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GLOBAL ECONOMY

Obama, EU Leaders Make TTIP Push as "Brexit" Debate Escalates

US President Barack Obama met with a series of EU national leaders over the past week to call publicly for negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) to speed up in the coming months, particularly given his limited time left in office.

The leaders' meetings came as the latest series of TTIP negotiations were about to begin, with the thirteenth round [being held](#) in New York from 25-29 April.

"[The trade deal is] important for the German economy; it's important for the whole of the European economy," said German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday during a [joint press conference](#) with Obama. "And if I look at the progress that was made with [the Trans-Pacific Partnership], I think we all ought to have an interest in speeding matters up."

Obama, for his part, added that while he does not expect TTIP to be ratified this year, he does expect the talks themselves to be finalised. "[At] that point, we will have the negotiations completed and people will be able to see exactly why this would be good," he said.

The statements in Germany were made shortly after Obama visited another EU member state – the United Kingdom – and similarly paired up with Prime Minister David Cameron to stress the importance of the trade deal, as well as the risks to the UK should it opt out of the European Union.

Timing

The TTIP talks were launched nearly three years ago to much fanfare, with both sides stressing the value in both economic and geopolitical terms in strengthening the world's most robust trading relationship. The goal would be to lower market access barriers across the Atlantic, while also working to find areas to cooperate on each sides' regulatory processes in areas ranging from textiles to chemicals. (See Bridges Weekly, [20 June 2013](#))

The years since, however, have seen the talks struggle to make major progress, despite 12 rounds of talks, several high-level “political stocktaking” meetings between top trade officials, and repeated pledges at the leaders’ level that the negotiations remain a high priority.

Meanwhile, the pact has drawn harsh criticism from some parts of the public, especially in Europe, over concerns that efforts to improve regulatory cooperation could limit domestic governments’ role in adopting policies in the public interest – despite trade officials’ assurances to the contrary.

The worrisome state of the global economy, as well as the impending leadership changes in Washington, have raised the stakes for the trade deal. Indeed, as the clock winds down on the US leader’s time in office, Obama has been pushing to advance a series of priority policy areas, including on trade.

Obama is due to leave the White House on 20 January 2017, with his successor to be elected in early November of this year. However, the expected outcome of the US election is anything but clear at this stage, with the two main political parties still to confirm their respective nominees for the November polls.

The process has reignited an already-fraught public debate over the possible merits and pitfalls of international trade deals, particularly given the parallel push by the Obama Administration for the US Congress to ratify the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal this year. (See Bridges Weekly, [7 April 2016](#))

“During presidential elections, it’s always tough,” Obama said in Hannover on Sunday. “When we’re in the heat of campaigns, people naturally are going to worry more about what’s lost than what’s gained with respect to trade agreements.”

“Brexit” referendum approaching

The fate of the UK’s membership in the European Union also dominated headlines during the US President’s visit to the bloc, with Obama publicly entering the fray to argue against a so-called Brexit.

In an op-ed published ahead of his visit by [The Telegraph](#), a UK-based newspaper, Obama warned about the dangers of a UK exit from the European Union, while acknowledging that the decision “is a matter for British voters to decide for yourselves.”

Speaking “with the candour of a friend,” he said that the outcome of the 23 June vote is a subject deeply important to Washington, arguing that the UK’s role as a global leader is enhanced by being part of a “strong Europe,” one that actually increases London’s influence.

Examples of this, Obama added, range from international leadership on climate change to the benefits to the UK of being part of the EU’s single market and a player in the 28-nation bloc’s trade negotiations with third countries, such as the US.

“When it comes to creating jobs, trade, and economic growth in line with our values, the UK has benefited from its membership in the EU – inside a single market that provides enormous opportunities for the British people,” he said.

“And the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the EU will advance our values and our interests, and establish the high-standard, pro-worker rules for trade and commerce in the 21st century economy,” Obama continued.

Though the comments were welcomed by Cameron and other politicians in favour of the UK continuing in the EU, campaigners supporting a “Brexit” lambasted the US leader’s

remarks, with some arguing that Washington would never cede its own sovereignty in that way.

A [report](#) published by HM Treasury earlier this month said that a vote in favour of a UK exit would leave the country "permanently poorer," analysing alternatives that included either a Norway-style membership of the European Economic Area; a Swiss-style bilateral pact; or just being a fellow WTO member without a specific trade deal with the EU.

Obama: UK-US trade deal would not happen "anytime soon"

Should UK voters decide in June against staying in the European Union, they would also not be assured of a trade deal with the US in the near-term – contrary to what some pro-Brexit campaigners argue – according to Obama.

"I think it's fair to say that maybe some point down the line, there might be a UK-US trade agreement, but it's not going to happen anytime soon, because our focus is in negotiating with a big bloc, the European Union, to get a trade agreement done, and the UK is going to be in the back of the queue," said the US leader in a [joint press conference](#) with Cameron last Friday.

Obama explained that Washington prefers negotiating with several countries to have access to larger markets, such as the TTIP with the 28-nation EU, rather than pursuing "piecemeal" pacts, which he suggested were "hugely inefficient" as a strategy.

The US leader's remarks echo the warnings raised by his top trade negotiator, US Trade Representative Michael Froman, who has regularly said that Washington is not interested in trade deals with individual countries. (See Bridges Weekly, [24 March 2016](#))

ICTSD reporting; "Eurosceptics pour scorn on Obama's warming against Brexit," THE GUARDIAN, 23 April 2016.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Signing of Paris Climate Accord Kicks Off Race to Ratify

A record-breaking 174 countries and the European Union formally [inked](#) a new multilateral deal on climate change on Friday at a special ceremony held at UN headquarters in New York, the largest number of first-day signatures to an international agreement to date.

Many speakers at the landmark event, attended by various world leaders, noted that signing represented an important first step, a beginning rather than the end for climate efforts, and called for concerted action moving forward.

"With their signatures today, governments have made a covenant with the future," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon [said](#) on the occasion. "Today's signing is a vote of confidence in a new approach to climate change. It is imperative this strong political momentum continues to grow."

