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CLIMATE CHANGE

Paris Climate Deal to Enter into Force in November

The Paris Agreement on climate change is set to enter into force next month, officials have confirmed, after receiving a series of key ratifications this week. The landmark climate deal has now surpassed the two thresholds needed for its activation, allowing it to enter into force on 4 November.

Governments agreed last year that the deal would be activated 30 days after 55 parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) representing 55 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions deposit instruments of ratification.

The European Parliament approved the deal on Tuesday, which followed a [vote](#) by the bloc's environment ministers on Friday agreeing to go ahead with ratification of the climate deal at the EU level.

EU member states will also be required to ratify the deal, given that certain elements require implementation at the national level. Seven member states – Austria, Germany, France, Hungary, Portugal, Malta, and Slovakia – have already completed these domestic processes, which helped bring the Paris accord over the emissions threshold. (See Bridges Weekly, [29 September 2016](#))

"I encourage you to build on your proud legacy, and to support the speedy ratification of the Paris Agreement," UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon [said](#) on Tuesday ahead of the vote in the European Parliament.

"Such a swift embrace would be a remarkable achievement for any international agreement. It would be especially impressive for one that addresses one of the most complex, all-embracing issues of our time. In the past few weeks, we have seen tremendous momentum from all corners of the globe for bringing the Paris Agreement to life this year," he continued.

"We have the policies and tools to meet our targets, steer the global clean energy transition, and modernise our economy," EU Climate and Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete said in a [press release](#) on Tuesday.

Adopted just last December, support for the Paris Agreement has moved this process forward at a record pace, boosted by early commitments from major emitters. The US and China – the world's largest emitters – ratified the deal jointly in early September while India, which is the fourth largest, did so on this past Sunday. (See Bridges Weekly, [7 September 2016](#))

The expected [Indian ratification](#) was delivered to UN headquarters on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the country's independence movement and respected philosopher.

"There is no better way to commemorate the great Mahatma Gandhi and his legacy of peace for people and the planet," UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson [said](#) on Sunday.

Notably, Canada and New Zealand also ratified the accord this week, bringing the total of parties who have ratified to 74. These cover 58.82 percent of greenhouse gas emissions.

Of the world's [top ten](#) emitters, Indonesia, Japan, and Russia had yet to submit their instruments of ratification by press time.

Marrakesh expectations

The Paris Agreement also provides that the first meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, to be known as CMA1 for short, will be held in conjunction with next scheduled UNFCCC meet. This is due to take place in Marrakesh, Morocco, from 7-18 November.

The CMA will be the deal's governing body, with primary authority over its implementation, and only parties that have joined the agreement can take decisions that affect it. Non-participants can participate as observers.

According to the Paris Agreement and accompanying decisions from last year's UNFCCC meet, CMA1 would be required to take a number of decisions to help implement the deal.

This includes, for example, providing guidance for accounting countries' individual national climate action plans; adopting common modalities, procedures and guidelines for the transparency of action and support; and giving guidance for countries voluntarily cooperating on emissions reduction, among other things. Some areas of the Paris Agreement, such as accounting for public climate finance, are assigned a 2018 finalisation date.

At last year's climate meet, parties had created an ad hoc working group on the Paris Agreement (APA) to help prepare the entry into force of the deal along with the UNFCCC's existing subsidiary bodies. This would include overseeing the draft decisions to be forwarded to CMA1. Parties agreed an agenda for the APA during intersessional meetings in May in Bonn, Germany.

Discussions in Bonn also touched on the potential "early" entry into force of the Paris Agreement, given that stakeholders had previously expected a start date by around 2020. At the time, several parties suggested that the occurrence would not affect the rights of all parties to participate in the rulemaking process. (See Bridges Weekly, [2 June 2016](#))

According to some climate watchers, parties could manage the situation by opening CMA1 and then suspending it, either immediately or after having addressed some technical issues. Parties will also need to decide whether the CMA oversees ongoing preparatory work or whether to continue with the current arrangements through the APA and other bodies.

In the meantime, submissions from parties on various implementation areas are already being made to the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies. Some examples include [proposals](#) for accounting guidance on voluntary cooperation on emissions reductions, which can involve

the transfer of international emissions credits. These submissions also include views on the rules, modalities, and procedures for a mechanism to contribute to total greenhouse gas reduction, whereby emissions slashed in one country could be used by another to reach its climate action targets.

