the global economy was attributed to the difficulties in stemming the Ebola crisis, particularly in West Africa. (See Bridges Weekly, [16 October 2014](#))

While the Ebola crisis has since abated, this year, both the IMFC and the joint IMF-World Bank Development Committee noted the risks now posed by the ongoing refugee and migrant crisis, which has dominated news headlines in recent months as the EU struggles to address the massive influx of people fleeing conflict situations in some Middle East and African countries.

"We call on the IMF to continue to work closely with the World Bank and other international institutions to support the countries affected by the humanitarian and refugee crises, especially in the Middle East and Africa, in order to mitigate the adverse effects on the economies of the regions and spillovers to the global economy," the IMFC said, with a similar call expressed by the Development Committee.

Given these various risks, the policy-setting body then outlined a series of goals for IMF member countries to push toward in response to these stark prospects.

"The key policy priorities are to lift short-term and potential growth, preserve fiscal sustainability, reduce unemployment, manage financial stability risks, and support trade," the IMFC said. Ensuring calibration and communication of policy decisions, as well as avoiding protectionism and competitive devaluations, were cited as important ways to reach such growth goals and prevent negative spillovers.

Lagarde: time for policy upgrade

In response to the uncertain global outlook, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde [has called](#) for a "policy upgrade" for both advanced and emerging economies.

For the former, she indicated that central banks in such countries "should give due consideration to the risks of spillovers," while for the latter, she referred to the need of addressing the accumulation of foreign debt and corporate leverage.

The IMF chief also referred to trade liberalisation as another avenue forward.

"I am hopeful that – building on the recent TPP agreement – we can restart the stalling engine of global trade," she told policymakers, referring to the recently concluded negotiations for the 12-country Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). (See Bridges Weekly, [8 October 2015](#))

Lagarde also urged countries to consider the ramifications of climate change as they design their macroeconomic frameworks, such as by eliminating energy subsidies in light of current low prices, as well as pushing for continued technological innovation, a resolution to the migrant situation, and facilitating the increased participation of women in the global economy.

IMF reform

The long-standing issue of the planned IMF quota and governance reforms also resurfaced during the Lima gathering.

The reforms were agreed five years ago, with a view to shifting more power to developing and emerging economies given their increased economic clout. A quota increase would

also provide the IMF with more funds to address crises, with the planned changes meant to double the quota to over US\$700 billion.

However, the implementation of such reforms has stalled, given that the US Congress has not yet ratified these terms – a result that the IMFC has repeatedly termed as “deeply” disappointing, given the “importance of these reforms for the credibility, legitimacy, and effectiveness of the IMF.”

Given this context, during their Spring Meetings this past April the IMFC directed the 24-member Executive Board – which is responsible for conducting the Fund's daily business and are appointed by individual countries or country groups – to come up with an interim solution. (See Bridges Weekly, [23 April 2015](#))

In Lima, the IMFC called on the organisation's Executive Board to “complete its work on an interim solution that will meaningfully converge quota shares as soon as and to the extent possible to the levels agreed under the 14th General Review of Quotas.”

This 14th General Review would then serve “as a basis for work on the 15th Review, including a new quota formula,” the IMFC said.

ICTSD reporting; “Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in graphics,” BBC NEWS, 7 October 2015; “World's Top Finance Officials Find Global Economy Sputtering,” THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12 October 2015; “The autumn meetings of the IMF and the World Bank conclude with a chill,” THE ECONOMIST, 12 October 2015.

CLIMATE FINANCE

Development Banks Boost Climate Finance Pledges Ahead of Key UN Meet

A host of the world's top development banks announced substantial increases in financing for developing countries to reduce climate-warming emissions and adapt to the consequences of climate change, as top finance and development officials met from 9-11 October in Lima, Peru.

The World Bank Group has pledged to boost its climate finance offering from 21 percent up to 28 percent by 2020, with the support of its 188 member countries. This translates into a projected increase of funding from US\$10.3 billion in 2020 to US\$16 billion, according to the Bank's [press release](#).

The Bank also promised to continue current levels of leveraging co-financing for climate projects with governments and the private sector. This would provide an additional US\$13 billion, bringing the total cumulative amount of climate-focused funding available from its multilateral coffers to US\$29 billion by 2020.

"We are committed to scaling up our support for developing countries to battle climate change," [said](#) the Bank's President Jim Yong Kim.

"As we move closer to Paris, countries have identified trillions of dollars of climate-related needs. The Bank, with the support of our members, will respond ambitiously to this great challenge," Kim continued, referring to a landmark UN climate meeting scheduled for the end of this year in the French capital.

In addition, the meet saw a doubling of finance commitments by other multilateral development banks (MDBs) and regional counterparts by 2020. For example, the African Development Bank (AfDB) indicated it would distribute US\$5 billion of low-carbon funds, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) said it would increase climate funding from 25 percent to 40 percent.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) also [pledged](#) to increase the proportion of its lending support for climate-related investments in developing countries from 25 to 35 percent. The news was delivered at the start of the Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF), where the reduced growth forecasts and generally gloomy economic outlook otherwise dominated the three-day meetings.

