


LIVE

UNCTAD Trade Policy Dialogue

The multilateral trading system in the post-pandemic “new normal”

Friday, 25 September 2020, 10 a.m.–4.30 p.m. CET

Organized by the Division on International Trade and Commodities (DITC) in cooperation with the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) Secretariat

10–11.30 a.m.

Session 1 – Towards a post-COVID-19 trading system in support of developing countries’ exports

The global pandemic and the associated lockdown measures have exposed particular vulnerabilities of many developing countries, especially those that depend on tourism and remittances for export earnings/income. Other countries also suffered from value chain disruptions and falling commodity prices. As a result, the pandemic afflicts many developing countries with unemployment leading to high poverty incidence. The session will examine particular challenges posed to key traded sectors in developing countries – such as services, tourism, remittances and trade in value chains – and how the trading system could be made more supportive, perhaps via with special and differential treatment (SDT), of developing countries’ efforts to better cope with some of the transformative shifts triggered by the crisis. The Session will also facilitate the exchange of best practices and coping mechanisms.

- What were the major challenges faced by developing countries in putting in place effective response measures to the COVID-19 crisis?
- How can the COVID-19 challenges and lessons for developing countries be best addressed and factored into ongoing and future negotiations and WTO reform, including on SDT?

Moderator

H.E. Ms. Cheryl K. Spencer, Ambassador, Jamaica

Speakers

Mr. Escipión Joaquín Oliveira Gómez, Assistant Secretary-General, OACPS

H.E. Ms. Xolelwa Mlumbi-Peter, Ambassador of South Africa to the WTO

Mr. Carlos Correa, Executive Director, South Centre

Mr. Faizel Ismail, Director, Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, University of Cape Town

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UNEDITED VERSION

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Session 2 – Redefining the trading system in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis came on the heel of the systemic challenges confronting the MTS. Rising trade tensions had affected the prospects of multilateral processes and led to the stalemate in the appointment of WTO Appellate Body members. While the WTO reform agenda was put to the forefront of debate, and open-ended plurilateral processes were launched on certain issues, there is not yet a clear understanding on how the current trading system could best be reenergized and be made more relevant and effective in addressing the diverse interests of developing countries. The session will take stock of the current state of play and discuss the possible way forward towards MC12 and UNCTAD 15 in 2021.

- How do we best address diverse interests of developing countries in the WTO reform debate on SDT and on “new pathway” for multilateral trade negotiations?

Moderator

Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Director, DITC

Speakers

H.E. Mr. João Aguiar Machado, Ambassador of the European Union to the WTO

Ms. Li Yihong, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of China to the WTO

H.E. Ms. Merewalesi Falemaka, Ambassador, Pacific Islands Forum

Mr. Bernard Hoekman, Robert Schuman Chair, European University Institute

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