Elsewhere, the 191 members of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) are in the process of finalising a carbon offsetting scheme for international aviation, a sector not covered by the Paris Agreement. The ICAO Assembly concludes on Friday in Montreal, Canada.

ICTSD reporting; "INSIDER: CMA1, the First Meeting Under the Paris Agreement – Why It's Significant and How it Could Happen at COP22," WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE, 3 October 2016.

GLOBAL ECONOMY

UK Premier Sets Deadline for Starting EU Exit Negotiations

UK Prime Minister Theresa May announced on Sunday that she will formally request the start of negotiations for exiting the European Union by late March of next year, confirming again that the island nation will indeed proceed with a so-called "Brexit" despite some pending domestic legal challenges.

In a speech to the Conservative Conference, May also gave a broad outline of what the UK will be seeking as part of its exit package when it triggers "Article 50," the provision in the Treaty of Lisbon which allows for an existing EU member to negotiate their way out of the bloc.

The news comes as leaders from the remaining "EU 27" begin work on charting their own path as a group, without the UK – a process that is due for completion in March, the same month that May has set as a deadline for submitting the Article 50 notification. (See Bridges Weekly, [15 September 2016](#) and [22 September 2016](#))

Under the Treaty of Lisbon, any EU member who wishes to exit the bloc must formally notify the European Council of its intent to do so. This then starts a two-year window for negotiations between that country and the rest of the European Union, represented by the Council. A final agreement will require a "qualified majority" on the Council side, as well as the signoff from the European Parliament.

Should a deal not be reached within two years, the UK will be forced to leave the EU, unless all parties agree to extend the negotiations.

May: "No unnecessary delays"

Any announcements about the timetable of the "Brexit" negotiations have been closely watched since the June referendum, given both the political and policy implications for the European bloc. Fellow EU leaders have repeatedly urged the UK to proceed as promptly as possible in order to limit the economic fall-out that may otherwise arise from a period of prolonged uncertainty. (See Bridges Weekly, [15 September 2016](#))

Speaking to the Conservative Party conference last week, May said that "there will be no unnecessary delays in invoking Article 50." She clarified, however, that the UK will do so when it is fully ready.

Procedurally, she also sought to clarify which entities on the UK side would be responsible for submitting the Article 50 notification to the European Council, arguing that this will be a process conducted by the UK government – not either of the Houses of Parliament.

She also attempted to counter the suggestion that both the House of Lords and the House of Commons would need to agree on triggering Article 50 – as some critics have suggested.

"When it legislated to establish the referendum, Parliament put the decision to leave or remain inside the EU in the hands of the people. And the people gave their answer with emphatic clarity," she said, pledging to fight against domestic legal challenges on the subject.

The UK premier also said that while the government will consult with "devolved administrations" in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, it will ultimately be up to the UK government itself to conduct the negotiations.

Scotland and Northern Ireland had voted in favour to stay in the EU, and a legal challenge is underway in the latter to determine whether a parliamentary vote is needed to proceed with "Brexit."

Already the uncertainty prompted by the "Brexit" vote last June has led some international financial institutions to downgrade their growth predictions for the UK, along with having broader implications for the global economy.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) [said this week](#) that investor confidence has taken a hit in the wake of the UK referendum, with the Washington-based institution predicting that the UK will see growth slow from 2.2 percent in 2015 to 1.8 percent in 2016 and 1.7 percent in 2017.

Soft or hard Brexit: "False dichotomy"

Whether leaving the EU will entail a "soft" or "hard" Brexit has also been the subject of much speculation over the past several months, with fears of the latter scenario already causing the pound sterling's value to drop this week to levels not seen in over three decades.

A "hard" Brexit is one that would limit in some way the UK's level of access to the EU single market, while a "soft" Brexit has been interpreted as one that is more similar to the country's current relationship with the European Union.

However, casting it as a choice between the two sets up a "false dichotomy" that must be put aside, the UK premier said. Rather, striking a deal that will restore UK sovereignty while at the same time ensuring good trading terms with the 27 other EU member states should not be considered a "trade-off."

"The process we are about to begin is not about negotiating all of our sovereignty away again. It is not going to be about any of those matters over which the country has just voted to regain control," said the UK premier.

She also ruled out using a so-called "Norway" or "Switzerland" model in establishing a new UK-EU relationship, as some experts have suggested. May said instead that London will pursue its own approach, suitable to its own needs.

An ideal arrangement, she said, would be one featuring free trade and goods and services. "I want [the deal] to give British companies the maximum freedom to trade with and operate in the single market – and let European businesses do the same here."