Critical finance goal

These pledges came as welcome news to many in the international community eagerly awaiting climate finance mobilisation commitments ahead of the Paris meeting, where countries aim to ink the world's first-ever universal emissions-cutting deal under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that will go into effect in 2020.

As negotiators continue to hammer out the details of the agreement, financing for its implementation, specifically for developing countries, remains a critical and contentious issue among parties. (See Bridges Weekly, [8 October 2015](#))

According to many experts, a successful deal in Paris hinges on a transparent and comprehensive proposal by developed countries to deliver on a 2009 promise to provide US\$100 billion annually in climate finance starting from the end of the decade.

Laurent Fabius, France's Foreign Minister and leader of the Paris talks, reacted positively to the announcements from the development banks. "This bodes well for meeting the goal of US\$100 billion," he said during a press briefing.

A number of climate action pledges were submitted to the UN at the beginning of October, and a majority of plans put forth by developing countries make specific reference to the use of these international resources.

[Analysts](#) at Carbon Brief, an organisation closely following the climate pledges, estimate that developing country parties have requested US\$26.8 billion per year from 2015 to 2030 in their commitments so far, but this number is expected to increase before December.

Elusive numbers

Identifying the precise figures for climate finance flows has proven tricky, given that this depends partly on whether these are concessional grants or loans, how to factor in funds provided by MDBs, and the question of "new and additional" funding on top of existing official development assistance (ODA).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in partnership with the Climate Policy Initiative, [released](#) a report on 9 October designed to benchmark progress towards the US\$100 billion goal. The OECD report was [requested](#) by the Peruvian and French governments, the current and incoming presidencies of the UNFCCC climate talks.

It estimates public and private climate finance from developed to developing countries was US\$62 billion in 2014, up from US\$52 billion in 2013, thus averaging US\$57 billion annually from 2013-2014. Out of the US\$57 billion, some 77 percent was allocated towards climate mitigation, 16 percent towards adaptation, and seven percent targeted both.

Public finance, both bilateral and multilateral, accounted for approximately 70 percent of the flows. Another 25 percent was from private finance, with the remainder made up by export credits, mainly for renewable energy.

According to further analysis, a large increase in funding from 2013 to 2014 was the result of increased efforts from multilateral development banks.

The estimates do not, however, reflect any pledges made to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), a finance institution established under the UN that is host to approximately US\$10.2 billion pledged largely by developed countries. The fund has signed its first contract for disbursement and observers hope other projects will be supported by the end of the year.

In the report, the OECD makes it clear that while these estimates minimise double counting and capture the "best available data" it was "not possible to provide a fully complete and comprehensive picture of mobilised climate finance for climate action in developing countries."

The report nevertheless concludes that further investigation and improvement are needed for climate finance transparency and accountability, common definitions and methodologies, and reporting approaches. The need to take into account public finance for capacity building and public policies are particularly noted.

Climate economics

Some international figures have cautioned that the Paris deal should not seek to repeat a new climate finance pledge equivalent to the US\$100 billion figure for future decades. Rachel Kyte, World Bank Group vice-president and special envoy for climate change has told journalists this kind of number was not helpful when climate change now affects many aspects of a country's development and economy.

IMF officials in Lima referred to climate change as a "macro-critical issue," with Managing Director Christine Lagarde telling meeting participants that all countries need to integrate climate implications into their macroeconomic frameworks.

"One thing is clear: such is the nature of the challenges we face – from economic spillovers to climate change – no country can go it alone, and cooperation is key," Lagarde [added](#). Reports from the meeting also indicate that the IMF chief called for a scale-up of carbon taxes to help tackle planetary warming and boost government income.

Experts estimate that global growth expectations will require some US\$90 trillion worth of investments in infrastructure related to agriculture, cities, and energy, among others, particularly for developing countries over the next 15 years, according to [reports](#) by the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate. The Commission has argued that these investments should be made climate-smart.

The figures and the expected consequences wrought by climate change suggests deeper structural shifts in global aid, investment, and institutions are needed, with many other experts also advocating for the use of carbon pricing and fossil fuel subsidy reform. (See BioRes, [29 September 2015](#))

A communiqué from the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), which is the IMF's policy-setting body, includes a suggestion that governments consider reforming inefficient energy subsidies and taxes, "as needed," in light of the fall in oil prices. A separate [communiqué](#) released by the joint IMF-World Bank Development Committee, while not referring to the subsidy reform or carbon pricing issues, did highlight the risk posed by both climate change and natural disasters to "hard-earned development gains."

A UN Environment Programme (UNEP) [report](#) was also released alongside the Lima meetings with assessments on how to make the world's financial system fit-for-purpose to meet sustainable development needs.

