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TRADE AGREEMENTS

NAFTA Preparations Ramp Up as US Trade Rep Releases Negotiating Objectives

The Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) released a summary of its planned [negotiating objectives](#) for the upcoming renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on Monday 17 July, outlining a series of areas where it would like to see changes to existing provisions or the enactment of new terms.

Negotiators from the three NAFTA countries – the US, Canada, and Mexico – are slated to begin formal talks to update the decades-old pact on 16 August in Washington. The publication of this summary is required under the [2015 Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act](#), known more commonly as Trade Promotion Authority. (See Bridges Weekly, [2 July 2015](#))

That legislation requires the Office of the USTR to release publicly "a detailed and comprehensive summary of the specific objectives with respect to the negotiations, and a description of how the agreement, if successfully concluded, will further those objectives and benefit the United States" at least 30 days before the official launch of negotiations.

Tackling deficits

The USTR document sets out over nearly 17 pages the Trump Administration's planned approach to goods and services trade, technical barriers to trade, investment, intellectual property, labour, environment, and a host of other topics that it would like to see addressed in the planned NAFTA reboot.

The text frames this endeavour as a way to "ensure truly fair trade," claiming that under the current version of the trilateral accord, "trade deficits have exploded," with manufacturing jobs taking a particular hit.

Achieving the above-mentioned fair trade, the document says, would mean "the elimination of unfair subsidies, market-distorting practices by state-owned enterprises, and burdensome restrictions of intellectual property" and taking steps to make market access more "reciprocal."

The original NAFTA has been in force since 1994, and includes sections governing goods trade, government procurement, technical barriers to trade, investment and services, dispute settlement, and intellectual property rights. The prospect of an updated deal has fuelled intense interest from industry groups, civil society actors, and trade negotiators alike. According to the [US Federal Register](#), over 12,400 comments were submitted during the public consultations period.

Objectives raised

The negotiating objectives set out on Monday refer to changes both in existing chapters of the accord – such as trade in goods and services, or dispute settlement – along with advocating for a series of topics that were either not part of the original deal or were instead included in a side agreement.

For example, the US is looking to see specific provisions on digital trade, state-owned and controlled enterprises, labour, and environment. The final two subjects – labour and environment – were addressed in the original NAFTA mainly under the North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation (NAALC) and the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), respectively.

On labour and environmental issues, the USTR document said that it is looking to see “strong and enforceable” provisions that would be subject to NAFTA dispute settlement rules, and to bring these areas into the main trade deal text instead of addressing them separately. It then goes on to outline goals such as ensuring that parties “do not waive or derogate” from the relevant labour and environmental laws “in a manner affecting trade or investment between the parties,” among other objectives.

The negotiating objectives on environment include bullet points on tackling illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) and banning “harmful fisheries subsidies, such as those that contribute to overfishing and IUU fishing.” Concurrently, WTO members are negotiating global disciplines on harmful fisheries subsidies, with the goal of finalising a deal in time for the organisation’s upcoming ministerial conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, this December. (For more on the WTO fisheries negotiations, see related story, this edition)

On investment, the negotiating objectives refer to cutting back on hurdles that limit US companies’ abilities to invest in Canada and Mexico. It also refers to investor protections, without going into much detail on that front. The current version of NAFTA has an investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism in place under [Chapter 11](#), which deals with investment issues more broadly.

The new USTR objectives call for “[securing] for US investors in the NAFTA countries important rights consistent with US legal principles and practice, while ensuring that NAFTA country investors in the United States are not accorded greater substantive rights than domestic investors.”

The topic of NAFTA dispute settlement has also been raised in relation to other negotiating areas, with the US looking to “eliminate the Chapter 19 dispute settlement mechanism” with respect to trade remedies and to take steps on state-state dispute settlement to make it more “transparent” and “timely.”

Meanwhile, the section on digital trade calls for enacting NAFTA provisions that prevent countries from limiting cross-border data flows, among other steps, and ensure digital products do not face custom fees or discriminatory treatment.

Along with covering various other areas, the objectives conclude with a brief paragraph on the hot-button subject of currency, which calls for setting up an “appropriate mechanism” to prevent currency manipulation, without elaborating what that mechanism would entail.

The mechanism would “ensure that the NAFTA countries avoid manipulating exchange rates in order to prevent effective balance of payments adjustment or to gain an unfair competitive advantage.”

Last month, Lighthizer responded to US lawmakers’ questions on whether enforceable rules on currency would feature in the updated agreement, even though the issue of manipulation itself has not been a specific problem with Washington’s NAFTA partners.

At the time, the US trade chief said that the administration was still weighing its options, while suggesting that the upcoming NAFTA talks could serve as a chance “to put together what is a model agreement.” (See Bridges Weekly, [29 June 2017](#))

US House, Senate lawmakers weigh in

The top US Senate and House lawmakers on trade swiftly issued statements in response to the negotiating objectives, with some welcoming the move as a useful clarification, while others calling for further details and greater ambition.

“These objectives – which will be further developed as the negotiations proceed – are an important part of the public discussion about the launch of the upcoming trade talks among our three nations,” [said](#) Orrin Hatch, the Republican senator from Utah who chairs the Senate Finance Committee.

The Utah senator also said that the negotiating objective should go further, particularly in terms of intellectual property protections, regulatory provisions, and enforcement.

His Democratic counterpart on that panel, Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon, [flagged](#) some areas in the USTR document that he argued were lacking in sufficient “ambition,” while also criticising the overall document for being “hopelessly vague” on how this approach would “benefit the United States” in certain important areas.

He also noted that some of the objectives raised in the USTR document involve topics that were already negotiated under the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, of which the US is no longer a signatory.

“It suggests that in other areas, such as the environment, the Administration is planning to come to the table with watered down versions of TPP proposals. It is surprising that in key areas the Trump Administration is seeking outcomes that were achieved in the TPP, which the President said was a bad agreement,” said Wyden.