However, she pledged that the UK would not yield control of immigration in the process, nor would it subject itself to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.

"As ever with international talks, it will be a negotiation... But make no mistake: this is going to be a deal that works for Britain," she said.

From EU to British law

One of the many questions prompted by the "Brexit" vote has been how the UK will extricate itself from the vast body of EU laws and regulations that has been developed over the last several decades.

May sought to clarify how this process would work during her speech on Sunday, confirming that the repeal of the European Communities Act would also include language that would convert existing EU law into British law.

From there, she suggested, the UK's Parliament will be able to then make changes to any laws, once these have gone through the necessary legislative reviews and debates. Current workers' rights will remain legally protected under her administration, she added.

This ability to change those laws, however, will be "subject to international agreements and treaties with other countries and the EU on matters such as trade."

Indeed, while the UK relationship with the EU single market has been one of the dominant questions in the overall "Brexit" debate, how the UK will [navigate](#) its relationship with the WTO as well as with those countries who have existing or planned trade deals with the European Union will also be key issues going forward.

The United Kingdom is already a member of the Geneva-based World Trade Organization in its own right. However, the European Commission currently conducts trade policy on behalf of its member states, and the UK's commitments at the WTO are expressed as part of the EU's overall commitments, rather than being [broken down](#) by member state.

UK Trade Minister Liam Fox has said that he aims to see his country's WTO relationship – particularly in addressing its "schedules" on goods and services as an individual member, rather than part of the EU – resolved with as little "disruption" to global trade as possible.

"We will want to see a position on WTO schedules adopted in a way that causes minimal disruption. That is not an entirely simple process, and we would never pretend that it is, but neither is it an insoluble riddle," he told the Huffington Post last weekend.

ICTSD reporting; "POLITICO Brexit Files: Sterling low FTSE high – EP red lines – Brexit breakfast," POLITICO, 4 October 2016; "Theresa May is right to offer clarity on Brexit timetable," FINANCIAL TIMES, 2 October 2016; "Theresa May sets Brexit course away from EU single market," FINANCIAL TIMES, 2 October 2016; "May puts UK on course for sector-by-sector deals on EU trade access," FINANCIAL TIMES, 2 October 2016; "Northern Ireland considers whether Brexit requires parliament vote," REUTERS, 4 October 2016; "Britain's Fox says wants new Brexit WTO terms with minimal disruption," REUTERS, 2 October 2016.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

WIPO Assemblies Get Underway, Focusing on Next Steps for Key Treaties

The UN's intellectual property agency opened its annual "Assemblies" this week, gearing up for a series of high-level meetings aimed at advancing the organisation's normative work in areas such as a possible industrial design treaty.

The Fifty-Sixth Assemblies of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) began on Monday 3 October and will end on 11 October, with this year's event being convened under the chairmanship of Latvian Ambassador Jānis Kārklīņš.

Looking ahead to the weeklong meetings, WIPO Director General Francis Gurry urged member states in [his opening address](#) to consider the complexity that arises for the intellectual property landscape, in light of "an economy in which value resides increasingly in intellectual assets, and in which technology and innovation are developing at accelerating speeds."

Visually impaired treaty in force

This year's meeting came just days after the entry into force of a major international treaty aimed at making it easier for the blind, visually impaired, and print disabled to access books in formats adapted to their needs.

The agreement was adopted three years ago in Marrakesh, Morocco, which is its namesake. Known formally as the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled, the international agreement has now been ratified by the required "contracting parties" and entered into force on 30 September. (See Bridges Weekly, [4 July 2013](#))

The list of countries where the treaty is in force includes Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, North Korea, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Israel, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Paraguay, Peru, South Korea, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, and Uruguay.

Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have also ratified the deal, submitting their instruments of ratification last month. The Marrakesh Treaty will enter into force for them in December.

Specifically, the accord aims to both facilitate the production of books in accessible formats, along with helping ease their exchange across country borders – particularly given that [over 90 percent](#) of published works are not available in formats designed for the blind or visually impaired. Approximately 285 million people in the world are either blind or otherwise print disabled, according to the [World Blind Union](#).

The Marrakesh Treaty's entry into force is a "major cause for celebration," Gurry said on Monday. The WIPO chief particularly acknowledged certain countries and regions for playing a major role during the ratification process, with India as the first member to ratify. Latin America is also the region with the most countries among the current contracting parties, while Australia and Canada were the first developed countries to join.