Speaking as a youth representative for the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), 16-year-old Tanzanian radio reporter Getrude Clement [told the audience](#) that climate action should be immediate. "We expect action, action on a big scale, and we expect action today, not tomorrow."

Adding up the numbers

The Paris Agreement, named after the city in which it was hammered out last December, will come into effect 30 days after 55 countries accounting for 55 percent of greenhouse gas emissions have ratified it.

The deal was reached under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) during its annual Conference of the Parties (COP).

The Paris Agreement sets several long-term climate goals, including holding average temperatures well below a two degree Celsius rise from pre-industrial levels, pursuing efforts to limit this to a 1.5 degree threshold, peaking global emissions as soon as possible, and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

"We have a treasure in our hands now. We have this agreement, which has been signed, and we have to transform this treasure. We have to ratify it," said French environment minister Ségolène Royal, who is serving as the president of the UN climate talks until the upcoming COP in Morocco this November.

[Fifteen](#) nations submitted their ratifications directly after signing, including several small island developing countries such as the Marshall Islands and Palau, which stand to be particularly affected by climate impacts.

In a move welcomed by climate observers, China's vice-premier Zhang Gaoli said that the world's largest emitter was aiming to ratify the deal in time for a G-20 leaders' meeting in Hangzhou in September, and called on other G-20 members to do the same.

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said that climate action would be a top priority during his country's leadership of the G-7 process next year.

Australia, Argentina, Cameroon, Canada, France, Mali, Mexico, the Philippines, and the US also signalled plans to ratify the agreement in 2016.

According to the Washington-based World Resources Institute (WRI), at least one of the world's four largest emitters – constituting China, the US, the EU, and Russia – will need to be [on board](#) to meet the entry into force requirements.

While the US and China issued a joint statement in April pledging rapid accession to the deal, the two nations represent no more than 38 percent of global emissions. This implies that several other significant emitters and a host of additional nations will be needed to surpass both the emissions and numbers threshold. (See BioRes, [7 April 2016](#))

Given the recent political momentum, several experts close to the process have suggested that the deal could come into effect by 2018, two years before an originally planned date of 2020.

A [briefing note](#) by the UNFCCC Secretariat clarifies that only parties that have ratified the Paris Agreement will be able to participate in its decision making procedures, including on a number of items relevant to its operationalisation. The note suggests that this should provide a strong incentive for domestic ratification.

According to Article 28, a country may withdraw from the climate deal, but only four years after it has joined. Some commentators have recently referred to this clause in the context of uncertainty over the US' implementation of the deal under a new administration once President Barack Obama steps down in January 2017.

The US Supreme Court's decision in February to halt enforcement of Obama's Clean Power Plan (CPP) until various legal challenges against it have been resolved has further stoked concerns that the country may not come through on its carbon commitments. (See BioRes, [10 February 2016](#))

Finance, investment

Other significant announcements at last week's ceremony included the [confirmation](#) by Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that his country would deliver C\$2.5 billion (US\$1.9 billion at current exchange rates) of climate finance over the next five years.

Under the Paris package, developed nations intend to continue aiming at mobilising US\$100 billion per year through to 2025 in order to help the world's poorest nations mitigate and adapt to climate change. Parties to the Paris Agreement will also define a new collective, quantified financing goal from this floor in the interim.

While the ceremony provided a ringing endorsement for the Paris Agreement, several participants also noted the sheer scale of the challenges ahead.

Global average temperatures broke previous records during the first three months of this year, for example, and keeping these in check in the long-term will require a massive energy system transformation.

"None of what we have to achieve is beyond our capacity technologically. The only question is whether it is beyond our collective resolve," US Secretary of State John Kerry [told participants](#) during last week's ceremony, referring to the need to maintain renewable energy investments.

Carbon pricing goal

French President François Hollande said last Friday that his country would be at the forefront of setting a price on carbon, an increasingly used policy option to factor climate impacts into the economy, and re-direct capital towards low carbon options.

Just ahead of the Paris signing ceremony, Hollande was joined by the leaders of Germany, Canada, Mexico, Ethiopia, and Chile, as well as the heads of several international agencies in [calling](#) for a doubling of existing carbon pricing coverage to cover 25 percent of global emissions by 2020 and a 50 percent coverage within the next decade.

"Carbon pricing helps ensure that the true costs of fossil fuels – and the benefits of clean energy – are reflected in the marketplace," last Thursday's [vision statement](#) reads.

The initiative stems from efforts under a Carbon Pricing Panel, convened by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde, which in turn is designed to provide momentum to a [Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition](#) (CPLC) that features industry and other policymakers.

The CPLC held its first formal meeting earlier this month on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings, calling among other things for the development of "global goals" which would cover emissions through "meaningful carbon pricing systems." (See Bridges Weekly, [21 April 2016](#))

"In order to deliver on the promises of the historic Paris climate agreement, a price on carbon pollution will be essential to help cut emissions and drive investments into innovation and cleaner technologies," Kim said in a [press release](#) last week.

Carbon pricing is recognised in a decision accompanying the Paris deal as an important incentive for emissions reductions activities and the agreement itself also includes several provisions that will likely prove relevant to international emissions trading plans. (See BioRes, [13 December 2015](#))

A [joint report](#) accompanying last Thursday's announcement, published by the Environmental Defense Fund and the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA), outlines several possible scenarios for meeting the 2020 carbon pricing goal.

This includes potentially increasing the number of sectors covered by the EU's carbon market, implementation and extension of China's national emissions trading scheme, and the adoption of new carbon pricing policies in major economies such as Australia, Mexico, or Brazil. While Australia did have a carbon tax for two years, it was repealed in 2014. (See Bridges Weekly, [17 July 2014](#))

ICTSD reporting; "Live Blog: Signing Ceremony of the Paris Climate Change Agreement," WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE, 22 April 2016; "UN record as 175 countries sign climate deal, but hard graft remains," CLIMATE HOME, 22 April 2016.