The TPP was a 12-country trade agreement that previously included the United States among its signatories. While the accord was one of the top priorities under former US President Barack Obama’s trade strategy, particularly given its potential to develop deeper ties with Asia-Pacific markets and set a template of future trade rule-making, the TPP was panned by Trump on the campaign trail last year and was subject to heavy public scrutiny.

After taking office, Trump withdrew the United States from the trade deal, leaving the remaining 11 members – a group that includes Canada and Mexico – to examine how best to proceed without the coalition’s largest economy. (For more on the TPP-11, see related story, this edition)

Trudeau: Avoid “race to the bottom”

The release of the document came just days after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [addressed](#) US state governors at a meeting of the National Governors Association, defending the benefits seen under the current version of NAFTA while noting the potential gains from an upgrade – along with the pitfalls that could emerge.

Speaking in Providence, Rhode Island, on 14 July, the Canadian leader repeatedly emphasised the importance of the US-Canada relationship, while noting that like any relationship, it requires continued care and attention.

"Let's face it, this is another truth about good neighbours: sometimes we take each other for granted. Sometimes the very dependability and ease of a relationship can lead to us paying too little attention," he said.

Trudeau also touted the benefits of NAFTA for workers on both sides of their shared border, noting that approximately two-thirds of American states count Canada as their biggest destination for exports, and that Canada overall is the United States' "biggest, best customer, by far," outpacing China, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

"This is the most successful economic partnership in the history of the world. It's worth about a trillion dollars each year, and most importantly, it's well balanced," he added, while supporting the idea of updating the accord.

However, Trudeau warned against taking "politically-tempting shortcuts," such as incorporating local content requirements, being less open in public procurement market access, and taking on additional trade barriers.

"Such policies kill growth. And that hurts the very workers these measures are nominally intended to protect. Once we travel down that road, it can quickly become a cycle of tit-for-tat, a race to the bottom, where all sides lose. My friends, Canada doesn't want to go there," he said.

Mexican, Canadian ministries highlight own preparations

The US' NAFTA partners have both welcomed the additional clarity on Washington's intended approach, issuing statements noting their preparations for the mid-August launch of negotiations.

Both Canada and Mexico are currently holding public consultations with their domestic constituencies, with the time period for Ottawa's consultations recently extended. Mexico's consultations will end in early August.

"The government of Mexico will work towards a constructive negotiating process that will help boost trade and investment flows and consolidate cooperation and economic integration in order to strengthen North American connectivity," [said](#) the Mexican Secretariat of the Economy.

"When negotiations begin, we will be ready to work with our partners to modernise NAFTA, while defending Canada's national interest and standing up for our values," [said](#) Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland.

ICTSD reporting; "Federal government extends public consultations as launch of NAFTA renegotiations looms," THE CANADIAN PRESS, 18 July 2017; "Trump administration reveals goals ahead of NAFTA talks with Canada, Mexico," CBC NEWS, 17 July 2017.

AGRICULTURE

EU, Brazil Call for New WTO Rules on Farm Subsidies, Food Security

The EU, Brazil, and three other Latin American countries have tabled a new [proposal](#) on farm subsidy reform for negotiation ahead of the WTO's eleventh ministerial conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, this December.

Colombia, Peru, and Uruguay also co-sponsored the proposal, which was submitted ahead of a 19 July meeting of the WTO's negotiating committee on agriculture. Those countries are all agricultural exporters that favour faster liberalisation of global farm trade.

The proposal coincided with three other submissions charting alternative approaches, and a new proposal from Singapore on transparency in agricultural export prohibitions or restrictions.

Many countries see updated global rules on domestic farm support as a key topic for the Buenos Aires ministerial. However, negotiators are also looking at options beyond that meeting, such as a work programme, given the limited time remaining between now and December. (See Bridges Weekly, [8 June 2017](#))

Malmström: An "ambitious and realistic" proposal

Along with outlining proposed new upper limits on trade-distorting agricultural domestic support, the new EU-Brazil proposal suggests ways for WTO farm subsidy rules to account for food bought by developing country governments for public stocks, along with recommending special treatment for cotton.

The topics are seen as linked by many countries, although trade ministers have agreed that WTO negotiations on these issues would be addressed under separate tracks. (See Bridges Daily Update, [19 December 2015](#))

"Together with Brazil and other countries we are demonstrating our staunch support for a global trading system based on rules, at an important time for the World Trade Organization," said EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström in a [statement](#) on the new proposal. She called the proposed approach both "ambitious and realistic."

Capping trade-distorting support

The EU-Brazil paper calls for capping agriculture subsidies as a share of farm output. Developing countries would be able to provide more support than developed countries, or introduce new ceilings at a later date. There would be no constraints on trade-distorting support provided by least developed countries (LDCs).

Under a "de minimis" clause within WTO agriculture rules, developed countries can provide up to five percent of the value of production through product-specific support, and another five percent as non-product-specific support, such as subsidies for fertilisers. Most developing countries can provide twice that amount, although China accepted a lower limit of 8.5 percent for both types of support when it joined the WTO in 2001.

However, provisions on "amber box" support allow many developed countries to give additional trade-distorting support up to a level that was agreed under the Uruguay Round

of trade talks, and which is usually much higher than current support levels. Developing countries such as those in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group have called for lower ceilings. (See Bridges Weekly, [17 November 2016](#))

The new EU-Brazil proposal would cover trade-distorting support in both the amber box and de minimis categories, with exact limits for developed and developing countries subject to negotiation. Another category of trade-distorting support – production-limiting “blue box” payments – would be subject to further negotiations at the twelfth ministerial conference, likely set for 2019.

Members should also continue to respect the existing domestic support ceilings under the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture, such as commitments in absolute monetary terms on amber box spending, the co-sponsors say.

Governments would also provide the WTO secretariat with additional information on their support schemes. Calculations of the value of production would be based on the average of the three most recent years of data that have been submitted to the WTO's Committee on Agriculture.