The WIPO chief also referred to progress of a related initiative, known as the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC). This partnership is led by WIPO and also includes publishing and author groups, as well as those organisations who work with the visually impaired.

To date, the ABC has helped support the lending of books in accessible formats – such as Braille, audio, or large print – to 100,000 visually impaired people across 16 countries. The consortium also [provides training](#) in developing countries for supporting the production and distribution of such books, along with working to support commercial publishers in developing e-books for the visually impaired community.

Design law treaty: next steps?

One of the key items on the docket during this year's Assemblies will be how to move forward on a design law treaty that has been under discussion for the past eight years.

The proposed treaty aims to harmonise industrial design registration formalities at the international level. It is being negotiated under WIPO's Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT).

Plans to convene a "diplomatic conference" – WIPO's highest level of meeting – to finalise talks on the proposed treaty have been repeatedly postponed. Last year, the WIPO Assemblies agreed to aim for a diplomatic conference in early 2017, following discussions on the unresolved issues of "technical assistance" and a possible "disclosure of origin" requirement aimed at protecting traditional assets from misappropriation.

According to Gurry, the SCT nearly managed to reach a deal on those remaining topics. The WIPO chief urged members to clinch a deal during the coming days, in the hopes of bringing the long-running talks to a close.

"There was widespread agreement on a common approach, with only isolated resistance," he told member states on Monday. "I very much hope that the member states will be able to bridge the remaining difference in this meeting and decide to convene the diplomatic conference in 2017."

Spurring forward other normative work?

The WIPO chief suggested to member states on Monday that progress on the industrial design treaty could help provide some much-needed political momentum to the UN agency's other rule-making efforts, most specifically its negotiations on a broadcasting treaty as well as its negotiations on an international instrument(s) involving traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, and genetic resources.

Neither of these are up for formal decisions at this year's meetings. However, Gurry suggested that the discussions on both issues during the coming week may still prove invaluable for next year's work, particularly given some upcoming deadlines.

The Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR) is the WIPO group tasked with the negotiations of the broadcasting treaty, which is focused on protecting the rights of broadcasting organisations. Past efforts at deciding on whether to convene a diplomatic conference have failed to bear fruit.

These efforts are [in response](#) to the so-called WIPO Internet treaties, which were signed two decades ago. These accords apply to copyright and also to performers and producers of phonograms (sound recordings), and were what triggered broadcasters to call for updated protection from having their signals stolen.

"While some further progress has been made in the past year in the technical understanding of the issues and in defining a way forward, the time has come, after 20 years, for member states to decide in a definitive manner what they wish to do with this item," said Gurry.

Meanwhile, the work on traditional knowledge, traditional culture expressions, and genetic resources has been conducted under the Intergovernmental Committee on Traditional Knowledge, Genetic Resources, and Folklore (IGC). That committee was established nearly two decades ago, in response to concerns from indigenous peoples and biodiversity-rich countries that these resources might be misappropriated and that their benefits might not be shared equitably.

The IGC process has faced several hurdles over the years. These include deciding what legal nature a final instrument(s) will take, along with how advanced the substantive discussions are. The fact that the committee's mandate must be renewed biennially has also led to intense debates at WIPO, including at last year's Assemblies, particularly given that the IGC's work had been on hiatus since 2014. (See Bridges Weekly, [8 October 2015](#))

The [mandate](#) for 2016-2017 involves a series of dedicated IGC meetings to the three overarching topics of traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, and genetic resources. Next year's WIPO Assemblies will then assess the advances made in that process, in order to determine whether to convene a diplomatic conference.

To date, two meetings have been held this year on the topic of genetic resources, with a working draft document having since been forwarded to the 2017 Assemblies – albeit with many unresolved issues. A meeting on traditional knowledge was held [last month](#). (See Bridges Weekly, [29 February 2016](#) and [9 June 2016](#)) A third IGC meeting will be held from 24-30 November.

"Steady progress has been made in the year to date by the IGC, but it is clear that a very concentrated effort at a political level will be required in the coming year in order to deliver positive results to the 2017 Assemblies," said Gurry.

Patent systems: year in review

[On Monday](#), Gurry also provided an overview of the various "global IP systems" – specifically WIPO's Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), the Madrid System for marks, and the Hague System for designs – noting that all of these had seen progress over the past year.

He referred to the need to keep working on expanding the geographical coverage of these systems, while also noting that some regions and intellectual property systems that were traditionally not that active have lately seen increased activity.