DISPUTES

India Lodges WTO Appeal in US Solar Cells Dispute

India has now asked the WTO's highest court to review certain aspects of an earlier panel's finding in its dispute with the US over the use of domestic content requirements in the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission (JNNSM) energy scheme ([DS456](#)), filing a notice of appeal on 20 April.

New Delhi launched the JNNSM six years ago, aiming to promote "ecologically sustainable growth while addressing India's energy security challenge." The mission is working toward generating 100,000 mega-watts (MW) of grid-connected solar power capacity by 2022.

Under the Mission, the Indian government buys power from solar power developers, at a guaranteed rate for 25 years, and subsequently sells the electricity to downstream distribution utilities which, in turn, resell to consumers.

In the Mission's initial phases, solar power developers were required to use certain types of Indian-made solar cells and modules. The US complained that this requirement was discriminatory and a WTO panel was established to hear the case in May 2014. (See Bridges Weekly, [28 May 2014](#))

In late February, the panel found the JNNSM's domestic content requirements (DCRs) constituted trade-related investment measures, thus violating the national treatment obligation under the Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994. (See Bridges Weekly, [3 March 2016](#))

Moreover, the panel found that the measures could not be exempted by the GATT's government procurement derogation, nor could they be justified by that agreement's general exceptions.

The February panel ruling has drawn significant interest in the trade and climate policy communities since its release, particularly amid various separate developments in both fields, including the adoption of a multilateral UN climate accord last December.

The JNNSM is one of India's various efforts that aims to tackle the challenge of climate change through increasing its capabilities in clean energy, among other objectives. On the global stage, last December at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) annual meet in Paris, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi [launched](#) with French President François Hollande an international solar alliance of over 120 countries, concurrent with New Delhi's pledge to derive 40 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030.

The US, for its part, has repeatedly stressed that it does not question India's climate policies or objectives in this dispute. Rather, Washington has specifically taken issue with the inclusion of domestic content requirements in the scheme.

Meanwhile, India's Power, Coal, and Renewable Energy Minister Piyush Goyal told the NDTV news agency last week that New Delhi's own analysis has found 16 US states which, he claims, "have similar domestic content requirements when they procure solar panels for their energy needs."

The issue of whether domestic content requirements are actually effective for scaling up the deployment and use of clean energy has also been questioned by various experts over the years, as governments work to develop and refine policies aimed at boosting their renewable energy capabilities.

Government procurement derogation

GATT Article III:8 (a) says that the national treatment obligation does not apply to measures “governing the procurement by governmental agencies of products purchased for governmental purposes and not with a view to commercial resale or with a view to use in the production of goods for commercial sale.”

In its February ruling, the panel found that the measures at issue are not covered by this derogation, given that the solar cells and modules discriminated against were not in a “competitive relationship” with the electricity bought by the Indian government from the solar power developers.

In its notice of appeal, India claims that the panel was mistaken in not considering its arguments that “solar cells and modules are indistinguishable from solar power generation” and that they qualify as “inputs” for that purpose. India has therefore asked that the Appellate Body reverse such findings.

India has also asked the WTO judges to find that the domestic content requirements in the JNNSM are covered by the GATT’s government procurement derogation, and that such requirements do not violate the national treatment requirements under the TRIMs Agreement and the GATT.

Article XX exceptions

Furthermore, India is challenging the panel’s conclusion that the measures are not justified under the GATT’s general exceptions, specifically Article XX(j) and XX(d). These specific provisions outline justifications that may allow the use of otherwise WTO-inconsistent measures if these are “essential to the acquisition or distribution of products in general or local short supply” or are “necessary to secure compliance with laws or regulations,” respectively.

The panel found that Article XX(j) refers to a situation where the quantity of a product from all sources, domestic and foreign, does not meet the demand in a relevant geographical area or market.

In particular, the panel rejected India’s argument that a lack of domestic manufacturing capacity establishes that a product is in short supply, regardless of whether demand can be met through other sources.

In the notice of appeal, India argued that the panel replaced the country’s justification for domestic content requirements with one lacking basis in New Delhi’s submission, and made its findings using “a piecemeal and selective analysis” of evidence without providing “due process” rights to respond.

The panel also rejected India’s defence under Article XX(d), finding that the international agreements invoked by the country do not have “direct effect” or form part of New Delhi’s domestic legal system, and that the domestic legal instruments identified by India are either not legally enforceable rules of conduct or lack sufficient relevance to domestic content requirements in order to fall under the category of “laws or regulations” under Article XX(d).

The panel also said that the DCRs are not “essential” within the meaning of Article XX(j) or “necessary” under XX(d).

India is now appealing these conclusions, asking the Appellate Body to reverse the panel's findings and find these measures to be justified under these provisions.

Next steps

Under WTO rules, the Appellate Body now has 90 days from the date of appeal to issue its report. The Appellate Body generally reviews questions relating to law or legal interpretation and not the factual findings of the panel ruling.

ICTSD reporting; "India unveils global solar alliance of 120 countries at Paris climate summit," THE GUARDIAN, 30 November 2015; "India Accuses US Of Double Standards On Solar Trade," NDTV, 23 April 2016.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS

Environmental Goods Agreement Negotiators Discuss Tariff Cut Offers

The thirteenth round of talks geared towards securing a trade-liberalising Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA) focused on several proposals for tariff cuts and phase outs during a variety of meetings in different configurations, sources say. The talks were held last week in Geneva, Switzerland.

At the invitation of the chair of the EGA talks, Andrew Martin of Australia, these proposals were presented both before and during the round by most of the 17 WTO members participating in the plurilateral deal, with the 28-nation EU counting as one participant in this context.

The chair reportedly asked EGA participants to categorise products in his "convergence list" of 350 tariff lines circulated last December into those suitable for immediate liberalisation, those where tariffs might need to be phased out over a period of years, and items deemed sensitive or unclear on how best to treat.

