

LDCs and SVEs in the International Trading System: What future for them?

This Session will deliberate on opportunities and challenges faced by the LDCs and small, vulnerable economies (SVEs) in the international trading system. Possible mechanisms of the interaction of trade, growth and poverty reduction in the developing world on the one hand, and their presence or absence as well as their strength in the specific context of the LDCs on the other, will be discussed. The scope for public policy at national and international levels will be debated.

Operationalising Aid for Trade: Who is (should) doing (do) what?

There has been a growing academic and policy interest in recent years in whether and how to give additional support for developing countries to adjust to trade reform and greater international integration. The aim of this Session is to review the arguments and issues surrounding 'aid for trade' debate, specifically to review and assess the nature of the adjustment issues arising out of trade reform/liberalisation.

UK's Aid for Trade Strategy: Lessons for future effective international trade and development architecture

Aid for trade must be an integral part of a developing country's growth strategy. It has to be used as an integrated and strategic economic tool, not as means of providing off-the-shelf aid supplies. Planning such spend is complex and needs to be country-led. It needs to be focused on building capacity and capabilities for sustainable trade and development. Adding to this complexity are the bilateral and multilateral aspects of aid for trade. The Aid for Trade strategy launched here aims to show how together we can tackle such challenges to transform the economic trading infrastructure of a fast developing nation.

Services Liberalisation and Domestic Regulation: Why is it so important?

Domestic regulation is a very complex issue in services trade policy formulation. On the one hand, it is necessary to ensure consumer protection, service standards and several other public interest objectives, and on the other, it can act as a very significant restriction and curtail the market access granted to foreign service suppliers in any trade agreement. This Session will examine various issues regarding service trade liberalisation and domestic regulation and their implications for effective market access.

Mainstreaming Development in the WTO

The launch of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations in 2001 was marked with criticism by developing countries of the Uruguay Round. This Session will focus on the concerns of the developing countries in the area of Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT). However, merely deepening existing trade preferences and providing greater flexibility for the existing WTO rules will hinder the growth of a more development-oriented WTO. What does then constitute development in the WTO?

Trilateral Development Cooperation: How to make it more effective?

This Session will focus on projects which are jointly planned, financed and carried out by an established donor country which is a member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and a partner country together with a cooperating country which, although itself a recipient of development cooperation, has either started providing aid or has accumulated expertise.

The Future of the Global Trading System

This is a forward looking Session on the future of the International Trading System (ITS). There are both continuity and considerable change in politico-economic characteristics and institutional structure of the system over the coming decades. It will focus on the sustained and uneven transformation of the global economy, with the associated rise of new powers, heightened aspirations and considerable pockets of social discontent as its contemporary determining features.

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Global Partnership for Development

*Where do we stand
and where to go?*

12-13 August 2008

FICCI, Tansen Marg, New Delhi



**Federation of Indian Chambers of
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The World Bank

CUTS International and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), in association with the Department of Commerce, Government of India, Commonwealth Secretariat and India office of the World Bank are jointly organising a Conference on ‘Global Partnership for Development’ in New Delhi, India on August 12-13, 2008. The idea for this Conference was conceived in the backdrop of slow progress in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations. Although in no sense substitutes for the multilateral process of the Doha Round, the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations involving the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union (EU) may not yield desired developmental outcomes.

The on-going Doha Round was dubbed as the ‘Development Round’ even though a completely successful Doha Round cannot possibly solve the serious developmental problems in most least developed countries (LDCs), many of which are domestic in nature. Yet, after seven years of tortuous negotiations poor countries are now concerned that the possible outcomes are unlikely to offer anything meaningful to them, since prospects of significant reductions in market access barriers faced by many of them are dim.

Besides, significant domestic supply constraints limit their ability to take advantage of increased global trade and investment flows. Similarly, an overwhelming majority of ACP countries are increasingly realising that their Preferential Trading Arrangements (PTAs) with the EU, which are to be transformed to reciprocal preferential schemes (WTO consistent), can hardly help them to increase their share in world trade and deliver development.

Whilst international trade is recognised as an important vehicle for fostering economic growth, lack of supply-side capacity along with market access barriers have reduced development opportunities for a large number of poor and most vulnerable countries, threatening the objective of achieving a number of their own development goals.