For example, Asia accounted for nearly 44 percent of international patent applications in 2015, followed by North America and Europe with 28 and 27 percent, respectively. He also emphasised that the accession of several major economies has made the Hague System for designs much more dynamic, with applications in 2015 having grown by almost 41 percent.

External offices

Another sensitive issue being treated in this year's meeting is the long-running discussion on the potential opening of three new external WIPO offices. Last year, the Assemblies agreed that priority would be given to Africa in allocating the offices.

According to [a report](#) from the WIPO secretariat, 18 member states have submitted requests to host. This group includes Algeria, Azerbaijan, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Iran, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Panama, Romania, South Korea, Tunisia, and Turkey.

Going into the meeting, Algeria and Nigeria are reportedly those that have received the African Group's backing, while the Group of Latin American and Caribbean countries has supported Colombia, according to IP-Watch.

Two-layer complexity

Looking forward, "complexity" was the word Gurry chose to bundle up the challenges ahead for the UN agency. This includes "subject-matter complexity" in "a world of great asymmetries in knowledge capacity," with the Director General citing in this context the wide range of existing economic models, from pre- to post-industrial, and the different roles that intellectual property rights play within them.

There is also "institutional complexity," which the WIPO chief said was the result of the former, and has taken shape in a diverse set of intellectual property frameworks at the national, bilateral, plurilateral, regional, and multilateral levels, all of which are interconnected.

Finally, Gurry invited members to reflect on "the role of the multilateral in this new landscape of multi-speed and multi-layered complexity."

A recap of the WIPO Assemblies' outcomes will be provided in the next edition of Bridges.

ICTSD reporting; "External Offices, WIPO Normative Work At Heart of General Assemblies," IP WATCH, 3 October 2016.

GLOBAL ECONOMY

IMF, World Bank Chiefs Call for Addressing Inequality, Protectionism At Annual Meetings

Issues relating to inequality will be high on the agenda at this weekend's Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Group, being held from 7-9 October in Washington.

The meetings held between the two Bretton Woods institutions are expected to focus on how to build a stronger case for closer integration and trade openness, in a climate where globalisation is widely being blamed for generating and perpetuating inequities in the global community.

The meetings are expected to explore ways of handling the impact of globalisation and technology, harnessing digital development, encouraging inclusion and integration, deploying finance for development, managing migration, and stimulating economic growth, among other topics.

The Annual Meetings are held every autumn to give the Board of Governors from each institution the chance to discuss policy issues of global concern, including poverty reduction, economic development, and the effectiveness of aid efforts, and provide an overview of the world economic outlook as well as on global financial markets.

During this process, the IMF's International Monetary and Finance Committee (IMFC) and the joint World Bank-IMF Development Committee also meet to steer the direction of the two organisations and advise the Boards accordingly. The Annual Meetings are complemented by Spring Meetings, which took place this year during the week of 11-17 April in Washington and also focused heavily on flagging global growth rates. (See Bridges Weekly, [21 April 2016](#) and [14 April 2016](#))

Various other constituencies are also slated to hold ministerial-level meetings on the sidelines, such as the G-20, G-24 and the Commonwealth, as in previous years.

Tackling inequality

Global extreme poverty as well as income inequality both across and within many countries has been decreasing, according to the [inaugural study](#) in a new World Bank series on Poverty and Shared Prosperity. However, there is still much to be done, according to World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, who spoke at the Brookings Institution on Monday.

Kim was recently reappointed to a second five-year term at head of the bank, to commence 1 July 2017, following a unanimous decision on behalf of the Board of Executive Directors.

"Today's report identifies strategies to address inequality that even the poorest nations can adopt – whether through conditional cash transfer, connecting farmers to markets, or rural electrification. The lesson is that inequality is not an unsolvable mystery," he said.

As part of a pathway towards ending extreme poverty by 2030 and further minimising inequality, Kim has [singled out](#) inclusive and sustainable economic growth through private sector investment in infrastructure, where emerging and low-income economies currently face a gap of US\$1.5 trillion dollars a year in financing.

In addition, he encouraged renewed investment in human capital and attention to matters of health, education, and skills development to help countries to compete in the economy. Kim added that mechanisms should be put in place to withstand global shocks, such as those that incurred the financial crisis in 2008.

Keeping protectionist pressures at bay

Mounting frustrations with globalisation and its role in exacerbating inequalities is causing a backlash against integration and rising pressure against entering into trade agreements.