This convergence list is based on a group of some 650 tariff lines covering over 2000 items nominated and discussed by EGA participants since the talks launched in July 2014. Possible products slated for inclusion are those relevant to cleaner and renewable energy generation, air pollution control, and energy efficiency, among other things. (See Bridges weekly, [25 June 2015](#))

According to some sources, last week's discussion focused on products identified as sensitive, with participants looking to build consensus around which items should go into the final list. Several reported constructive conversations, with differing levels of product sensitivities identified, such as those products that might prove very difficult to include and others with the potential for compromise.

This included work in small groups – one including the EU, US, Japan, and Canada and another led by Switzerland, Norway, Hong Kong, and Israel – to compare proposals. Sources also noted a continued focus on environmental credibility alongside the mercantile push-and-pull of trade negotiations.

For example, one delegation raised sensitivities around some products despite their own country currently imposing low tariffs, arguing that the environmental rationale for liberalisation was not apparent. Conversely, other participants pushed for flexibility where environmental arguments were strong, as a leverage for taking on the tariff cut.

Based on these efforts, some sources estimated that over 200 tariff lines could be included in some way in the final list without much difficulty, depending on the political landscape moving forward.

Mixed forecasts

Sources gave varying forecasts for the way forward. Several suggested that on a technical front the talks could be concluded this year, but much will depend upon resolving some key issues.

The EGA talks hit a snag last December after participants diverged on how to interpret a [negotiating mandate](#) to “build upon” a list of 54 product categories targeted for a voluntary reduction of tariffs to five percent or less by end-2015 by the 21-nation Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) alliance.

At that time, China reportedly reiterated concerns to the US over a push for immediate, full elimination of tariffs under a completed EGA on a handful of APEC goods, with attempts by other participants to manoeuvre around the block proving unsuccessful.

This development dashed hopes among some stakeholders that a deal might have been secured in time for a landmark UN meet that birthed a new multilateral climate accord and the WTO's Tenth Ministerial Conference (MC10), held back-to-back in the same month. (See BioRes, [9 December 2015](#))

“The deal makers will be the US and China,” said one source following the latest round, suggesting that the US had been pushing for a swift conclusion this year before President Barack Obama leaves office in January 2017, but that recent efforts to craft a high-level political intervention on the EGA between the two trading giants had also faltered.

Some reports also suggest that Beijing has indicated that acceptance of its long-standing bid to participate in ongoing talks for a separate, plurilateral Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) would facilitate the EGA negotiations, a move panned by Washington, among others. (See Bridges Weekly, [26 September 2013](#))

Other outstanding areas to be resolved include addressing China's proposals for special and differential treatment (S&DT) for developing countries within the EGA and a “snap back” clause to raise tariffs if the portion of world trade in goods covered by the deal drops below a certain level.

On the former, China has suggested crafting different tariff phase out or “staging” periods for developed and developing countries, with the possibility of maintaining an indefinitely low level of tariffs on certain products for the latter group. This proposal is relatively controversial for other EGA participants.

Sources confirmed, however, that Beijing's “snap back” clause is a major sticking point for many delegations, who are concerned that it would violate fundamental trade law principles. The EGA is being negotiated on the basis of “bound” tariffs that represent the maximum duty ceiling levels WTO members can apply, contrary to “applied” tariffs, which signify the actual duty levied at the border.

EGA participants have signalled intentions to conclude the deal as a most-favoured-nation (MFN) style pact, which would extend the eventual bound tariff reductions to the WTO's entire membership.

Similar plurilateral initiatives, such as the WTO's Information Technology Agreement (ITA), have defined a “critical mass” of participants, which should represent a significant volume of world trade in order to stave off potential free riders benefiting from tariff concessions without offering anything in return.

China has expressed concerns vis-à-vis EGA participants over how to manage critical mass in a world of rapidly shifting trade and investment flows. Some stakeholders have pointed to the recently concluded ITA expansion effort that agrees to future discussions if necessary should trade patterns alter participants' critical mass, without prejudice to the outcome. (See Bridges Weekly, [16 December 2015](#))

EGA participants also held a briefing session for the wider WTO membership last week. Some commentators have noted that the addition of new countries could help assuage critical mass concerns.

Next steps

While some sources maintained that the disagreements with China soured the EGA waters last week, others suggested that the country needs to navigate complex domestic procedures and considerations, and said that its concerns were not new but instead have been raised in previous rounds.

In that context, time will tell whether EGA participants will be able to keep each other engaged and find landing zones for the list, one commentator reflected. Another source suggested that the broad view remained among all EGA participants to push towards a conclusion as soon as possible and at an appropriate moment.

EGA negotiators have signalled that work will continue intersessionally through bilateral and group conversations in order to provide further guidance on identifying an acceptable product list. Some participants may update their staging proposals in light of information gathered last week and continued discussion. The next round is scheduled for 20-24 June.

A G-20 trade ministers meeting on 9-10 July in Shanghai could provide a useful political milestone and opportunity for guidance, even though not all EGA members are G-20 economies, and conversely not all of the G-20 participate in the EGA.

Efforts are also reportedly underway in the G-7 grouping of industrialised economies – that includes the US, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom – to send positive signals to the talks. The G-7 is set to hold its annual summit on 26-27 May in Japan.

ICTSD reporting.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

EU Trade Chief Outlines Possible Areas for Updating WTO Rulebook

EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström outlined on Tuesday a series of topics which, she suggested, could be constructive areas for future discussion as WTO members brainstorm how to move forward in a "post-Nairobi" negotiating landscape.

However, she warned against getting "bogged down" in debates over whether the Doha Round – the series of negotiations which WTO members have been undertaking since 2001 – is alive or dead.

"What matters is that many of the issues within the Doha Development Agenda are as relevant today as they were in 2001, if not more so," she said, particularly given that some topics are best addressed at the WTO level rather than in bilateral or regional deals elsewhere.

Indeed, whether or not to reaffirm the Doha Round negotiating mandate was one of the top issues during the WTO's last ministerial conference, held in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi last December. Ultimately, after days of round-the-clock negotiations, ministers ultimately agreed to disagree on the subject. (See Bridges Daily Update #5, [19 December 2015](#))

The ministerial declaration adopted in December instead noted the opposing viewpoints on the Doha Development Agenda and subsequent ministerial conference declarations and decisions. While some reaffirmed "their full commitment to conclude the [Doha Round] on that basis," others argued for "new approaches" to reach meaningful, multilateral results.