One trade source familiar with the proposal told Bridges that this requirement was intended to incentivise countries to report their farm subsidy levels – including the value of production – to the committee more regularly, given current backlogs. (See Bridges Weekly, [12 May 2016](#))

Public stockholding for food security purposes

India, China, and other WTO members in the G-33 coalition of developing countries have argued that farm subsidy rules should give greater flexibility to developing countries that buy food at minimum prices as part of their public stockholding programmes for food security purposes. The new EU-Brazil submission puts forward what the co-sponsors say could provide a lasting solution in this area.

The proposal builds on an [agreement](#) from the WTO's Bali ministerial conference in 2013, shortly after several price spikes caused many developing countries to fear that the associated food price inflation could cause their support programmes to exceed WTO limits. (See Bridges Weekly, [7 December 2013](#))

When countries buy traditional staple food crops at minimum prices as part of these public stockholding programmes, the co-sponsors say that there should be circumstances where this support would not count towards WTO ceilings in the amber box or de minimis, or towards the proposed new limits expressed as a share of the value of production.

Support provided by LDCs would be exempt from these limits, while support provided under food stockholding programmes in place at the time of the 2013 Bali deal would also not count towards the existing and proposed limits – provided that countries also respect the other requirements outlined in the Bali agreement, such as improved transparency.

Support under new stockholding programmes would also be exempt, though the value of the stocks procured must not exceed 10 percent of the average value of production in the three most recent WTO domestic support notifications.

Cotton: tighter new rules

The new EU-Brazil proposal also recalls that trade ministers at previous WTO ministerials have agreed to address cotton “ambitiously, expeditiously and specifically,” at the behest of some West African countries which argue that their farmers are adversely affected by trade-distorting support elsewhere.

The co-sponsors propose that all trade-distorting support for cotton face a new overall limit, expressed as a share of the value of cotton production, that would be negotiated by WTO members.

They would also agree to review by 2019 how this product-specific limit affects trade, to determine next steps in phasing out such support.

Fixed or floating limits?

Another negotiating [submission](#) from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Paraguay argues instead for new domestic support disciplines based on fixed limits, rather than floating ones such as those tied to the value of production.

"It is essential that exporters and producers be able to predict the upper limits of members' domestic support outlays, allowing them to predict market behaviour and hedge against risk," the four countries say.

They also caution that floating limits based on this criterion will grow annually, given that the value of agricultural production in most countries has tended to increase.

They add that fixed support caps would allow members to focus on addressing the WTO notifications backlog, "without having to grapple with additional notification requirements."

Eliminating amber box support?

An informal China-India submission also diverges from the EU-Brazil approach, but for different reasons. The two Asian trading powers argue that imbalances in countries' existing entitlements to provide trade-distorting "amber box" support are unfair, and call for eliminating these "Aggregate Measure of Support" (AMS) commitments as a "pre-requisite" for looking at other domestic support reforms.

They also call for developing countries to be allowed to maintain their existing "de minimis" flexibilities, without any new ceilings or cuts, according to a copy of the proposal seen by Bridges.

The paper includes data to support the argument that existing "amber box" ceilings have allowed developed countries to provide significant levels of trade-distorting support, drawing on figures for Canada, the EU, and the US.

G-10 countries advocate for caps

The informal China-India paper appeared to diverge from the approach put forward by Switzerland, Japan, and other [G-10 countries](#). Their submission argues that WTO members' existing entitlements for amber box and "de minimis" support should be a starting point for new disciplines.

The group indicates that it would be willing to consider an overall cap for these types of support, perhaps by converting countries' entitlements in these areas into monetary terms.

The G-10, which includes countries with highly protected farm sectors, also warns against WTO members pursuing talks on new product-specific limits that would help prevent trade-distorting support from focusing on a limited number of farm goods. (See Bridges Weekly, [24 May 2017](#))

ICTSD reporting.

FISHERIES

WTO Members Prepare for Next Chapter in Fisheries Negotiations

Negotiators have been examining an influx of new and updated proposals to establish WTO disciplines on harmful fisheries subsidies over the past week, as they prepare to enter the next stage of talks for a potential deal at the organisation's ministerial conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, later this year.

At press time, the members and member groups that have put forward proposals within the "rules negotiating group" include the Least Developed Country (LDC) Group; the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group; the European Union; Norway; New Zealand, Iceland, and Pakistan; Indonesia; and a group of Latin American countries.

While some of these proposals were tabled and discussed earlier in the year, such as the New Zealand, Iceland, and Pakistan proposal, others are revisions from earlier documents, or in the case of the ACP and LDC groups are textual proposals building off previous concept papers. The push to put all proposals on the table came with the WTO's annual August break fast approaching, with negotiations to then resume in Geneva this autumn.

According to a Geneva trade official, the chair of the rules negotiations, Ambassador Wayne McCook of Jamaica, will now be preparing with the support of the WTO secretariat a document that summarises the different factual aspects of these proposals in a matrix format to facilitate this next stage of the talks.

Negotiations on fisheries subsidies at the Geneva-based organisation are held within the "rules negotiating group," which also tackles subjects such as trade remedies. In related news, Geneva trade officials say that a proposal from China to discuss improvements in transparency and due process in trade remedy investigations remains a point of contention among the rules negotiating group, though members welcomed the pledge from Beijing last week that progress on this subject would not be tied to the talks on fish.

Updated proposals

The seven fish subsidies proposals currently under consideration address a series of issues, which viewed together exhibit some of the nuances and differences that have emerged in the recent discussions.

Many of them feature language such as how to define a subsidy in this context; what types of subsidies would be prohibited and how to define them; how to discipline subsidies to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; disciplines and carve-outs related to subsidies to overfished stocks, overfishing, and overcapacity; special and differential treatment, including how to define terms such as artisanal and small-scale fishing; notifications; transitional arrangements; and monitoring and review.