Rising populist pressures have most recently been manifested in the result of the June UK referendum, with nationalistic sentiments echoing across the European continent, as well as the ongoing battle between presidential candidates in the United States over how to approach economic and trade policy in a way that responds to these concerns – an effort that has led both to publicly distance themselves from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, a 12-country deal negotiated under the outgoing Obama Administration. (See Bridges Weekly, [29 September 2016](#))

Ahead of the upcoming meetings, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde has encouraged policymakers in attendance to avoid lending their backing to protectionist policy approaches.

[Addressing Northwestern University](#) on 28 September, she focused specifically on the importance of trade – and the risks of turning inward.

"If we were to turn our backs on trade now, we would be choking off a key driver of growth," she said, referring to trade restrictions as a "clear form of economic malpractice." The IMF chief cited blockage of access to important economic opportunities, disruption of supply chains, and inflated prices on basic goods as among the consequences that would ensue.

Lagarde harkened back to the history of cooperation in trade and to the 1944 Bretton Woods conference itself to vouch for continued trade openness.

"Since World War Two, trade has been the engine that has propelled economic progress," she said.

Kim similarly affirmed the message that inward-looking approaches – whether in policy or in partnerships – would prove a hindrance to global growth.

"We need more cooperation, greater economic integration, and stronger partnerships than ever before," he said, arguing that these would help boost economic growth, while noting that greater emphasis must be put on ensuring that growth is equitable and inclusive.

ICTSD reporting; "Backlash to World Economic Order Clouds Outlook at IMF Talks," BLOOMBERG, 4 October 2016.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

Azevêdo Urges WTO Members to Deepen Engagement for MC11 Outcomes

WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo urged members this week to deepen their engagement as they work to determine possible negotiating outcomes for their Eleventh Ministerial Conference (MC11), which will be held in the Argentine capital city of Buenos Aires in late 2017.

"This is the time to engage. This is the moment to ensure that your priorities and concerns are reflected – to ensure that they are on the table," said Azevêdo at a meeting of the organisation's General Council on Monday.

The General Council is the organisation's highest decision-making body outside of the ministerial conference, with this week's meeting marking the first since the WTO's August hiatus.

"We can only go as far as our legs allow. Whatever we do - on any issue - will not be the end of the road. It will be a first step," he added.

At an informal meeting last week of "heads of delegation," some WTO members similarly called for scaling up the negotiating action in order to have a smoother road to Buenos Aires than they had for the previous ministerial in Nairobi in 2015.

"Although we are seeing some positive developments in certain areas of work, we remain concerned about the overall pace of discussions and the engagement of members to advance multilaterally on certain topics," said EU Ambassador Marc Vanheukelen last week.

"We need to start having clarity on the overall picture soon if we want to avoid the problems we encountered in the runup to Nairobi," he added.

Indeed, trade sources say that an upcoming "mini-ministerial" in Oslo, Norway, later this month may be able to yield some useful political momentum for negotiators as they begin to ramp up their preparations for next year's Buenos Aires gathering.

Fisheries, services

Since the previous ministerial in Nairobi, Kenya, last December, WTO members have been engaged in a process of "reflection" in an effort to determine where the organisation should go next, particularly in light of the interest by various members to explore so-called "new issues," along with the "agreement to disagree" on whether to continue using the Doha Round framework in structuring the WTO negotiations. (See Bridges Weekly, [28 July 2016](#))

In recent weeks, some new developments have emerged that could signal what direction negotiators will be taking as they begin ramping up their activities ahead of the Buenos Aires ministerial.

One of these areas involves fisheries, where WTO members have said that they hope to achieve some multilaterally agreed outcome in time for the next ministerial after earlier efforts to clinch an outcome in Nairobi failed last December.

Concurrently, a joint initiative by 13 WTO members to begin preparing for negotiations on disciplining harmful fisheries subsidies was announced last month. (See Bridges Weekly, [22 September 2016](#))

How these two sets of negotiations may proceed in parallel will be a key question moving forward, with sources familiar with the new subsidies initiative saying that this will not preclude pursuing a multilaterally-agreed outcome. However, some WTO members not involved in the new initiative, such as the EU, have said that this topic is best addressed at the multilateral level.

Meanwhile, some members have also expressed interest in revamping the WTO's work programme on e-commerce, with a dedicated discussion on the subject expected later this month. There has also been a renewed push for outcomes on domestic regulation in services, as well as trade facilitation in the latter.

