

Commonwealth Trade Symposium: “Shaping a Global Trade Agenda for Development”

23-24 June 2015

Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa

Background

Trade policy issues have always attracted huge attention from Commonwealth Members. Commonwealth Heads in their last meeting (CHOGM) in 2013 issued a standalone statement on trade. In what has come to be known as the *Kotte Statement on International Trade and Investment*, Commonwealth Heads reaffirmed their strong commitment to a rules-based, transparent, free and fair multilateral trading system while taking into account the special requirements of capacity constrained countries such as Small States, LDCs and Sub-Saharan Africa. They also expressed their support for regional trading arrangements that complement the multilateral trading system. Amongst others, they called for increased trade capacity support, and recognised the potential for intra-Commonwealth Trade. Previously at 2005 CHOGM as well, the Heads issued the *Valletta Statement on Multilateral Trade* in expressing their unequivocal support for the global trading system to promote effective participation of developing countries.

The Commonwealth Trade Symposium provides a platform for officials, experts, the private sector and other stakeholders to meet and review emerging and long-standing trade related issues. Its objective is to contribute to global policy discourse by highlighting issues and perspectives that are critical in order to ensure an inclusive global trade support architecture for development. The space provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat is unique in the sense that brings together States with diverse economic characteristics that share a development vision, to discuss all major topical trade topics in one forum. This should facilitate a better understanding of interlinked issues; as well as support the sharing of country perspectives on the process of achieving trade development objectives and setting global priorities. As the future challenges faced by member states must be situated within the broader context of fundamental changes taking place within the global trading landscape, 2015 is a pivotal year in view of the following major events:

- The 5th Global Aid for Trade review (30th July-2nd July 2015) with a focus on reducing trade costs for sustainable development,
- The UN adoption of the Post-2015 agenda (25-27th September 2015) and shift from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which includes trade as a cross-cutting thematic issue and a key driver of structural economic change,
- Negotiations for a new international climate change deal under the auspices of the UNFCCC,
- The Post-Bali work program will be addressed at WTO’s 10th Ministerial Meeting, to be held in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Symposium will enable officials and other stakeholders to evaluate current processes and developments, and where appropriate, help prepare and adapt in the run up to these events. It will also help stakeholders prepare for further engagements on trade and development issues by identifying gaps and deficits in global support architecture and coming up with ways and means of dealing with them.

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Draft Agenda

Day 1 - 23 June 2015

9:00am- 11:00am	<p>Opening Remarks to the Commonwealth Trade Symposium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Secretariat • South African Ministry <p>SESSION I: Trade, Multilateralism and Development <i>2015 is a pivotal year. Some of the major challenges affecting global trade patterns include: the effect of recent economic crises on global trade flows, and fragility of the global recovery; the emergence of deeper and interconnected global production and trade networks, as reflected in the prominence of global value chains; the ascendancy of mega-trading blocs; and, finally, the challenge of climate change for conventional trade and development strategies. Major questions remain as to how the multilateral trading system and supporting global architecture can adapt to these new challenges and agendas being set by UN bodies in 2015, which will be explored in this opening session.</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Deputy Secretary-General, Commonwealth Secretariat</p> <p><i>Presentations:</i> TBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WTO • UNCTAD • Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Kenya <p><i>Questions for discussion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What needs to happen in order to conclude the Doha Round?</i> ➤ <i>Given the experience of the MDGs and Global Partnership for Development goals, how can the trade-related goals of the SDGs be better enforced?</i> ➤ <i>What prospects give time for Trade Multilateralism to promote development?</i> <p>Open discussion and Q&A</p>
11:00am – 11:30am	TEA/COFFEE BREAK
11:30am - 1:00pm	<p>SESSION II: Mega-Stumbling Blocs?: The implications for excluded countries</p> <p><i>The system of multilateral rules which underpinned the trade agenda for the last few decades, risks being rewritten within a myriad of regional and ‘mega’ trading agreements. There are genuine risks of trade and investment diversions. Similarly, major concerns are arising due to the perceived weakening of the multilateral</i></p>