There is a widespread recognition of the need for developed countries to help developing countries achieve their development goals, which necessarily will go beyond the development goals envisaged in the Doha Round and EPA negotiations.

The reality is that the eight goals of the so called Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular, MDG-8, which stresses the importance of a global partnership for development, emphasising the need for cooperation and commitment from developed nations towards achieving the other seven MDGs, remains largely rhetorical. There is no firm and concrete commitment by the rich countries to reform their trade regimes to provide effective opportunities and to take concomitant measures to assist the poor countries in their fight against poverty.

However, the direction and priorities of trade, aid and debt policies, the principal ways through which the North interacts with the South are largely decided in the North. Yet, they have profound impact on the society, economy and stability of countries in the South. Both the rich and the poor countries are accountable in advancing a broad development agenda.

Many observers are of the view that as the expectations of poor countries from the Doha and EPAs are presently quite low, an emphasis on a broad development agenda with a clear delineation of commitments and obligations of the North and South would provide an opportune avenue through which more serious North-South engagement in development cooperation may be triggered. With this in view, this global dialogue, involving important stakeholders, is being organised.

To keep the Conference focused on the subject matter and facilitate stimulating deliberation and discussion, a number of thought provoking ideas will be discussed as a reference for future discourse on global trade and development cooperation regime.

The specific objectives of the Conference will revolve around the following:

- To assess the impact of the Doha Round of negotiations by WTO Members on LDCs and small vulnerable economies and the prospects for achieving their enhanced and beneficial participation in world trade;
- To discuss the scope for cooperation among developed and developing countries outside multilateral trade talks and regional trading arrangements and to strengthen the link between trade, growth and poverty reduction in the developing world;
- To identify measures that could be adopted by developed and more advanced developing countries for advancing growth and development in rest of the world (particularly in the poorer world), i.e. beyond their national borders and regional economic groupings; and
- To arrive at recommendations for making the global partnership for development more inclusive.

Trilateral Development Cooperation

Overseas aid from the rich to the poor countries for their development is a well-established mechanism. Ridden with controversies, the system continues to function. There are various controversies, of which failure to achieve the target of 0.7 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) as development aid by the rich is perhaps the most prominent. However, the MDGs and the Monterrey Consensus among other international covenants have reinforced the need for enhanced and targeted delivery of overseas aid to developing countries. Most of the aid goes through the bilateral route with a large amount being channelled through inter-governmental organisations (IGOs).

Another new route is through ‘trilateral development cooperation’ where aid is channelled through institutions in developing countries for being applied to development projects in other poor countries. There are two major advantages in this approach. First, it is cost effective. Second, learnings from one developing country to another are more relevant than from a rich country to a poor one. Trilateral development cooperation needs mere attention that it gets.

Day One: Tuesday, 12 August 2008

0930 hrs Onwards

Inaugural Session
Global Partnership for Development: Where do we stand?

Session 1
LDCs and SVEs in the International Trading System:
What future for them?

Session 2
Operationalising Aid for Trade: Who is (should) doing (do) what?

Session 3
UK’s Aid for Trade Strategy: Lessons for future effective
international trade and development architecture

Session 4
Services Liberalisation and Domestic Regulation:
Why is it so important?

Day Two: Wednesday, 13 August 2008

Session 5
Mainstreaming Development in the WTO

Session 6
Trilateral Development Cooperation: How to make
it more effective?

Session 7
The Future of the Global Trading System

Closing Session
Global Partnership for Development: Where to go?

How to Ensure more Equitable Trade?

Developing countries can be said to have responsibilities on at least three levels:

- Provide leadership in framing their own national economic development vision, implementation plans and transparent systems of economic governance and accountability;
- Make efforts to implement their obligations to the multilateral trading system (MTS) and thereby contribute to an effective rules-based system; and
- Make efforts to participate more effectively in the MTS.

The responsibilities of developed countries include:

- Providing access for developing country exports to their markets;
- Building sufficient capacity for developing countries to enable their effective participation in the global trading system (the recent Aid for Trade initiative is a step in the right direction);
- Ensuring that the rules of the trading system are balanced and are not burdens for the developing world; and
- Facilitating effective participation of developing countries by ensuring inclusiveness and transparency.

With the support of



Conference on
Global Partnership for Development

Where do we stand and where to go?

12-13 August 2008

Venue: FICCI, Tansen Marg, New Delhi

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