The result has left trade watchers and negotiators alike mulling over what this will mean for the future of the trade body's negotiating arm, both in the year ahead and further down the road.

Multilaterals first – otherwise, plurilaterals

Speaking at a meeting with civil society on Tuesday, the EU trade chief stressed that the 28-nation bloc's preference remains with concluding multilateral deals at the global trade body, particularly given the WTO's large membership.

Noting the various changes seen to the international trading landscape over the past 15 years, Malmström cautioned that the organisation's rules have "major gaps," and also called for realism moving forward, even with the preference on multilateral deals.

"If it's a choice between making progress with a smaller number of partners or no progress at all, then we will choose to move forward – plurilaterally," she said, adding that the priority would then be plurilateral deals on a most-favoured nation basis.

In other words, these would be deals whose commitments are adopted by their participants, but whose benefits would extend to the entire WTO membership.

These would also be "open to others to join in the future and can use WTO dispute settlement," she said. Closed deals, by comparison, would be a last resort should open approaches fail.

Priority on rulemaking

Notably, the EU trade chief indicated that the 28-nation bloc's priority in its WTO strategy would be on setting new rules, and less on market access, though the latter remains important.

"We should focus our immediate attention on where the WTO can provide the biggest value. And that is rulemaking, especially in the new areas where no global rules exist yet," she said.

Even so, Geneva sources note that a recent informal meeting of the WTO's negotiating group on market access saw some members back the idea of plurilaterals in the area of industrial tariffs, while others were pushing either to continue market access talks in the WTO and still a third group is either "indifferent towards further work on NAMA issues at this stage" or otherwise are defensive in the interests of preserving existing policy space.

According to remarks by the meeting's chair, Swiss Ambassador Remigi Winzap, members are currently "in a brainstorming mode" when it comes to market access and seem to "still be looking for a foothold in the post-Nairobi discussions."

Agriculture, digital trade, investment

Malmström said on Tuesday that, in her view, the types of issues that appear to have support from fellow WTO members fall into three camps.

One camp involves domestic agricultural support, digital trade, and investment – areas which she deemed as having "strong importance to the system."

Indeed, regarding agriculture, the chair of the WTO's farm trade talks said in February that this area could be "key" to a negotiating outcome for the organisation's 2017 ministerial conference. (See Bridges Weekly, [10 March 2016](#))

Vangelis Vitalis, the New Zealand ambassador chairing those talks, is due to soon report back to WTO members on the outcomes of his latest consultations, sources say. An informal, open-ended meeting of the WTO's "special session" on agriculture is set for 10-11 May.

With the other two topics, Malmström noted in particular the interest seen from China, one of the world's largest trading powers. Investment had been one of the "Singapore issues" that were discussed in working groups following the [1996 Singapore Ministerial Conference](#), only to be dropped in 2003 after members were unable to achieve consensus moving forward.

The EU trade chief then classed a number of other Doha topics – such as fisheries subsidies, food security and public stockholding, and domestic regulation in services – as also having support, though being "smaller in terms of impact."

While decisions were adopted in Nairobi regarding public food stockholding for food security purposes, efforts to address the other two areas ultimately failed to bear fruit at the December ministerial meet. (See Bridges Daily Update, [19 December 2015](#))

Other areas falling in that second camp could include regulatory practices and transparency for technical barriers to trade, as well as subsidies for industrial goods – with Malmström tying the latter to the burgeoning global steel crisis, which has particularly hit EU producers hard.

Indeed, recent talks in Brussels among various countries and industry officials ultimately failed to yield agreed steps forward on the steel overcapacity issue, with some key players

such as the US warning of trade action against countries like China and others should the problems persist. Those talks were in the context of a high-level symposium, organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the government of Belgium. (See Bridges Weekly, [21 April 2016](#))

Again in this second camp of topics, the EU trade chief highlighted three “new issues” where, she said, there is interest among some WTO members in moving forward. These include export restrictions on energy and raw materials; local content requirements; and state-owned enterprises.

Goods sectorals, trade facilitation

While Malmström stressed throughout her remarks that multilateral approaches are ideal, she did flag two areas where plurilaterals may be the only option.

These include sectoral deals on goods market access, similar to the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) and related expansion, as well as taking on additional work on trade facilitation, building on the multilateral pact on the subject reached in Bali, Indonesia in December 2013.

That latter deal is not yet in force, still needing approximately 30 more WTO members to ratify its terms. At press time, 77 members had deposited their “instruments of acceptance” to the global trade body, with the latest [being Russia](#). To come into force, two-thirds of the organisation’s 162 members must ratify it domestically.

Coming up

The EU trade chief is set to hold additional discussions with member states in crystallising the bloc’s position moving forward, as well as with civil society representatives and various other stakeholders. Malmström is also due to be in Geneva – home of the WTO – next week, during which she will give [public remarks](#) on “multilateralism and other values in EU trade policy.”

Other major events on the international trade calendar which could provide additional guidance going forward include a G-7 leaders’ meet in late May; the annual OECD Forum and ministerial meeting in late May and early June; and a G-20 trade ministers’ gathering in early July in Shanghai.

Indeed, various informal gatherings held in Geneva over the past weeks have indicated that members are still reflecting on what path they hope to chart forward for the WTO’s future work, with sources noting that many are wary of “drifting” should further clarity and political direction on the negotiating pillar not come soon.

The WTO’s General Council, which is the highest decision-making body outside of the ministerial conference, is also due to meet at headquarters on 12 May.

ICTSD reporting.

DISPUTES

Disputes Roundup: Mexico Rejects US Compliance Panel Request in Tuna Case

The US-Mexico dispute on "dolphin-safe" tuna labelling continued on last week, after Mexico City rejected Washington's first request for another compliance panel process to evaluate the recent March 2016 revision to its labelling policies.