The proposals from Indonesia, the EU, and the Latin American country group are all revisions from earlier submissions to the global trade body. The European Union's updated proposal, dated 6 July, now includes text in brackets, and shows where text has been added or removed from the earlier iteration.

The EU adds early in the proposal that the share of overfished stocks already surpassed 31 percent four years ago, and later includes an additional prohibition to ban subsidies for

"fishing outside the territorial sea that negatively affect targeted fish stocks that are in an overfished condition."

Changes to the EU's previous proposal also include the addition of language regarding a to-be-defined "transition period" for subsidies that boost fishing vessel capacity or ability to track down fish, among select other subsidies, so long as the vessel involved "does not target fish stocks that are in an overfished condition."

Other changes relate to notifications, such as asking developing or least developed countries to indicate whether they have used the proposed flexibilities in the EU text. These flexibilities are outlined under Article 4 and involve, for instance, allowing these countries to provide subsidies for fishing vessels engaged in subsistence fishing (Article 4.1), or to give financial support for other uses that would otherwise be prohibited, so long as the fish stocks targeted using the subsidy are not overfished and have a management plan in place (Article 4.2).

They also include a provision, numbered 4.2bis in the proposal, which says that "developing countries ranking among the world's [X] biggest in terms of marine capture production as determined by the FAO shall endeavour to refrain from making use of the flexibilities set out in 4.2." The FAO refers to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

It also adds that parties "shall endeavour" to notify the status of fish stocks, conservation and management measures in place, and plans for capacity management. It further outlines information that would be required, such as the name, legal basis, and type of support and fishing activity involved for any subsidy programme.

Indonesia, for its part, has updated its earlier proposal from 5 June, with the new version from 12 July including clarifications on how it would address differences between small-scale and artisanal fishing within its section on special and differential treatment. It also addresses exceptions that would be granted to developing countries for granting subsidies to "underexploited resources in the member's own Economic Exclusive Zone or rights held by the member in high seas fishing quotas or a regional fisheries management arrangement." (See Bridges Weekly, [22 June 2017](#))

Separately, the Indonesian proposal continues to refer to the need for technical assistance to developing country members, which it says would be provided by developed countries "upon request" on terms that are "mutually agreed."

The proposal also flags a particular clarification that it wanted members to be aware of in this new iteration. "Indonesia would like to highlight that prohibition on subsidy related to IUU fishing has been rearranged to clarify that subsidies contributing to IUU fishing must not be tolerated, given such activities have great detrimental effects on all aspects, namely economic and social."

The proponents of the updated Latin American group proposal from 14 July are Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Their proposal notes that any new prohibitions would not have a bearing on territorial disputes, and would exempt time-bound subsidies used for reconstruction in cases of disaster relief, except for those involving IUU fishing. Certain conditions would also be attached.

It also prohibits subsidies involving IUU fishing, overfished stocks, and overcapacity, providing definitions for all concepts. For overfishing, the group outlines a transition period for developing and least developed countries to address information gaps relating to the state of their fish stocks, with the timeframe for this transition period to be determined. The group also includes an exception to these prohibitions, minus IUU fishing, that would allow subsidies for "small-scale artisanal fishers to access marine resources and markets," so long as this takes place within national waters.

Other provisions tackle notifications, listing what is required; what information is best endeavour; and the timeframe for providing such information, with longer periods granted to developing and least developed countries. It also calls for implementing a system to help provide the WTO's poorer countries with technical assistance and capacity building, and includes separately a provision to review annually the state-of-play in enacting these new disciplines.

New proposals

Among the new texts that have been circulated is a one-page proposal from Norway, tabled on 26 June. This text calls for a specific article prohibiting any subsidies for "vessels, owners, or operators engaged in illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing," and directing WTO members to cross-check against IUU vessel lists and assess whether a vessel has fished illegally in another country's territory in recent years before allocating such financial support. The Scandinavian country said this article should be "inserted into a larger text."

The LDC Group proposal was submitted by Cambodia and dated 17 July, while the ACP Group proposal was tabled by Guyana and dated 13 July. Both proposals also address which subsidies would be prohibited; outline transitional arrangements for developed, developing, and least developed members; and feature provisions on special and differential treatment.

The two proposals, while having similar language in some sections, differ in areas such as notifications. Differences include what information must be included in the notifications, and what exemptions would exist for those requirements. The LDC Group exempts least developed countries from notification requirements, while the ACP Group says that these requirements "shall not be burdensome on developing countries with capacity constraints, especially LDCs."

Clock running down

The push for a fish subsidies deal, while not new in the WTO context, has taken on renewed energy in light of the political momentum generated by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Adopted by UN members in 2015, these goals include a dedicated SDG to ocean and marine resource conservation and sustainable use, known as SDG 14.

That goal involves a related target, 14.6, to "eliminate subsidies that contribute to [IUU] fishing" along with banning subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, by the year 2020, as well as according "appropriate and effective special and differential treatment" for the organisation's poorer members, making a specific reference to the WTO talks on fisheries.

With the August break coming up shortly, trade negotiators have been pushing to lay the groundwork for when the talks on both fisheries and other WTO topics, such as agriculture, resume this autumn, aiming to get a better sense of what might be potential deliverables for Buenos Aires. (For more on the agriculture talks, see related story, this edition)

WTO members are due to meet next week informally at the level of heads of delegation, and then formally under the General Council from 26-27 July. The latter is the organisation's highest decision-making body outside of the ministerial conference.

Negotiations are then expected to pick up in the autumn, with a "mini-ministerial" planned for Marrakech, Morocco, in early October that sources say could be valuable in setting the stage for the 10-13 December WTO ministerial in Argentina.

ICTSD reporting.

TRADE AGREEMENTS

TPP-11 Negotiators Examine Options for Advancing Deal Without US

The chief negotiators from the 11 remaining [Trans-Pacific Partnership](#) (TPP) nations debated options last week for advancing the trade pact without the US' participation, meeting in Hakone, Japan.