The WTO's Working Party on Domestic Regulation is due to meet on Thursday morning, which will see discussions on two new documents circulated in recent days – one by India on trade facilitation in services (TFS), covering all modes of supply, along with a communication from Australia, Chile, Colombia, the EU, Mexico, Norway, South Korea, and Taiwan on so-called "administrative measures" in services domestic regulation.

The Indian concept note is divided into an "illustrative" list of cross-cutting issues – such as publication and availability of information, including electronically – that could be address in a services facilitation deal, along with select topics specific to the four different modes of supply.

"India firmly believes that like the TFA, a well-structured TFS will significantly enhance the potential for trade in services for all members," the document says. The TFA refers to the existing Trade Facilitation Agreement, which covers goods trade and is in the ratification stage.

US-China grains dispute casts shadow over farm talks

On the subject of agriculture, trade officials told Bridges that they were waiting to see what would happen next in the legal challenge that Washington initiated last month on Beijing's grain subsidies. (See Bridges Weekly, [15 September 2016](#))

The US has begun the first step in legal proceedings at the WTO by requesting consultations with China over its support programmes – which some observers say could cast a pall over efforts to negotiate an outcome on agricultural domestic support ahead of the next ministerial conference.

"We're waiting to see how that plays out," one source said.

Another trade official said that the US elections also limited how much could be achieved in the talks in the short term, as American officials were effectively unable to engage meaningfully in the process until there was more clarity on the approach the new Administration would take.

The US has reportedly said that it will aim to continue constructive engagement in the WTO talks, while acknowledging the domestic electoral context.

In the meantime, the legal challenge could remain at the consultation stage – possibly even for years – or the US could eventually request that the WTO establishes a dispute settlement panel.

In the meantime, other countries could continue to push for improvements to be made in global farm subsidy rules – with the upcoming Oslo meeting the next opportunity for members to test the waters on this issue, sources said.

Members such as the EU and Brazil are believed to be looking at potential options in this area, sources told Bridges, possibly with a view to tabling an informal paper on the topic at the global trade body.

ICTSD reporting.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming Soon

7 October, Washington, US. BROOKINGS INSTITUTION SEMINAR "DIGITAL POLICY LESSONS FOR THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION." This seminar is being hosted by the Governance Studies Department at the Brookings Institution and will feature as its moderator Cameron Kerry, visiting fellow for the Centre for Technology and Innovation. The panel aims to discuss what lessons the next US president should draw from recent developments in the digital field, including with regards to economic growth and national security, among other related concerns. More information and registration is available [here](#).

7 October, Washington, US. 2016 BRAZIL ECONOMIC CONFERENCE. This conference is being hosted by the Wilson Centre featuring as its guest speakers the Finance Minister of Brazil, the President of the Central Bank of Brazil, and heads of various global corporations. This conference will discuss the current economic outlook in Brazil, with over 250 leaders from the Brazilian-American business community expected to attend. More information and registration is available [here](#).

8-14 October, Kigali, Rwanda. 28TH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL. This meeting of the parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer will examine a series of topics related to the implementation of the international treaty, including the possible adoption of an amendment on phasing down the use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Additional information, including pre-session documents, can be found [here](#).

10-11 October, London, United Kingdom. CHATHAM HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE 2016. This Chatham House conference is sponsored by the Climate & Development Knowledge Network and the Mott MacDonald Group. The two-day conference will explore issues such as the implications of the Paris Agreement on climate change for capital investment, innovation and planning in the public and private sectors, as well as the impact of low fossil fuel prices and the fragile global economy. For more information, click [here](#).

11 October, Brussels, Belgium. POLICY ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTING CONSUMPTION-BASED CLIMATE POLICIES. This event marks the final workshop of the Carbon-CAP Project, a three-year endeavour which has sought to examine ways that EU policy may facilitate a move toward reduced carbon consumption patterns. The project's participants include academics, private sector and government representatives, and consumer groups. The International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), the publisher of Bridges, is part of the Carbon-CAP's project team. More information is available [here](#).

12 October, Istanbul, Turkey. 23RD WORLD ENERGY CONGRESS. THE IMPERATIVE OF TRADE: ACCELERATING THE INNOVATION TRANSFER. This conference is being organized by the World Energy Council and aims to discuss how countries can tackle tariffs and non-tariff measures (NTMs) to accelerate the transfer of low-carbon technologies across borders. Panellists will also discuss how the APEC agreement can be replicated on a regional or global level. For more information, click [here](#).