Last week also saw the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) establish a panel to review Russia's complaint over Ukrainian anti-dumping measures on imported ammonium nitrate, following a second panel request from Moscow.

US, Mexico spar over process, implications

Earlier this month, the US asked that a compliance panel review the latest changes to Washington's "dolphin-safe" tuna labelling regime, which were announced in March. (See Bridges Weekly, [14 April 2016](#))

At the time, the US explained that the revisions were meant to bring its previous labelling measure in line with global trade rules, which it argues warrants the establishment of another compliance panel. (See Bridges Weekly, [24 March 2016](#))

However, Mexico rejected the request during Friday's DSB meeting, citing a series of procedural concerns over the US move – particularly since the case has already gone to arbitration. The ensuing discussion, source familiar with the meeting told Bridges, was whether arbitration should proceed in light of a new compliance panel process, or whether a compliance panel should wait until the arbiter circulates its decision.

The two North American countries sparred also over whether establishing such a compliance panel would slow down an already prolonged case – going back to 2008 – or, [as the US argued](#), "best facilitate" resolving the row.

Mexico, for its part, argues that starting yet another compliance panel process could have larger systemic implications, essentially allowing for members to delay "ad infinitum" dispute settlement proceedings and prevent the actual suspension of concessions.

Other disagreements aired during Friday's meeting included whether consultations were needed between the two trading partners before such a compliance panel request, as Mexico claims, and whether the US' request is in line with the terms of a "sequencing agreement" between the two sides.

The US confirmed that it will now ask for a special DSB meeting so it can table its second compliance panel request on the subject.

The long-running dispute between the two members ([DS381](#)) dates back to 2008, with the WTO's Appellate Body confirming in 2012 that the US' dolphin-safe labelling regime was discriminating unfairly against tuna and tuna products imported from Mexico. (See Bridges Weekly, [16 May 2012](#))

The US revised the measure in 2013. However, both a compliance panel and the Appellate Body deemed that the changes were insufficient to bring the policy in line with global trade rules – prompting Mexico to ask for permission to suspend concessions against the US, with

Washington then objecting to the level of suspension. At the DSB meeting last month, it was agreed that "the matter is referred to arbitration." So far there is no announcement on the WTO website on the constitution of the arbitrator.

Panel established in Russia-Ukraine dispute

Separately, the DSB established a panel on Friday to hear Russia's complaint against Ukrainian anti-dumping measures on imported ammonium nitrate, a product often used as a fertiliser ([DS493](#)).

This was the second panel request by Russia, after Ukraine objected to the first one in March. (See Bridges Weekly, [24 March 2016](#)) Under WTO rules, a respondent to a dispute can object to a first panel request. Upon a second request by the complainant, however, a panel is usually established automatically.

Russia said that it requested a panel again as all other settlement paths had been exhausted, sources familiar with the meeting confirmed. For its part, Ukraine reportedly said that certain aspects of the measures raised in Russia's panel request were not part of the original consultations request and therefore not discussed between the two countries. These aspects actually expand the dispute's scope, Ukraine argued.

At issue in the case was a 2014 Ukrainian decision to extend an anti-dumping measure imposed in 2008 for an additional five-year period. The measure also allegedly raised the duty on imported ammonium nitrate from Russia from 11.91 to 36.03 percent. (See Bridges Weekly, [13 May 2015](#))

Russia requested WTO consultations with Ukraine in May 2015, claiming that the measure violated various provisions of the Anti-Dumping Agreement and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT 1994).

ICTSD reporting.

TRANSPORT EMISSIONS

IMO Clinches Deal on Shipping Fuel Use Data, Though Emissions Target Remains Elusive

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has agreed on a mandatory system to track fuel use from international shipping, following a meeting of its Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC).

The 18-22 April meeting had drawn significant attention from climate watchers, in the wake of the universal climate accord adopted by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) last December in Paris and signed last week by over 170 countries in New York. (For more on the Paris agreement, see related story, this edition)

Emissions from maritime shipping and civil aviation were ultimately not included in the Paris accord, despite a push by some countries for doing so. The UN specialised agencies which work on those topics are, however, aiming to take steps in their respective forums to tackle the issue of climate change.

While the IMO committee did reach a deal on fuel consumption reporting, which it said could pave the way for future decisions on potentially taking steps to boost energy efficiency and tackle shipping-related emissions, countries reportedly remained at odds over whether to pursue an emissions reduction target now or wait until there is more concrete data available.

The IMO's environment committee is next due to meet in October, which will include a working group discussion on possible emissions-related steps.

Data tracking system

The draft mandatory data system agreed last week, [according to the IMO](#), would require ships to record and report fuel consumption. These measures have been drafted as amendments to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, otherwise known as MARPOL.

The system will require ships of 5,000 gross tonnage and above to report their fuel type and consumption. This will then be reported back to the state that enforces laws for the ship's registration and licensing, also known as the flag State. The flag State will then check that the data is in compliance with requirements, and send this data to the IMO Ship Fuel Consumption Database.

The specific requirements of the system will be discussed this October at the 70th MEPC Session, with a view to adopting it at that session and putting the scheme into effect in 2018.

Emissions debate

While the data collection decision was welcomed by top IMO officials as a step in the right direction, no such agreement has been reached regarding setting a target for limiting the shipping industry's emission levels.

"The unanimous agreement to take forward a mandatory data collection system is a significant step," said Kitack Lim, Secretary General of the IMO, crediting the momentum

from the Paris accord as helping pave the way for an outcome. "It will provide a solid basis on which to consider, armed with information, whether further measures may be required in future to mitigate [greenhouse gas] emissions from shipping."

However, this session was not the first time in which agreement on a quantifiable emissions reduction target was put off. (See BioRes, [19 May 2015](#))

The shipping industry currently represents about three percent of global GHG emissions. Furthermore, some experts project that emissions from this sector could increase between 50 percent and 250 percent by 2050 if it continues at current rates.