"For the pact to come into effect with 11 countries, we need a new international agreement," Japan's chief negotiator Kazuyoshi Umemoto said after the talks, according to comments reported by the New York Times. "We now have an image of how that agreement will be shaped."

Over the course of the two-day meeting, divisions in country positions reportedly re-emerged, with some nations favouring a re-write of certain terms in light of the US' absence, and others preferring not to re-open substantive negotiations. Reports suggest that countries are in favour, however, of keeping the high ambition regarding the rules set out in the original TPP.

Following Washington's withdrawal in January, officials in the other participating countries have grappled with next steps for the pact, which would have covered almost 40 percent of global GDP and over a quarter of world trade when considered with the US. The North American nation was the largest economy of the group by far, followed by Japan. (See Bridges Weekly, [9 February 2017](#))

The mandate for this meeting between senior trade officials was given at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) trade ministers' summit in Hanoi in May. At the time, ministers [agreed](#) to "launch a process to assess options to bring...the agreement into force expeditiously," and set a November deadline for the work to be completed, on the occasion of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in Da Nang, Vietnam. (See Bridges Weekly, [24 May 2017](#))

Negotiations for the TPP were concluded in late 2015 following several years of negotiations among 12 nations in the Asia-Pacific, including Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, New Zealand, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam. (See Bridges Weekly, [8 October 2015](#))

Negotiating positions at play

Australia, Japan, and New Zealand have been among those reportedly advocating for the TPP-11 to advance the current version of the agreement, keeping its substance mainly intact except for a few small changes to facilitate its enactment. Tokyo and Wellington have already ratified the accord in its current form under their domestic legislatures. (See Bridges Weekly, [4 May 2017](#))

The withdrawal of the pact's largest economy meant that the ratification threshold required for entry into force could not be met, where a minimum of six countries accounting for at least 85 percent of the total GDP of the original 12 signatories are required to approve the agreement domestically.

Malaysia and Vietnam, however, have reportedly suggested that certain rules may need to be revisited, suggesting that the US withdrawal has changed the balance of the final deal on multiple fronts, ranging from goods market access to labour rules.

Negotiators are reportedly planning to re-convene in Australia by early September to finalise their preparatory work in time for submitting the required set of options to leaders in November.

Japan's reported scepticism on re-working the content of the agreement has been credited partly to a hesitation to revisit some of the areas that had proven challenging to resolve in the original negotiations and later defend domestically.

In Japan, the accord has fuelled significant public debate, particularly in terms of agriculture, with farmers raising concern that the agriculture concessions agreed in TPP could put them at risk of losing out to foreign competition on rice, pork, and other sensitive agricultural products.

In addition, some officials warn that larger scale changes could make it harder for the US to re-enter the agreement, should it later choose to do so.

"Although TPP-11 is acceptable, Asian countries are aiming for the US market in the end," Nobuteru Ishihara, an [economic minister](#) in Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's cabinet, told the Kyodo news agency.

The joint statement from the APEC ministerial meeting noted that the scope of the discussions will include "how to facilitate membership for the original signatories," as well as leaving the door open for additional countries to join later on.

Japan has already moved forward on another major trade pact this year, having announced with the EU a political agreement on a planned free trade agreement (FTA), also known as an economic partnership agreement. While certain thorny topics must still be resolved before the full negotiations can be completed, proponents have touted the planned agreement as a signal that both parties are committed to trade liberalisation and to bucking inward-focused policy approaches. (See Bridges Weekly, [29 June 2017](#))

ICTSD reporting; "Japan wants a massive trade deal without the US — but these countries stand in its way," CNBC, 13 July 2017; "TPP chief negotiators meet to hash out deal with or without U.S.," KYODO, 12 July 2017; "11 TPP members remain divided over approach to put deal into force," XINHUA, 13 July 2017; "Chief Negotiators From 11 TPP Nations Begin Talks In Japan," MALAYSIAN DIGEST, 13 July 2017; "TPP, the Trade Deal Trump Killed, Is Back in Talks Without U.S.," THE NEW YORK TIMES, 14 July 2017; "TPP states agree new framework needed to implement pact without U.S." KYODO, 13 July 2017; "TPP to stay largely as is minus US, members agree," NIKKEI, 14 July 2017.

TRADE AGREEMENTS

US Trade Rep Requests "Special Session" on Korea Trade Deal

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer sent a [formal notification](#) to Seoul last week calling for a "special session" of the joint committee under the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA).

The reason for the request, according to a [press release](#) from the US Trade Representative (USTR), is to "start the process of negotiating to remove barriers to US trade and consider needed amendments to the agreement."

The US has "real concerns about significant trade imbalance with Korea," the statement says. Addressing trade deficits with various partners has been stated repeatedly as one of the Trump Administration's top [trade policy objectives](#), and White House officials have flagged the KORUS FTA as one of the existing trade agreements where they would like to see changes.

The KORUS trade deal was signed in 2007 and was later partially renegotiated in 2010. It was then ratified in both countries the following year, entering into force in March 2012. The deal aimed at slashing goods tariffs, opening up markets for agricultural products and automobiles, and liberalising trade in services between the two countries, among various other provisions.

US lawmakers call for consultations

The USTR request sparked a response from several top US legislators on trade, with Senate Finance Committee chairman Orrin Hatch of Utah and ranking member Ron Wyden of Oregon pairing up with House Ways and Means Committee chairman Kevin Brady of Texas and ranking member Richard Neal of Massachusetts to submit a [joint letter](#) to Lighthizer.

Hatch and Brady are Republicans, while Wyden and Neal are Democrats. The four lawmakers asked that the US trade chief "consult closely" with the US legislature, noting that doing so would be in line with both legal obligations and past precedent, along with allowing Washington to present a "united front" to its trading partners.

"There are a host of areas in which our trade relationship with Korea can be enhanced. A high-level dialogue with Korea also presents an opportunity to address longstanding concerns with respect to implementation of existing commitments on automotive trade, services, customs, and other key matters," they said.