While offering a compilation of initiatives from around the globe to reform financial systems in this direction, commentators on the report nevertheless signalled that much unfinished work was still needed in this area.

ICTSD reporting; "Action urged on climate change, growth slowdown," WORLD BANK, 10 October 2015; "Lima finance minister meeting delivers pre-Paris climate lending boost," BUSINESS GREEN, 12 October 2015; "Development banks boost funding to fight climate change," NEW YORK TIMES, 9 October 2015; "Paris climate talks should not put figure on finance, says World Bank vice-president," THE GUARDIAN, 7 October 2015; "Now is the Time for A Carbon Tax, IMF Chief Says," CLIMATE PROGRESS, 8 October 2015.

TRADE AGREEMENTS

Australian Lawmakers Review Possible Compromise for China Trade Deal Ratification

Australian lawmakers are reviewing a possible compromise proposal that could pave the way for ratifying a bilateral trade deal with China, following months of heated public debate over the impact the agreement could have on domestic workers and whether the necessary safeguards to protect them were in place.

The set of proposed amendments, tabled by Labor Party leadership on Tuesday, would specifically make changes to Australia's Migration Act. The proposed changes would not alter the language of the actual trade deal itself nor the related side letters or Memorandum of Understanding, Labor Party officials say.

The Labor Party is currently the opposition in Australia.

"We understand there are great benefits in a China free trade agreement for many people," [said](#) Labor Party leader Bill Shorten in unveiling the amendments. "We're also very committed to making sure that there are no unintended consequences which see Australians miss out on jobs."

Senator Penny Wong, the Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment, affirmed that the Labor Party is not trying to change the deal, but rather "to introduce reasonable complimentary safeguards."

The three amendments proposed would include making sure that Australians are giving a first opportunity to work on investment projects that are worth over A\$150 million (US\$108 million at current exchange rates) via the use of labour market testing; lifting the base pay for skilled temporary workers from overseas under the [457 visa programme](#) from A\$53,000 to A\$57,000 (US\$38,300 to US\$41,222); and making sure those foreign workers operating in licensed trade and occupations have the qualifications to meet Australian safety and local standards.

In a [joint media statement](#), Australian Trade Minister Andrew Robb and Immigration and Border Protection Minister Peter Dutton pledged to consider the Labor proposals "in good faith" and to also "respond accordingly."

"For some time now we have said that if the Opposition put forward concrete proposals we would look at them. Until today, all we have heard for months are sound bites and rhetoric but nothing specific," the ministers said.

Australian government officials had held that the terms of the bilateral pact with Beijing – which were only completed following a decade of negotiations – are unalterable.

"We welcome Labor's belated acceptance that in no way can the agreement with China be reopened," added Dutton and Robb in their statement.

According to the two government officials, some of the provisions that the Labor Party is asking to see are already in place in government policy, such as the requirement of "labour

market testing" for jobs that are sought under an Infrastructure Facilitation Arrangement, or IFA.

Whether the proposals and upcoming discussions will be enough to ensure the ratification of the trade deal in Canberra is not yet certain. The domestic debate in Australia over the trade deal's merits has reached a fever pitch since the agreement was signed in June of this year, with unions among the most vocal in their opposition to the pact's terms. (See Bridges Weekly, [9 September 2015](#))

However, a joint parliamentary committee studying the deal is expected to recommend the approval of the pact, according to The Australian newspaper. The actual committee report is due out later this week.

The country has also seen a political upheaval over the past month, with the ousting of previous Prime Minister Tony Abbott by fellow members of his Liberal Party, to be replaced in the post by Malcolm Turnbull. (See Bridges Weekly, [25 June 2015](#) and [17 September 2015](#))

While Abbott had been unwilling to negotiate changes to domestic Australian law in response to the uproar, [telling](#) the Labor Party in early September that "there is absolutely nothing to negotiate here," Turnbull's government has reportedly indicated that it is willing to hold discussions on the subject.

"We hope that the Government will not act like Tony Abbott was acting and Malcolm Turnbull shows that he's not Tony Abbott and that he's prepared to sit down with the Opposition in order to try and gain bipartisan support in the national interest," Wong told reporters.

Robb, Dutton warn against delay

Australian government officials have touted the pact's potential benefits, particularly in the areas of agriculture and services trade.

Regarding services, Robb said [in an interview](#) with Sky News this week, "we've got the best deal China's ever done; we've got concessions that no one else has got in health services, in education services, in aged care services, in financial services, in engineering services, you name it."

Should the pact's ratification be delayed through next year, Robb and Dutton said earlier this week, this could lead to losses in the "hundreds of millions of dollars in 2016 alone," given the two successive tariff cuts that are currently envisioned in the deal for both this year and also for January onwards, respectively.