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has presented a [proposal](#) for reducing emissions in the shipping industry. It calls for the agreement to "develop an Intended IMO Determined Contribution on behalf of the international shipping sector as soon as possible." The group noted that this would be consistent with the system of using "nationally determined contributions" for countries under the Paris climate accord.

The Solomon Islands also put forward a proposal calling to reduce emissions in the shipping industry, with backing from France, Belgium, Germany, the Marshall Islands, and Morocco, according to the Carbon Pulse news agency.

Those questioning the proposals argue that the data to be provided from the data collection system is necessary before the next steps are taken. These countries, including China and the US, say that in order to target emission levels, analysing data from specific ships first will provide useful insight.

On the other hand, countries which supported the proposals dismissed this idea, noting that decreasing emission levels in the shipping industry is already of the utmost importance.

According to Carbon Pulse, those pushing back on the proposals include Brazil, China, India, Saudi Arabia, and Russia. The US reportedly raised initial concerns over both proposals, but did not continue to object like China and Brazil, according to the news agency.

The decision to put off the discussions once more drew strong criticism from some environmental stakeholders, such as John Maggs, senior policy advisor at Seas At Risk, an environmental NGO.

"The IMO has fallen flat on its face in the first test of its determination to tackle greenhouse gas emissions after Paris, unable even to agree to develop a work plan for reducing ship emissions," he said in a [press statement](#).

ICTSD reporting; "Despite Setbacks, Action to Tackle Shipping Emissions is as Inevitable as the Tides," BUSINESS GREEN, 26 April 2016; "IMO Again Delays Talks over GHG Reduction Targets for Shipping Industry," CARBON PULSE, 21 April 2016; "US, China Resist Shipping Emissions Curbs at UN Meet," CLIMATE HOME, 21 April 2016.

AGRICULTURE

US Senate Passes New Food Security Bill, As Farm Subsidy Costs Grow

The US Senate last week passed the [Global Food Security Act](#), authorising almost US\$1 billion per year in support for hunger and food security initiatives. The new legislation, if enacted, would institutionalise on a permanent basis President Barack Obama's flagship "Feed the Future" initiative.

A [related bill](#) was already passed by the US House of Representatives earlier this month.

While the 20 April move was [welcomed](#) by aid agencies such as Bread for the World, Action against Hunger, and Oxfam America, critics also warned that mushrooming farm subsidy spending could undermine the effectiveness of US efforts to tackle malnutrition in other parts of the world.

New [figures](#) from the US Congressional Budget Office show that the country's two major farm subsidy programmes are now estimated to cost US\$45.9 billion over a ten-year period – around twice as much as was foreseen two years ago when the schemes were launched.

A drop in global [prices](#) for food and farm goods have pushed up the expected cost of programmes authorised two years ago under the country's five-yearly Agricultural Act, widely referred to as the Farm Bill after the name of the draft legislation giving rise to it. (See Bridges Weekly, [6 February 2014](#))

"It's entirely predictable this would happen," said Gawain Kripke, policy and research director at Oxfam America, who noted that the previous high prices were already beginning to fall as the new Farm Bill was enacted.

Farm prices have [fallen](#) for various reasons, including slowing demand for commodities in major economies such as China, coupled with falling oil prices and a robust supply-side response to recent high price episodes. (See Bridges Weekly, [17 March 2016](#))

Paying peanuts?

Professor Vince Smith of Montana State University told Bridges that the Congressional Budget Office initially used price projections that were much higher than those of the US Department of Agriculture or academic research centres at the time.

"The CBO is now using prices that look a whole lot more credible," Smith said.

Prices for some products are now substantially different from original estimates, farm policy experts said, with wheat and maize payments likely to be particularly affected.

Projections for payments to peanut producers are also expected to increase seven-fold under the Price Loss Coverage scheme that was enacted in 2014.

While an April 2014 CBO [report](#) anticipated that these would cost an average of US\$76 million over five years, the newly-released figures place the likely cost at US\$585 million.

Competition concerns

In addition to raising costs for US taxpayers, the programmes have sparked concerns that farmers in other regions may face unfair competition on world markets. (See Bridges Weekly, [10 March 2016](#))

A coalition of aid groups and other organisations have recently criticised US government [plans](#) to ship an initial 500 metric tonnes of peanuts to Haiti as part of a food aid programme.

While acknowledging that the programme “may be well-intentioned,” the groups caution that 150,000 Haitian farmers are reliant on peanut production, while many more depend on economic activities associated with transforming the crop into processed products.

Other agencies involved in the initiative rejected these concerns, noting that the peanuts to be donated this year amounted to less than two percent of Haiti’s production of the crop.

This amount was “well below the market share a reasonable economic analysis would determine causes serious damage to the local market,” said Allan Jury, Vice President of Public Policy and Senior Advisor at World Food Program USA, in an emailed statement seen by Bridges.

Chavannes Jean-Baptiste, a Haitian farm leader with the organisation “Mouvement Paysan Papaye,” disagreed with this assessment. “This aid will suppress peanut prices on local markets,” he told Bridges, adding that peanuts are valued by small farmers for their drought-resistant qualities.

Implementing the WTO's Nairobi outcome

Food aid recipient countries as well as aid agencies have long argued that the provision of in-kind food aid in non-emergency situations can effectively create subsidised competition for domestic producers, along with distorting markets.

An agreement at the WTO's Nairobi ministerial conference last December sought to establish new disciplines to address these problems, while ensuring that aid was still available in humanitarian emergencies. (See Bridges Daily Update #5, [19 December 2015](#))

One African negotiator in Geneva described the deal as a “step forward.”

However, he added that attention now needed to shift towards implementation of the Nairobi accord, and to efforts to develop new global trade rules on farm subsidies and in other areas ahead of the next WTO ministerial conference, due to be held at the end of next year.

The chair of the agriculture negotiations, New Zealand ambassador Vangelis Vitalis, plans to hold meetings over the next few weeks to share with WTO members the outcomes of his consultations to date, trade sources said.