	<p><i>system that best protects and promotes the interests of poor and vulnerable countries. Future GVC developments may become more exclusive due to the new rules included within mega trading blocs. This session will explore the systematic effects of the ascendancy of mega-trading blocs on the multilateral system and the implications for excluded countries.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Commonwealth Secretariat</p> <p>Presentations: Panel TBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Alan Winters, Sussex University • Dr Ganeshan Wignaraja, Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department, Asian Development Bank • Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore <p>Questions for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are the implications of the mega-trading blocs for the future of the multilateral trading system, including the WTO? ➤ How will the mega-trading blocs affect countries not participating in these negotiations? ➤ How can the mega-regional agreements be shaped in a more development-friendly way, and how might existing trade surveillance mechanisms better assist countries in managing and mitigating any adverse consequences? <p>Open discussion and Q&A</p>
<p>1:00pm – 2:00pm</p>	<p>LUNCH</p>
<p>2:00pm – 3:30pm</p>	<p>SESSION III: Leveraging the South within Emerging and Evolving Production Networks</p> <p><i>Global trade is increasingly characterised by global, and regional, production networks. The experience to date however, suggests that an overwhelming majority of capacity-constrained countries have been bypassed by these networks. In view of this, trade with fast growing developing countries may offer important new opportunities for specialization, efficiency gains, investment and export market diversification. Some emerging developing countries now provide improved market access to LDCs and have become important sources of technical and financial assistance. Issues related to South-South trade and Small States will also be discussed in this session, with a view to leveraging the South in emerging and evolving production networks..</i></p> <p>Moderator: Commonwealth Secretariat</p> <p>Presentations: Panel TBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Raphael Kaplinsky, Sussex University • Faizel Ismail, Special Adviser to the Minister of Trade and Industry, South Africa • Dr Mohammad Razzaque/Dr Jodie Keane, Commonwealth Secretariat • Ricardo Melendez-Ortiz/Vinaye Ancharez, ICTSD <p>Questions for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are the main challenges relating to gainful participation in Global Value Chains?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How can LDCs, small states and Sub-Saharan Africa develop more inclusive and beneficial approaches towards value chain development given the rise of emerging developing countries? ➤ How can the new financial architecture (e.g. BRICS-led New Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, etc.) better assist integration with emerging and evolving production networks? <p>Open discussion and Q&A</p>
<p>3:30pm – 4:00pm</p>	<p>TEA/COFFEE BREAK</p>
<p>4.00pm – 5.30pm</p>	<p>SESSION IV: Trade Policy Negotiations through the Gender Lens <i>Changes to trade flows can arise from many different sources and will have many different effects as they filter through the economy and society. Any trade policy change creates winners and losers, at least in a relative sense. Governments have a responsibility to take flanking measures that mitigate adverse effects and reinforce positive ones. International trade and negotiation outcomes may result in differential gender impacts. Yet, women are largely excluded from decision-making processes and negotiations related to the trading system. A gender perspective will be used to shed light on broader distributive issues related to trade liberalisation effects in this session.</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Commonwealth Secretariat</p> <p><i>Presentations:</i> Panel TBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCAP • Simonette Zarrilli, Chief of UNCTAD Trade and Gender Unit • Yinka Bandele, Commonwealth Secretariat <p><i>Questions for discussion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How could trade policy negotiations be made more inclusive in terms of ensuring adequate gender representation? ➤ What are the challenges of embedding gender impact assessments within policy processes? ➤ If trade policy negotiators were more balanced in terms of gender, how might trade outcomes be affected? <p>Open discussion and Q&A</p>