However, they added that the US "cedes no sovereignty to the joint committee" and flagged the legal roles of both the US president and Congress in advancing any KORUS changes.

Special session

While KORUS already dictates that the joint committee meet annually, co-chaired by the respective trade ministers or other designed officials from both sides, the call for a special session must come at a party's particular request. The joint committee is meant to examine ways to develop deeper trade ties or address disagreements that have emerged, along with looking at how the deal has operated in practice.

It can also “consider amendments to this agreement or make modifications to the commitments therein,” among other possibilities.

Earlier this year, US President Donald Trump [suggested](#) to the Washington Post that terminating the agreement could be one option going forward, though US officials have since moved away from that characterisation.

While the details on how exactly the US is going to tackle the deficit issues are not yet clear, Korea has [received questions](#) from the US on the implementation of KORUS in the past. In addition, a 2017 USTR report on “foreign trade barriers” [highlighted](#) both the gains from the trade deal, along with some questions on certain hurdles that US businesses have allegedly faced in different areas.

South Korea has not yet released an official statement regarding the US request. Generally, however, South Korean officials have noted the gains seen on both sides in the five years since KORUS took effect. Commerce Minister Joo Hyung-hwan, while visiting the US in March this year, [noted](#) the deal's benefits in comments to the Financial Times and expressed an interest in building upon it further.

According to Korean [news sources](#), Seoul officials have pointed out that Korea has not agreed to negotiating changes to the trade deal, while suggesting that there could be other options for dealing with the issues raised by Washington.

Under the agreement's [procedures](#), unless otherwise agreed by the parties, the joint committee would convene within 30 days of the request. While the US suggested that Washington serve as the location, KORUS terms indicate that the joint committee meets either in the respondent country or at another mutually agreed location.

Weighing the impacts

How to assess the impacts of KORUS has been a recurring question both during the deal's negotiation and since its entry into force, particularly given sensitivities on both sides with certain key sectors.

Prior to the KORUS' enactment, several studies explored how the agreement might impact the two economies. In 2007, the US International Trade Commission [estimated](#) that US GDP would increase by US\$10.1 billion to US\$11.9 billion upon full implementation. Their estimates suggested the expansion of US goods exports to Korea, which some other [analyses](#) issued in subsequent years similarly predicted, though others were less optimistic.

The Korea Institute for International Economic Policy [assessed](#) in 2005 the potential impact on Korea's economy, suggesting an increase of 0.42 percent to 2.27 percent of GDP.

According to a USTR [fact sheet](#) released in 2016, under the previous administration of US President Barack Obama, “the US-Korea trade and investment relationship is substantially larger and stronger than before the KORUS agreement.” In particular, the Office of the USTR said that the agreement has created benefited US exporters of various manufactured and agricultural products, as well as services and intellectual property works providers.

The USTR statement released last week under the Trump Administration, however, [refers](#) to the effects of the US-Korea accord as “quite different from what the previous Administration sold to the American people when it urged approval of this agreement.”

South Korea is currently US' sixth largest trading partner. The US has been running a deficit in goods trade with South Korea “for nearly two decades,” according to Lighthizer.

Data from the [US International Trade Commission](#) and the US Department of Commerce's [Bureau of Economic Research](#) suggests that goods trade "imbalances" have been steadily rising before the agreement came into force, resulting from overall bilateral trade expansion.

However, exports of some goods on both sides have improved over time, including from when KORUS entered into force, with results varying depending on the sector. US exports of capital goods, minus automobiles, are ranked by the Bureau of Economic Research as the top export to the Asian economy, while the top imports from South Korea are automobiles and their associated parts. In services trade, the US is [keeping](#) a steady trade surplus.

ICTSD reporting; "Trump: 'We may terminate' U.S.-South Korea trade agreement," THE WASHINGTON POST, 28 April 2017; "US to renegotiate South Korea trade pact," FINANCIAL TIMES, 17 April 2017; "US pressuring on KORUS renegotiation, S. Korea says joint investigation first," THE HANKYOREH, 14 July 2017; "South Korea and US wrangling over where to host KORUS FTA committee special session," THE HANKYOREH, 14 July 2017.

GLOBAL ECONOMY

Indian Trade Minister Says Multilateralism at Crossroads, Outlines "Multi-Pronged" Approach

Indian Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman called for taking a "multi-pronged approach" towards supporting multilateralism in the trade world, suggesting that "multilateralism as embodied at the WTO is at a crossroads" during a speech to a Geneva audience on Tuesday 18 July.

The Indian official gave a speech at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies under the theme "Reclaiming Multilateralism," and [met](#) earlier with WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo on the preparations for this December's WTO ministerial conference.

The global trade body's Eleventh Ministerial Conference is (MC11) scheduled for 10-13 December in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with negotiators looking at ways to discipline harmful fisheries subsidies, along with potentially advancing some outcomes on agriculture, though these and other topics are still under negotiation.

Sitharaman also spoke regarding the global geopolitical context on trade, warning against "protectionist" and "inward-focused" policies and political approaches being seen in some parts of the world, without referring to specific countries by name.

"History teaches us that inward looking policies rarely achieve common good," she said, adding that the lesson applies not just to trade, but also to environmental concerns, humanitarian issues, and other topics.

New issues, Doha "legacy issues"

The Indian official's speech focused primarily on the WTO context, looking both at the negotiations to update global trade rules along with the function of the organisation's dispute settlement branch.

Discussing first the domestic context in India, including economic and social issues such as its struggles with extreme poverty in some internal regions, she described the country as a "microcosm of similar problems faced by most developing countries." She added that New Delhi does not play the role of "naysayer for the sake of it" at the global trade body, given the wide-ranging implications of trade rule-making.

Among other points, she reaffirmed earlier concerns raised by her country's negotiators over how and whether to deal with so-called "new issues" in the WTO negotiating context – an issue that has long proved contentious, including two years ago at the Nairobi ministerial conference, when countries agreed to disagree on whether to reaffirm the Doha Round's mandate and later ministerial declarations and decisions.