The push to ratify the bilateral pact comes ahead of another expected ratification fight, which is also likely to prove contentious. Australia was one of 12 countries that concluded negotiations last week for a wide-ranging trade deal known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, which has already proven controversial during the past several years of talks. (See Bridges Weekly, [8 October 2015](#))

The deal, which also included Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the US, and Vietnam, does not currently include China.

However, Robb has played down suggestions that China's absence in TPP is a way of dividing the region, noting Beijing's involvement in the 16-country Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) talks, which also include Australia, as well as fellow TPP members New Zealand, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, among others.

"This other agreement, which is expected to be concluded at the end of next year, I don't think it will be as ambitious as TPP, but from what I can see, it is going to be a very good deal," said Robb in an [interview](#) with Sky News, referring to RCEP.

"China's now showing a lead in that and once that is concluded, I think by 2025, there's every prospect that those two can be brought together, and then you'll have one agreement with the US and China," the Australian trade chief added, noting the ambition of countries in the Asia-Pacific to ultimately reach a single free trade zone for the entire region.

Robb also touted the fact that a bilateral China-Australia FTA has been negotiated as proof that Canberra, on its side, does not see the TPP as an element of rivalry with China, which acknowledging that some other members of the pact may view the pact in a different strategic light.

ICTSD reporting; "Coalition opens door to deal on China-Australia free trade agreement," THE GUARDIAN, 13 October 2015; "China FTA given green light by committee," THE AUSTRALIAN, 14 October 2015; "Coalition and Labor to Talk Turkey on China-Australia Trade Deal," SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 13 October 2015.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

LDC Group Submits Elements on Rules of Origin, Services Waiver Ahead of WTO Meet

Bangladesh has presented, on behalf of the Least Developed Country (LDC) Group at the WTO, two submissions for consideration as possible deliverables for the organisation's upcoming ministerial conference in December. While one submission involves preferential rules of origin, the other requests a dedicated session of the Council for Trade in Services (CTS) on the LDC services waiver to be held this month.

These submissions were circulated to WTO members on 24 and 25 September. The news of these "submissions"—copies of which have been seen by Bridges—comes as negotiators work to conclude the terms of a package for the global trade body's upcoming Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC10) in Nairobi, Kenya this December.

Negotiations aimed at finalising such a package were launched as part of the WTO's Doha Development Agenda (or DDA) in 2001, but hit an impasse after talks broke down in 2008. The WTO's Bali ministerial conference in 2013 gave a boost to the struggling trade round with a commitment to reach a work programme on the remaining Doha issues, but the talks since have shown continued divides, with the planned work programme failing to materialise. (See Bridges Weekly, [24 September 2015](#))

In recent months, broad consensus has been emerging among Geneva-based trade delegates that the ministerial—as a minimum—must meaningfully address development issues of concern to LDCs in Nairobi.

"This will be our first ministerial conference in Africa, and it must deliver for Africa," said WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo at a joint meeting of the Africa, LDC, and African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries (ACP) groups last month.

LDC issues as part of a "mini" Nairobi package

At a meeting of WTO General Council held on 8 October, discussions reportedly centred mainly on the format and substance of a potential "mini" Nairobi package, as well as what "post-Nairobi" language to include in a ministerial outcome document.

"While there is a potential package on the table, it seems that, whatever we deliver in Nairobi, it will not be viable or credible, to announce it as an agreed conclusion of the DDA single undertaking," cautioned Azevêdo, while encouraging more focus on the post-Nairobi conversation in parallel.

Issues that have reportedly received more convergence and might be potential deliverables for MC10 include development issues with a particular focus on LDCs, export competition in agriculture, and a set of possible outcomes to improve transparency in a number of areas, such as domestic regulation in services.

Sources indicate that the LDC group will submit a detailed proposal in the coming weeks on possible issues they would like to see addressed in Nairobi.

Rules of origin

"Given that no substantive efforts have been made by preference-granting members to streamline their preferential rules of origin in line with the Bali guidelines, they have remained largely non-operationalized," states the submission on rules of origin.

According to experts in the field, this submission seeks to transform the guidelines on preferential rules of origin contained in the 2013 Bali ministerial decision into compulsory criteria.

"Members shall adhere to the following in framing their legislation on preferential rules of origin," reads the communication.

Rules of origin specify how much processing must take place locally before goods can be considered to be the product of the exporting country. They are often considered to be overly restrictive and inflexible, making it difficult for LDCs to take full advantage of the preferences they are granted.

Currently, these rules are designed on a unilateral basis without any harmonised standard, which critics say creates additional problems for the WTO's poorest members, forcing them to adapt to a range of rules depending on the intended export market.

During the 2013 WTO ministerial conference in Bali, a decision was adopted on rules of origin to provide some guidelines to WTO members to develop or build on their individual rules of origin arrangements applicable to imports from LDCs.

Trade experts, however, were quick in noting that the Bali decision was not legally binding and therefore did not oblige members to follow the provisions strictly. Since then, the LDC Group has considered the implementation of the Bali decision on preferential rules of origin as one of its priorities.