Day 2 - 24 June 2015

<p>9:00am - 10:30am</p>	<p>SESSION V: Managing Trading Arrangements</p> <p><i>Managing regional trade arrangements is going to be a key challenge in the coming decades. The interaction between North-South partnership arrangements (EPAs) with region wide integration processes (South-South integration) needs to be carefully managed. Moreover, engagement with new actors such as China and India is increasing. Given the plethora of RTAs and the challenges posed by their overlapping membership, this session will review the regional integration experiences of various RTAs, the lessons learnt, and future implementation and negotiation challenges.</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Commonwealth Secretariat</p> <p><i>Presentations:</i> Panel TBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific Island Forum Secretariat • Dr Christopher Stevens, ODI • Trudi Hartzberg, Executive Director, Tralac • Dr Stephen Karingi, UNECA • CARICOM <p><i>Questions for discussion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How can Africa manage its own regional integration agenda whilst developing new trading relationships with the BRICS and managing the transition in EU-ACP trading relations? ➤ Given the economics and politics of regional integration: what works and what doesn't? ➤ Discuss the relative merits of regional integration compared to the creation of other regional trading arrangements. <p>Open discussion and Q&A</p>
<p>10:30am - 11:00am</p>	<p>TEA/COFFEE BREAK</p>
<p>11:00am - 12:30pm</p>	<p>SESSION VI: Aid for Trade and Supporting Trade Capacity Building</p> <p><i>The OECD Development Assistance Committee's Creditor Reporting System monitors AfT disbursements and, despite the formal monitoring process, the level of AfT so far has been underwhelming. Challenges remain regarding how disbursements relate to country rather than donor priorities. The forthcoming 5th Global Aid for Trade review is on "reducing trade costs for sustainable development". In view of this, a panel session will highlight experiences to date related to Aid for Trade and trade capacity building across the Commonwealth.</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Commonwealth Secretariat</p> <p><i>Presentations:</i> Panel TBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federico Bonaglia, Senior Counsellor to the Director at the OECD Development Centre. • Commonwealth Secretariat • Tom Pengally, Saana Institute

	<p><i>Questions for discussion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Should WTO trade surveillance mechanisms be bolstered with regards to Aft? ➤ How can disbursement and monitoring mechanisms for Aft disbursements be improved? ➤ How can tensions between internal and external validity be addressed within Aft evaluation processes? <p>Open discussion and Q&A</p>
12:30pm – 1:30pm	LUNCH
1:30pm – 3:00pm	<p>SESSION VII: Trade in the Post-2015 Development Agenda: The right role?</p> <p><i>Trade now features as a cross-cutting issue in the SDGs. But the experiences of the MDGs (and MDG 8) demonstrate how fundamental changes need to take place in the international support system in order to ascribe, and protect, the important role of trade within growth and development strategies. As has been argued with specific reference to the post-2015 agenda – movement from the MDGs to the SDGs – statements that seek to uphold multilateralism are meaningless without recognition of the new landscape being carved out by regional trade agreements. This session will explore these aspects in view of the next WTO ministerial conference and the UN adoption of the post-2015 agenda in September 2015.</i></p> <p><i>Moderator: Commonwealth Secretariat</i></p> <p><i>Presentations:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Rorden Wilkinson, Sussex University • Miho Shirotori, Chief, Global and Regional Trade Analysis Section, Trade Analysis Branch, UNCTAD • Deb Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow, CPD • Dan Gay, Inter-Regional Adviser on LDCs, Committee for Development Policy Secretariat, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs <p><i>Questions for discussion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What difference will the SDGs really make in relation to reform of the global international trade support architecture? ➤ How might the SDGs be better enforced compared to the experience of the MDGs? ➤ How will the SDGs relate to the LDC-driven Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA) initiative? <p>Open discussion and Q&A</p>
3:00pm – 3:30pm	TEA/COFFEE BREAK
3:30pm – 5:00pm	<p>SESSION VIII: Getting the Private Sector in the Room: Engaging the Private Sector in Trade Policy Negotiations</p> <p><i>Trade negotiation is often described as commercial diplomacy. This is because it is the private sector that trades – governments create the framework of rules, laws and taxes within which this key economic activity takes place. For a change to the framework to have the desired impact in behavior, producers, traders and consumers must know what trade rules have changed, and why. This can be problematic given the minutiae of technical details included in trade agreements. It matters because it simply may not be possible to sustain firm-level upgrading processes (including</i></p>

	<p><i>social) overtime, unless governance structures can be influenced towards this objective and public/private actor incentive structures aligned. Ensuring the appropriate dialogue mechanisms becomes even more important within the context of GVCs. This session will explore business dialogue mechanisms and the interface with trade policy makers across the Commonwealth.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Commonwealth Secretariat</p> <p>Presentations: Panel TBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council • International Chamber of Commerce • Dr Keith Nurse, UWI • East African Business Council • FICCI, India or Federation of Indian Small and Medium Enterprises <p>Questions for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Within the context of the Commonwealth, how could the link between trade policy makers and the business community be strengthened?</i> ➤ <i>How should the private sector be involved with trade policy negotiations and business associations be consulted?</i> ➤ <i>How should the ascendancy of GVCs change trade policy negotiations?</i> <p>Discussion and Q&A</p>
<p>05:00pm – 5:30pm</p>	<p>CLOSING CEREMONY AND WAY FORWARD</p>