In Nairobi, the final declaration also said that while "officials should prioritise work where results have not yet been achieved, some wish to identify and discuss other issues for negotiation; others do not. Any decision to launch negotiations multilaterally on such issues would need to be agreed by all members." (See Bridges Daily Update, [19 December 2015](#))

During her speech on Tuesday, Sitharaman noted the perception of India "being less than enthusiastic about new issues in the negotiations and is even sometimes accused of standing in the way of the WTO's progress."

"Nothing could be further from the truth," she said, noting that global challenges, including those involving trade, are regularly evolving.

However, she added that the South Asian economy has "good reason to be cautious," suggesting that these new issues need to be better understood, given varying experiences with these topics at the domestic level, among several other factors.

She also warned that these new issues can "divert attention from priority areas for which mandates exist." Among the new issues she referred to on Tuesday were proposed binding rules on e-commerce and steps on investment facilitation, which have been backed by some WTO members.

"While some countries are pushing for initiating negotiations on the new issues, we cannot ignore many of the legacy issues of the Doha Round," she said, saying that WTO members need to decide by consensus over the end of the Round and calling for members to "engage in good faith" to do so.

She also suggested that the decisions made at the global trade body in the next couple of years could have reverberations for a long time to come, and said that there was a need to ensure "mutual trust" among the WTO membership.

That trust, she said, "unfortunately seems to have been serially eroded over the years and dealt a body blow by the developments at the Nairobi ministerial conference," she said, citing concerns over whether all members felt ownership over the final outcomes, among other questions.

Three-pronged approach

Moving forward, Sitharaman advocated for an approach at the WTO built around "strengthening the system, countering protectionism, and fostering development."

For example, she suggested that negotiating at WTO ministerial conferences be conducted in a more inclusive manner, starting immediately, and also said that the organisation's dispute settlement branch is in need of reform. Regarding the latter, she specifically suggested changes to the system of Appellate Body appointments, moving from two four-year terms to one single term of five to six years.

"We need to make sure that the Appellate Body members retain their autonomy, without being influenced by the governments of their member countries," she said.

WTO members have lately struggled to resolve a disagreement over advancing the appointment of new members to the organisation's highest court, even though two of these members will see their terms end this year and various proposals have been put forward on the subject, according to Geneva trade officials familiar with the talks.

Sitharaman also called for countering protectionism, such as by stopping the "misuse" of sanitary and phytosanitary measures with "protectionist intent" and taking other steps in the areas of agricultural tariffs and trade remedies.

The final pillar raised by the Indian official focused on topics that she said fell under the subject of development, such as food security and past pledges to provide duty-free, quota-free market access on 97 percent of product lines from least developed countries.

The South Asian economy, which is home to over [1.3 billion](#) people, has raised concerns repeatedly over making sure farm subsidy rules do not unfairly inhibit developing countries from buying food at minimum prices as part of their public stockholding programmes for food security purposes.

Sitharaman argued that over 800 million are hungry or malnourished in her country, while noting that the issue is not just important to India, but also to many other developing nations. She also called for a lasting solution – referring to an earlier WTO deal reached in Bali four years ago as a “partial” solution to the situation. (For more on the WTO negotiations, see related story, this edition)

India has also put forward a WTO proposal for a “trade facilitation agreement in services,” which it says would build off the approach taken under the organisation's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) that involves goods trade. The TFA has been in force since early 2017. (See Bridges Weekly, [23 February 2017](#))

Sitharaman referred to the services proposal in her speech on Tuesday, urging WTO members to view the proposal “objectively” and with an “open mind.”

ICTSD reporting.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming Soon

21 July, Geneva, Switzerland. THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE IN THE CURRENT TRADE AND INTEGRATION CONTEXT. This informal roundtable is being organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and the China Centre for International Economic Exchanges (CCIEE) to discuss the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in relation to global economic integration and trade governance. Please note that attendance is by invitation only. More information is available at the ICTSD [website](#).

24 July, Geneva, Switzerland. E-COMMERCE AND DEVELOPMENT: SHARING THE BURDEN OF COMMITMENTS AND ENJOYING THE BENEFITS. This dialogue on e-commerce is being organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) within the context of the E15 Initiative, which is jointly implemented by ICTSD and the World Economic Forum (WEF). The event will look at the issue of e-commerce within the WTO context, particularly in light of the organisation's upcoming ministerial conference. Please note that attendance is by invitation only. More information is available at the ICTSD [website](#).

25 July, London, UK. TRADE AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA. This Chatham House event will feature Richard Lapper, former Financial Times editor covering the Latin American region, to discuss the economic opportunities available in regional markets. To learn more, visit the Chatham House [website](#).

26-28 July, Seoul, South Korea. REGIONAL SEMINAR ON GENDER EQUALITY IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT: WEATHERING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE. This event is being organised by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with the goal of training participants on a series of topics, such as gender-inclusive climate change policy. It also aims to bring various government actors and ADB experts together in order to build new networks. To learn more, visit the ADB [website](#).

27 July, London, UK. EUROPE'S FUTURE: WHAT DO THE PUBLIC AND THE ELITE REALLY THINK? This Chatham House event will examine public and "elite" attitudes towards the future policy direction of the EU bloc, building upon survey data, and will look at how these viewpoints may evolve going forward. More information is available at the Chatham House [website](#).

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted [here](#). Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO members and accredited observers only.

21 July: Committee on Balance-of-Payments Restrictions

21 July: Informal Group of Developing Countries

21 July: Negotiating Group on Market Access

21 July: Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology

24 July: 27th Round of the Director-General's Consultative Framework Mechanism on Cotton – Cotton Development Assistance

24 July: Informal Trade Policy Review Body meeting on Monitoring

25 July: Informal Trade Negotiations Committee

25 July: Informal Heads of Delegation

26-27 July: General Council

Other Upcoming Events

8-10 August, Lomé, Togo. 2017 AGOA FORUM. This year's African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum will be hosted jointly by the US and Togo, with the theme "The United States and Africa: Partnering for Prosperity through Trade." The event is geared towards senior officials from countries involved in AGOA's implementation. More information is available at the US State Department's [website](#).