In October last year the LDC group presented a substantive report to the WTO Committee on Rules of Origin, calling for a more effective design of preferential rules of origin. (See Bridges Africa, [5 November 2014](#))

In April this year, the LDC group submitted a paper entitled "Elements for a discussion on preferential rules of origin for LDCs" intended to trigger a discussion among WTO members with regard to the implementation of the Bali ministerial decision on rules of origin in order to ultimately enhance market access for their products.

The 24 September submission by Bangladesh presents in detail the rationale behind LDCs' request on preferential rules of origin under unilateral preference schemes and reiterates elements for a decision on preferential rules of origin for LDCs for adoption at MC10.

The submission also urges preference-granting countries to take into account "the level of development, industrial capacity, scarcity of resources, human resources constraints, manufacturing capabilities, and administrative challenges of LDCs" while designing their rules of origin.

Additionally the document encourages WTO members to take into account the current global value chains reality "wherein production is fragmented and companies are inclined to source goods from efficient sources."

In terms of setting out the technical aspects of preferential rules of origin and ways to determine when substantial or sufficient transformation has taken place, the submission details a series of methodologies and provisions related to cumulation – the latter of which allows two or more parties to a preferential scheme to jointly fulfil the relevant local processing requirements.

Regarding the value addition threshold, the LDC Group suggests the possibility of allowing foreign inputs to a maximum of ≤ 75 percent of value in order for a good to qualify for benefits under LDC preferential trade arrangements.

Services waiver

Bangladesh submitted on 25 September a communication requesting a dedicated session of the WTO Council for Trade in Services (CTS) to examine the results emerging from the Bali decision on the operationalisation of the services waiver for LDCs.

Following the Bali decisions, the LDC Group submitted a collective request in July 2014 articulating the preferences in terms of sectors and modes of supply that its members would like to receive from preference-granting countries. It was agreed in the decision adopted in Bali that six months after such a collective request, a high-level meeting would take place for WTO members to signal their preferential treatment to services and services suppliers of LDCs based on the collective request.

On 5 February, more than 20 members indicated concrete preferences for LDCs and it was then agreed that these preferences should be notified to the CTS by the end of July.

To date, Australia, Norway, Hong Kong China, Republic of Korea, Chinese Taipei, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, Mexico, Turkey, and the US have notified their preferences to the CTS. The European Union and Chile also recently announced their intentions of notification.

The LDC communication underlines the appreciation by the Group for some of the extensive notifications made by certain WTO members, especially when those included more preferences than what had been earlier announced. The LDC Group, however, cautions against delaying the submissions of all notifications as a Nairobi deliverable.

In the communication, the Group requested a dedicated session of the CTS to be convened in early October to review and assess the notifications submitted so far and also urged the CTS meeting "to authorise preferences notified beyond article XVI measures, and to consider next steps in light of notifications not yet received."

The services waiver decision provides a two-track approach. On the one hand, market access preferences of the type referred to in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) Article XVI can be automatically covered by the waiver. On the other hand, non-market access measures are not automatically covered, but can be authorised by the WTO CTS. These can include, for example, regulatory preferences, preferential national treatment, and exemptions for quotas or taxes.

ICTSD reporting.

BILATERAL TRADE TIES

US-Canada Softwood Lumber Deal Expires

The bilateral agreement between the US and Canada on softwood lumber expired on Tuesday, raising the prospect that a decades-long trade feud between the North American neighbours could soon be renewed.

Prior to the entry into force of the [Softwood Lumber Agreement](#) (SLA), as the deal is known, the two sides had sparred for decades on whether Canadian lumber producers were benefitting from allegedly unfair government support.

Specifically, US softwood lumber producers had argued that stumpage fees – a tax on each harvested tree on state-owned land – were so low that they essentially amounted to a Canadian government subsidy. The US Department of Commerce then conducted a series of anti-dumping and countervailing duty investigations into these allegedly unfair trade practices, leading to the imposition of hefty duties.

The disagreement eventually led to the filing of high-profile trade disputes both under the WTO ([DS 257](#)) as well as under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In 2006, the two sides confirmed that they had reached a mutually agreed solution on the subject – specifically, the SLA – that would last for seven years. (See BioRes, [14 July 2006](#))

This was later extended for two additional years in 2013, with no changes. (See BioRes, [6 February 2012](#))

The agreement had provided for the refund of US anti-dumping and countervailing duties worth US\$4 billion, out of the US\$5 billion collected since 2002. The remaining US\$1 billion was split between the US government and the forestry industry.

The SLA also provided for the use of [border measures](#) on softwood lumber being exported from Canada to the US. For instance, those exporters of lumber manufactured in the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, or Quebec are subject to an export charge should lumber prices fall below a set threshold. The export charge is a percentage of that product's price.

Furthermore, provinces have the option of either applying an export charge or a combination of a quota and a lower export charge, depending on specific needs. According to the [Canadian government](#), these export measures will no longer apply from 13 October onwards.