ICTSD reporting.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming Soon

2-4 May, New York, US. ECOSOC INTEGRATION SEGMENT 2016. Organised by the UN Economic and Social Council, the Integration Segment will bring together high-level representatives from member states, UN agencies, and civil society groups to identify possible opportunities and challenges for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Segment will have as its theme "Implementing the 2030 Agenda through Policy Innovation and Integration." Details for the event are available [here](#).

2-4 May, Berlin, Germany. JUMP-STARTING THE SDGS IN GERMANY: NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION. This conference, organised by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies e.V. with various other organisations as co-hosts, will examine the way forward for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Germany, focusing particularly on natural resources and sustainable production and consumption. Featuring interactive panel discussions and forums, core issues such as efficient resource use, food security and nutrition, bioenergy, land use and rural-urban continuum will be discussed. Additional event details are available [here](#).

2-5 May, Frankfurt, Germany. 49th ANNUAL ADB MEETING. This gathering will mark the first time that Germany is hosting the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Annual Meeting, bringing together the bank's Board of Governors to discuss regional and institutional issues. Centred on the theme "Cooperation for Sustainability," the organisers aim to bring together stakeholders in finance and development for discussions on key sustainable development topics. These include, among others, clean energy and climate change, urban development, and improving production and supply chains. Details for the event, including on how to register, can be accessed [here](#).

4-6 May, Antalya, Turkey. FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE (ERC). The 30th session of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations' ERC will feature a ministerial-level discussion on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their possible implications for agriculture and rural development in the region. Preceded by civil society consultations and other key meetings, the UN agency will review ways to support the implementation of the SDGs going forward. More information is available [here](#).

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.

27-28 April: Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices – Working Group on Implementation

27 + 29 April: Trade Policy Review Body – Malawi

28 April: Informal Group of Developing Countries

28-29 April: Negotiating Group of Rules (Technical Group)

2 + 4 May: Trade Policy Review – Honduras

3 May: Informal Open-ended Council for Trade in Services – Special Session

Other Upcoming Events

10-12 May, Geneva, Switzerland. OCEANS ECONOMY AND TRADE: SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES, TRANSPORT AND TOURISM. Co-organised by UNCTAD with the Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC) and the International Oceans Institute, this international seminar is geared toward improving the understanding of the oceans economy, particularly in the context of trade issues. Topics for discussion include the inter-sectoral relationships of ocean-based sectors and possible ways for goods and services trade to facilitate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Details for the event can be found [here](#).

19 May, Washington, US. THE YEAR OF THE MONKEY IS SERIOUS BUSINESS: WITA'S HIGH LEVEL POLICY DISCUSSION ON US-CHINA RELATIONS. This gathering, hosted by the Washington International Trade Association (WITA) will feature a panel discussion on China, with a focus on international trade and economy policy, as well as business-related issues. Speakers will include former acting Deputy US Trade Representative Wendy Cutler; former Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade Frank Lavin; and Director of the National Committee on US-China Relations Cheng Li. Further details are available [here](#).

31 May – 1 June, Paris, France. OECD FORUM 2016. This event, organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), will feature leaders from government, business, and civil society to debate today's top economic and social issues. The forum will feature various types of interactive sessions, as well as a "Civil Society Day" and the OECD Ministerial Meeting. More information is available [here](#).

8 June, Geneva, Switzerland. 2016 T20 TRADE AND INVESTMENT CONFERENCE. This event is being organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), IDEAS Centre, the Institute of World Economics and Politics at Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (IWEP, CASS), Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS), Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China (RDCY), and the WTO. The conference, held under the theme "Global Trade and Investment Cooperation – Openness, Inclusiveness and Growth," will address topics such as global trade governance and growth, regional trade agreements, and inclusive global value chains, among others. More information is available [here](#).

Resources

POST-PARIS: TAKING FORWARD THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE DEAL. By Rob Bailey and Shane Tomlinson for Chatham House (April 2016). This research briefing focuses on the Paris Agreement reached at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) Twenty-first Conference of the Parties (COP21) and the road ahead, particularly the importance of the next five years for staying below the 2°C temperature goal. The authors also discuss how international forums (i.e., the G-20 and G-7) can help these efforts in terms of long-term strategies. The briefing also notes the role of civil society organisations, and how they can continue to contribute going forward. The full briefing can be accessed [here](#).

THE MANAGING DIRECTOR'S SPRING GLOBAL POLICY AGENDA: DECISIVE ACTION, DURABLE GROWTH. Published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (April 2016). This report focuses on current global economic trends, and how the IMF views these trends in terms of future growth. Published ahead of the IMF-World Bank Group Spring Meetings, the report notes areas of improvement, such as in data releases, slightly firmer oil prices, less pressure on Chinese outflows, and actions taken by major central banks, and analyses how these could serve as a stepping stone toward improving global economic growth. Finally, the report calls for a three-pronged approach of monetary, fiscal, and structural steps to help global growth, while noting where the IMF can contribute. The full report can be accessed [here](#).

THE OCEAN ECONOMY IN 2030. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (April 2016). This report analyses the potential for growth with regard to the ocean economy in the coming years. Areas of focus include the capacity for job creation and innovation, emerging ocean-based industries, and the prospects for addressing challenges such as energy security and climate change, among others. The report also looks at the risks and uncertainties surrounding the ocean economy, and possible approaches for improving its long-term future. The full report can be found [here](#).

THE TPP, PART I: A DEAL TOO FAR. By Howard Mann for the International Institute for Sustainable Development (January 2016). This commentary paper discusses the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a trade deal between 12 Pacific Rim countries that is currently in the ratification stage. The author analyses the deal and the effects it could have on signatories, and suggests that countries should re-consider the role that such deals have in promoting inclusive, sustainable growth, among other topics. The full article can be accessed [here](#).

CHARTING NEW PATHWAYS AT THE WTO. Published by the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) (April 2016). This policy brief discusses the potential opportunities for governments to "inject new life" in the World Trade Organization, in light of recent developments in the global economy. The brief focuses specifically on possible actions regarding the digital economy and the participation of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. The policy brief is available [here](#).

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