12-13 October, Jakarta, Indonesia. 2ND WORKSHOP ON BEST PRACTICES FOR DEVELOPING THE GREEN ENERGY SMART FARM IN APEC REGION. This workshop is part of a larger APEC project that aims to demonstrate a best practical model for developing the

green energy smart farm with the small-scale standalone distributed renewable energy system. The project will also introduce a financial mechanism to benefit farmer families in the APEC region. The workshop will provide updates on the project implementation. 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.

7 October: Council for Trade in Services

10 October: Informal Trade Policy Review Body

11 + 13 October: Trade Policy Review Body - Korea

11 October: Committee on Market Access

13 October: Committee on Budget, Finance, and Administration

Other Upcoming Events

18 October, Accra, Ghana. ACHIEVING A NUTRITION REVOLUTION: THE ROAD TO HEALTHIER DIETS AND OPTIMAL NUTRITION. This conference is being organised by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the African Union Commission (AUC) to examine the progress made to date in implementing the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), a continental policy framework focused on agriculture, food security, and nutrition. Expected participants include private sector and government representatives, academics, and civil society and farmer groups, among others. More information is available [here](#).

18-19 October, Paris, France. 16TH IEA-IETA-EPRI ANNUAL WORKSHOP ON GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION TRADING. The workshop will cover the following themes: an opening session on the Paris Agreement and how international trading can be used to achieve and surpass nationally determined contributions (NDCs); an update on China's national emissions trading system (ETS) and in the Asia-Pacific region; a dedicated roundtable to the EU ETS; a session about the new market mechanisms that might emerge from the Paris Agreement; a discussion on the evolution of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions trading in North America; and a session on the global market-based mechanism that is being negotiated for the aviation sector. For more information, click [here](#).

25-27 October, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. 2016 UNEP FI GLOBAL ROUNDTABLE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. The UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) Finance Initiative (FI) will aim to use this year's global roundtable to follow up on the advances seen as a result of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change, and examine how the finance sector can help drive sustainable development. The meeting is being hosted by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment of the United Arab Emirates, with support from various other partners. More information can be found [here](#).

7-18 November, Marrakech, Morocco. UNFCCC COP22. The 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will focus on preparations for the Paris Agreement on climate change's entry into force. The UN negotiations are being held this year under the presidency of Morocco, and will be the first

under new UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa. To learn more, visit the COP22 [website](#).

5-7 December, Abuja, Nigeria. AFRICAN ECONOMIC CONFERENCE 2016. The theme of this year's African Economic Conference will be "Feeding Africa: Towards Agro-Allied Industrialization for Inclusive Growth." The meeting is being organised jointly by the African Development Bank Group (AfDB), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Coming in the wake of the 2015 adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other key international events, this meeting will focus on how agricultural policy in the content must evolve to achieve improved growth and help address poverty and hunger. More information is available [here](#).

Resources

THE LAW AND ECONOMICS OF A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY TRADE AGREEMENT. Edited by Gary C. Hufbauer, Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, and Richard Samans. Published by Cambridge University Press (August 2016). This book features a series of contributions from top experts in trade and environment, who together make the case for developed a Sustainable Energy Trade Agreement (SETA). The chapters examine how to address trade barriers in goods and services in a way that supports scaling up the supply and deployment of sustainable energy. To learn more about the book, visit the Cambridge University Press [website](#).

IMPLEMENTING THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT: FROM VISION TO REALITY. By Nora Neufeld for the World Trade Organization (WTO) (September 2016). The paper chronicles the path from the conclusion of the talks at the 2013 Bali Ministerial Conference to the present as the global trade body prepares for the Agreement to enter into force. The author provides an overview of the ratification efforts to date, along with looking forward to future work, including the trade deal's implementation. The publication can be found [here](#).

TRADE POLICIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS. Published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) (September 2016). This paper surveys the types of trade and trade-related policies that are the most relevant to facilitate increased and improved country participation in global value chains (GVCs). It also examines what such policies mean for GVCs' potential to support sustainable development objectives. The new paper is available for download [here](#).

PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS IN LATIN AMERICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR TRADE AND TRADE-RELATED POLICY. By Julien Gourdon and Przemysław Kowalski for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (September 2016). This report reviews global value chain (GVC) participation in select Latin American countries, looking at a series of trade-related topics such as preferential trade accords in this context. The publication is available for download [here](#).

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT, 2016: STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINED GROWTH. Published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (September 2016). This report reviews recent trends in the global economy and focuses on the policies needed to foster structural transformation. The full report is available for download [here](#).

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