The SLA also ensured that the US Department of Commerce could not launch any anti-dumping or countervailing duty investigations for as long as the agreement was in force. Other provisions included a safeguard should a region exceed its allocated share; a third-country adjustment mechanism that would allow for the refund of export charges retroactively if needed to preserve Canada's share in the US market, under certain conditions; and a dispute settlement mechanism, should the need arise.

The deal also features a one-year standstill on US trade remedy action upon the SLA's expiry.

New deal?

As lumber producers on both sides prepare for the ramifications of the deal's expiry, some industry groups are now calling for a new agreement to ensure stability for producers and fair trade practices. Whether either side's government will indeed choose to negotiate is, however, an open question given conflicting reports of disinterest in a new arrangement.

US producers, for their part, have openly advocated for a new SLA, while noting that the terms of such an arrangement should be modified to reflect market realities.

"Unfortunately, world timber and lumber markets have evolved and the 2006 agreement is now outdated. The Coalition intends to continue working with the US government to reach a new agreement that will resolve this issue effectively in the future," [said](#) Charlie Thomas, Chairman of the US Lumber Coalition.

The US Lumber Coalition is an alliance said to represent large and small lumber producers in the US and has long criticised Canada's allegedly unfair trade practices in this sector.

"If Canada continues to stay away from the negotiating table, the US industry will eventually have no choice but to use our rights under US trade laws to offset the unfair advantages provided to Canadian industry," Thomas said.

The British Columbia Lumber Trade Council, which presents the bulk of the Western Canadian province's lumber production companies, has also been backing a renewal. "We are hopeful that this would be an issue that would get urgent attention from the new government to find out if we can find a way forward," said spokeswoman Susan Yurkovich in comments to CBC News.

The province is the country's largest softwood lumber producer, according to government statistics, which attribute half of Canada's US-bound lumber exports to British Columbia.

Some regional Canadian officials have also been pushing for the SLA to be continued. Christy Clark, the Premier of British Columbia, has pledged to make the renewal of a bilateral lumber pact the "first issue" she will raise with her country's prime minister following the 19 October federal election.

Despite the US Lumber Coalition's assertion that Ottawa is not interested in negotiating a new deal, Clark has suggested that Washington is actually not ready to begin talks.

A [report](#) issued by the Canada West Foundation last month suggested that part of the perceived reticence on the US side for renewal comes from the high price of softwood in recent years, meaning that export charges have only been triggered periodically.

"From the perspective of US interests, these terms, under current conditions, do not help the US industry very much because prices are high enough that imports are not restricted via tariffs," the report said. The Canada West Foundation also recommends that Canadian producers diversify their customer base, including building deeper ties in this sector with other economies, particularly in Asia, as well as seeking new value-add products and markets within the United States.

In the years since the SLA took effect, the Asian region has grown in its consumption of Canadian softwood lumber, though these numbers still fall well short of Canada's exports to the US of the good.

ICTSD reporting; "Softwood lumber agreement ends Oct. 12," THE CANADIAN PRESS, 11 October 2015; "Neither side eager to renew Canada-U.S. softwood lumber agreement," BUSINESS VANCOUVER, 15 September 2015; Blame game already on as Canada-U.S. softwood lumber deal expires," THE CANADIAN PRESS, 13 October 2015.

AGRICULTURE

FAO: Social Protection Key in Tackling Hunger, Poverty

Social protection schemes offer a faster track to ending hunger and can help gradually improve the livelihood of the world's poor, according to a new report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The report, known as the [State of Food and Agriculture](#), is published annually by the UN agency, with this year's edition [launched](#) in Rome on Tuesday.

Social protection programmes encompass activities such as social assistance, which involves providing cash or in-kind transfer to the poor; social insurance for the protection of vulnerable populations against shocks such as weather vagaries or price volatility; and providing labour market protection through unemployment payments or training.

[According](#) to Benjamin Davis, the Deputy-Director of the FAO's Agricultural Development Economics Division, every dollar spent locally in social protection programmes can lead up to US\$2.5 of economic impact.

The report finds that social protection schemes benefit 2.1 billion people in the developing world and contribute toward keeping 150 million people out of extreme poverty – defined on less than US\$1.25 a day.

Nevertheless, only about one-third of the world's poorest are accorded any form of social protection, with coverage lowest in the regions where poverty rates are highest.

For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, almost 80 percent of the population is not covered by social protection measures. On the other hand, in regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean where poverty rates are lower, almost 60 percent of the population receive some form of social protection.

Social protection and agriculture

Expanding social protection programmes in rural areas and linking them to inclusive agricultural growth policies would rapidly reduce the number of poor and hungry people, the report says.

As 80 percent of the poor live in rural areas and largely depend on agriculture for their food and income, "investing in agriculture, and especially in family farming and small-scale production, is effective at driving down rates of rural hunger and poverty," FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva said at the launch of the report.