16 August, London, UK, and online. ODI IN CONVERSATION WITH RAJIV SHAH. This event is being organised by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and will feature Rajiv Shah, Rockefeller Foundation President and former Administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) as its guest speaker. Please note that the event can be attended either in person or online via webcast. To learn more and to register, please visit the ODI [website](#).

19 September, Paris, France. IMPLEMENTING SDGs IN AND BY EUROPE: WHAT ROLE FOR NGOS IN THE NEW PARTNERSHIP? This workshop is being organised by the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), the German Development Institute (DIE), and the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI). The event will focus on help supporting NGOs in taking a greater role in the process to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While the event is by invitation only, those interested in joining can e-mail the event organisers about the possibility of joining. More information is available online at the IDDRI [website](#).

25-27 September, Geneva, Switzerland. TRADE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FORUM 2017. This annual event by the International Trade Centre (ITC) will examine the topics of voluntary sustainability standards and sustainable value chains, looking specifically at partnerships and other collaboration in this field. To learn more and to register, visit the ITC [website](#).

26-28 September, Geneva, Switzerland. WTO PUBLIC FORUM 2017: "TRADE: BEHIND THE HEADLINES." This year's edition of the WTO's outreach event will have as its theme "Trade: Behind the Headlines." The meeting will aim to look at the real-life implications of trade, as opposed to rhetoric, and will also look at how trade can support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related issues. To learn more, visit the WTO [website](#).

25-26 October, Budapest, Hungary, 17th WORLD EXPORT DEVELOPMENT FORUM (WEDF). The International Trade Centre's (ITC) flagship event will have as this year's theme "Trade - A force for good: include, innovate, integrate." The forum will explore how trade can generate positive change at a time when global challenges – economic, social, and environmental – are changing how trade works. WEDF will be co-hosted by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and will gather business leaders, policymakers, and representatives of international organisations and trade and investment support institutions for interactive sessions and facilitated business-to-business meetings. Registration is now

open at <https://wedf-registration.org/> For more information on the event, please visit the WEDF 2017 [website](#).

2 November, Geneva, Switzerland, and online. THE FUTURE OF WORK. This event is being organised jointly by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and The Economist news magazine. This event will examine the relationship between education and employment in today's context, given the fast pace of technological development and the implications for the labour market. Please note that this event can be attended both in person and via the webcast. More information is available on the Graduate Institute [website](#).

11-12 November, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GLOBAL FUTURE COUNCILS. This event will bring together the members of the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Future Councils to discuss policy changes in areas such as technology and energy, among others. To learn more, visit the WEF [website](#).

11-13 December, Buenos Aires, Argentina. TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM (TSDS). This biennial event is being organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) in collaboration with select strategic partners, in parallel with the WTO's Eleventh Ministerial Conference. A dedicated website to the TSDS is now live, with information on how to become a knowledge partner; the event's format; and other relevant details. Additional information will be made available closer to the date. To learn more, visit the TSDS [website](#).

14 December, Buenos Aires, Argentina. FORUM ON MIGRATION, TRADE, AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY. This event is being organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and the Fundación Foro del Sur, with a view to understanding the interlinkages between trade and migration. The forum is slated to bring together public and private sector participants, along with representatives from civil society and academia. More details on a call for papers is forthcoming. To learn more, visit the ICTSD [website](#).

Resources

ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR DISCIPLINES ON SUBSIDIES TO ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING. By Carl-Christian Schmidt for the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) (July 2017). This new reference paper takes a close look at the WTO negotiations to discipline harmful fisheries subsidies, examining the issues that have arisen to date and providing information and options for negotiators to consider going forward. The paper looks closely at the topic of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in this context. The publication is available to download at the ICTSD [website](#).

WIN-WIN: HOW INTERNATIONAL TRADE CAN HELP MEET THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. Edited by Matthias Helbe and Ben Shepherd for the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) (July 2017). This new book examines the relationship between trade policy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), looking at interlinkages between them. The book is geared particularly towards policymakers in developing economies. The publication is available to download at the ADBI [website](#).

GREEN FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT. Published by UN Environment (UNEP) Inquiry (July 2017). This new report evaluates the progress seen over the past year among G20 members and other countries regarding seven "options" that were previously identified as ways for the coalition to support the use of green finance. To access the full report and related maps, please visit the UNEP Inquiry [website](#).

OPTIONS FOR A FUTURE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR TRADE IN SERVICES AND CUSTOMS AND TRADE PROCEDURES BETWEEN THE EU AND THE UK. Published by the Swedish National Board of Trade (2017). This paper provides a summary of a larger analytical work by the Swedish National Board of Trade, looking specifically at options for services trade between the EU and the UK following Brexit. The summary in English is available [here](#), along with related documents in Swedish.

THE MACROECONOMIC EFFECTS OF TRADE TARIFFS: REVISITING THE LERNER SYMMETRY RESULT. By Jesper Lindé and Andrea Pescatori for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (July 2017). This IMF working paper examines a series of different trade topics, including the implications of a "trade war" and border adjustment taxes for different economic indicators, including incomes. The paper is available for download [here](#).

TRADE AND FOOD STANDARDS. Published by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (July 2017). This report was released during this year's Aid for Trade Global Review, and examines various issues in relation to how international food standards can support trade, along with the need for continued collaboration among governments in this area. The full report is available for download at the WTO [website](#).

AID FOR TRADE: CASE STORIES. Published by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (July 2017). These various case stories were compiled ahead of the Aid for Trade Global Review as part of the joint WTO-OECD monitoring exercise. The case stories were submitted by public and private sector actors, as well as civil society and academia. To access case stories from 2017, as well as from previous Global Reviews, please visit the OECD [website](#).

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