The FAO head also highlighted the necessity of linking social protection schemes to productive support. For instance, institutional procurement programmes can create a market for small-scale family farmers by purchasing their produce, which can be used for social protection programmes, such as school feeding. Brazil is one example, where 40 million children receive daily school meals and by law at least 30 percent of the food should be bought from local family farmers.

However, "there are still relatively few agricultural interventions coordinated or integrated with social protection programmes," da Silva said.

Social protection and the WTO

Social protection is one of the major areas where significant improvements in food and nutritional security can be made without violating WTO rules, Dr. Ekatarina Krivonos of the FAO Trade and Market Division told Bridges.

The FAO report referred to Brazil's *Bolsa Familia* programme, which reaches a quarter of the country's population by providing financial aid to poor households, as a good example of effective social protection. Indeed, Krivonos said, decoupled income support of this type and other measures targeting consumers are exempted from domestic support commitments as they are considered non-trade-distorting.

However, other productive support measures may have unintended effects on markets, in particular at the regional level, and may therefore compromise food security for other countries.

"The challenge is to strike the right balance between the benefits of collective action brought through disciplines on the use of trade policy, and the policy space required by developing countries," Krivonos told Bridges.

For the vast majority of developing countries, particularly least developed countries (LDCs), the level of support provided to agricultural producers is still much smaller than in developed countries. In that context, Krivonos said that additional flexibilities in trade rules may be required for boosting agricultural performance of these countries.

ICTSD reporting.

TRADE AGREEMENTS

EU, Tunisia Launch Trade Talks

The EU and Tunisia launched negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement on Tuesday in Tunis, officials confirmed, with the first round of trade talks set to begin next week.

The two sides already have a Free Trade Area under a broader Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement, completed two decades ago. However, some of the benefits from negotiating a new deal, the EU [says](#), will be to address areas such as services trade, liberalisation in agricultural goods trade, intellectual property rights, technical barriers to trade, public procurement, competition policy, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and investment protection.

The free trade area under the existing Association Agreement, in comparison, mainly covers goods trade.

The trade and investment meetings in the Tunisian capital follow up on directives adopted by the European Council in December 2011, namely to pursue such "Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements" with Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco.

The proposed new agreement is aimed at boosting investment in the Mediterranean country and eradicating trade barriers in order to support Tunisia's future development, [said](#) EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström in a blog post ahead of meetings with Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Essid and Minister of Trade Ridha Lahouel.

In a separate speech in Tunis, the EU trade chief noted that bilateral trade between the two sides has more than doubled since the Association Agreement was signed two decades ago.

The deal also [aims](#) at improving the market access and investment climate in Tunisia, as well as supporting the economic reforms undertaken by the domestic government. Another [main objective](#) is to "bring Tunisian legislation closer to EU legislation in trade-related areas," according to a Commission factsheet.

The agreement would be "asymmetrical and progressive," implying that the EU will undertake greater commitments than Tunisia in market opening, Malmström [said](#) in Tunis on Tuesday.

However, the EU trade chief added that this proposed pact could boost growth and employment opportunities on both sides, noting that trade must "contribute to sustainable development." The EU is currently Tunisia's largest trading partner, accounting for over half of total Tunisian trade according to the bloc's statistics.

Previous support

The European Commission noted that it already [took measures](#) last month to support the recovery and reform of the Tunisian economy, as well as boost bilateral trade ties, through granting additional access for Tunisian olive oil to the bloc's market. This was geared toward helping the North African country recover from domestic difficulties, such as recent terrorist attacks.

In addition to the existing annual duty-free tariff quota of 56,700 tonnes of olive oil exports under the current Association Agreement, the Commission proposed a unilateral quota of 35,000 tonnes of Tunisian exports to the EU until the end of 2017.

Olive oil is Tunisia's largest agricultural export to the EU; the industry represents one-fifth of country's agricultural employment and provides direct and indirect employment to more than one million people.

According to a joint statement by Malmström and EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan, the quota is "a concrete effort targeted at one of the most important economic sectors of the country. It aims to create more jobs to the benefit of the Tunisian people."

The proposed quota is set to be implemented when the existing duty free tariff quota of 56,700 tones is exhausted.

ICTSD reporting; "EU begins talks with Tunisia on free trade zone," TVC NEWS, 13 October 2015; "EU launches free trade talks with Tunisia," EUROPE ONLINE MAGAZINE, 13 October 2015.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming Soon

19 October, Beijing, China. AGRO-FOOD TRADE AND FOOD SECURITY. This workshop, organised jointly by the Agricultural Trade Promotion Center of the Ministry of Agriculture (ATPC), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), together with other international institutions, aims to review policy options that would optimise the benefits of trade openness on food security, as well as reducing negative implications. Expected participants include Chinese policymakers, agricultural policy researchers, and OECD experts, among others. More information is available [here](#).

20-21 October, Doha, Qatar. WORLD EXPORT DEVELOPMENT FORUM (WEDF). This annual International Trade Centre (ITC) event will be held this year under the theme "Sustainable Trade: Innovate, invest, internationalise." Hosted by the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the State of Qatar through the Qatar Development Bank (QDB), the event is designed for policymakers as well as representatives from businesses and trade support institutions. The forum will include panel discussions, working sessions, and facilitated business-to-business meetings. Additional event details are available at the ITC [website](#).

20-22 October, Washington, US. 49TH MEETING OF THE GEF COUNCIL. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council will be holding its next meeting with the goal of reviewing and approving new projects that have global environmental benefits in areas such as climate change mitigation, international waters, biodiversity, and land degradation, among. The event will also discuss "integrated approach pilots" such as sustainable cities and food security in sub-Saharan Africa, while also providing guidance to the GEF Secretariat and Agencies. To learn more, visit the GEF Council [page](#).

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.

15-16 October: Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

15-16 October: Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

19 + 21 October: Trade Policy Review Body – Republic of Moldova

20 October: Committee on Import Licensing

Other Upcoming Events

26 October, London, UK. CLIMATE CHANGE 2015: BUILDING AGREEMENT TOWARDS 2°C, PARIS AND BEYOND. This Chatham House event will focus on the preparations underway for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) 21st

Conference of the Parties in Paris this December, looking specifically at the prospects for reaching a global climate deal. The conference will review the necessary steps for reaching such an agreement, as well as how non-state actors and other global mechanisms could also contribute to meeting ambitious long-term climate goals beyond Paris. To learn more, visit the Chatham House [website](#).

26-29 October, Berlin, Germany. IEA BIOENERGY CONFERENCE 2015. This year's International Energy Agency (IEA) Bioenergy Conference will focus on new research and market developments in bioenergy, such as the challenges across bioenergy value chains, environmental sustainability, socioeconomic issues and trade. The event is being supported by the German Ministry of Food and Agriculture and will feature presentations, opportunities for business meetings, technical field trips, and more. Additional information about the conference can be found at the IEA [website](#).

26-30 October, Geneva, Switzerland. INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON MINING, MINERALS, METALS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. The Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) aims to allow for discussions between member governments, mining companies, and industry associations regarding how the mining sector can better contribute to sustainable development. Participants are expected to include government representatives, donor agencies, international organisations, the private sector, and civil society. More details about the event can be found at the following [website](#).

23 November – 14 December, online. TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW. This online course, held by the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), aims to provide participants with an improved understanding of the techniques and procedures used in the international environmental law field, ranging from the adoption of new agreements to compliance and enforcement. The course is designed for government officials, international civil servants, academics, private sector and NGO representatives, lawyers, and judges that work in this area. More information about the course, including content, structure, fees, and registration processes, can be found [here](#).

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

CONTRIBUTION OF TRADE FACILITATION MEASURES TO THE OPERATION OF SUPPLY CHAINS. By Evdokia Moisé and Silvia Sorescu for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2015). This new report reviews the way that border procedures can affect supply chains, along with the related policy implications. The authors use data from both OECD and OECD-WTO databases in their analysis. The policy paper is available in full via the following [link](#).

THE MAKING OF THE TRIPS AGREEMENT: PERSONAL INSIGHTS FROM THE URUGUAY ROUND NEGOTIATIONS. Published by the World Trade Organization (2015). This new book reviews the various personal accounts from the negotiators of the WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Contributors discuss the way that the final text incorporated a range of policy approaches and trade interests, noting the importance of a clear negotiating agenda, as well as the roles of the Chair, the secretariat, and negotiators. The book is available for download [here](#).

PREVENTING GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS IN RENEWABLE ENERGY: THE USE OF NON-PREFERENTIAL RULES OF ORIGIN AS AN INDIRECT TRADE POLICY INSTRUMENT IN THE EU. Published by the National Board of Trade, Sweden (September 2015). This paper argues that the EU in recent years has tended to use its non-preferential rules of origin as an indirect trade policy instrument. When the complex reality has made it difficult to establish the non-preferential origin of products – due to global production and value chains – the authors suggest that the EU list rules for the establishment of non-preferential origin have been amended or disregarded in order to facilitate the imposition of trade remedies, with the affected products including renewable energy products – for instance, solar panels from China and bioethanol from the US. The authors argue that this is not in line with the WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin, and thus provide proposals for how the EU customs legislation might be amended in this context. The paper is available to download [here](#).

AFRICA AND THE WTO: THE PERILS OF WEAKENING THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA. By Biraj Patnaik and Timothy A. Wise (October 2015). This article, published on the AllAfrica website, reviews the prospects for the WTO's upcoming ministerial conference in Nairobi, Kenya, and makes a series of arguments over which approach African countries should take ahead of the meeting. The column highlights specifically the development mandate of the trade negotiations in this regard. The article may be downloaded [here](#).

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