

2016 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up
Round Table E
Trade, science, technology, innovation and capacity-building
Wednesday, 20 April 2016, 11 AM - 1 PM, Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations, New York

Tentative Program

Chair: H.E. Dr. Paul Oquist Kelley, Minister, Private Secretary for National Policies, Nicaragua
Moderator: H.E. Mr. Alfredo Suescum A. (Panama), President, Trade and Development Board, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Trade

Panellists: Mr. Puvan Selvanathan, Head, International Trade Center (ITC)
Mr. Hans-Peter Werner, Counsellor, Head of Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) Unit, Development Division, World Trade Organisation (WTO)
Lead Discussant: Ms. Deborah James, Director, International Programs, Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR)

Science, technology, innovation and capacity building

Panellist: Mr. Andrew Hirsch, Director General, International Intellectual Property Institute
Lead Discussant: Mr. Ambuj Sagar, Professor of Policy Studies, Indian Institute of Technology, and Member, Group of experts to support Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM)

(followed by informal exchange of views among participants)

Background Note

The objective of the Round Table is to: (1) take stock of commitments and actions contained in Action Areas D (International trade as an engine for development) and G (Science, technology, innovation and capacity building) of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (the Addis Agenda) and the related means of implementation (Mols) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); (2) review early actions taken towards implementation of the relevant provisions, as well as voluntary initiatives put forward at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13-16 July 2015); (3) identify obstacles and bottlenecks that impede policy action; and (4) discuss the monitoring and assessment framework, building on the report of the Inter-agency Task Force (IATF) on Financing for Development.

Action Area D: International trade as an engine for development

The Addis Agenda highlights the importance of international trade as an engine for development. It notes that, with appropriate supporting policies, infrastructure and an educated work force, trade can also help realize inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction, productive employment, decent work, women's empowerment and food security, as well as a reduction in inequality, among other objectives. International trade in goods and services increased rapidly in the past several decades, but the 2008-2009 financial crisis changed world trade dynamics and global trade in goods has not yet regained its pre-crisis rate of growth. Dwindling commodity prices make it difficult for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in particular to repeat the buoyant growth in commodity export earnings. Global value chains (GVCs) have been the motor behind the massive expansion in trade among developing countries, or South-South trade, in the past decade. However, many developing countries, particularly raw commodity-supplier countries, are largely outside the production processes in GVCs. Gains from trade have often been unequally distributed within value chains.

Further complexity arises from the emergence of “mega” regional trade agreements, which may further change the dynamics in world trade flows as well as the underlying international trade rules.

Action Area G: Science, technology, innovation and capacity building

In a major expansion and advance beyond the Monterrey agenda, the Addis Agenda introduces a chapter on science, technology and innovation (STI) as well as capacity building. STI is of pivotal importance in addressing sustainable development challenges. Technological innovation is at the heart of sustainable development, and building technological capacities can help developing countries catch up with developed countries. There have been major advances in this area, for example in the area of information and communication technologies (ICTs). At the same time, access to technology is currently uneven and unequally distributed. Addressing these gaps will require national policy actions and international cooperation.

The STI capabilities of a country depend not only on access to a growing stock of science and technology, but also on the quality of interactions among the innovation actors in what might be called the ‘innovation system’. One of the major challenges in promoting technological innovation in developing countries is the lack of an appropriate innovation system to ease interaction among key actors. Bridging the formal and informal sector is especially difficult in circumstances of high social disparities. An effective innovation system should encourage greater interaction between groups. Such a system should foster investment in advanced technology and promote the development of affordable technology to meet the needs of the poor. The Addis Agenda seeks to strengthen these interactions so as to improve the contribution STI makes to the achievement of sustainable development, including the SDGs.

The Addis Agenda contains a range of policy commitments for action in the above areas. Chapters 2D and 2G of the IATF report (<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-IATF-Chapter2D.pdf> and <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-IATF-Chapter2G.pdf>), respectively, organize these commitments by thematic clusters and present proposals for monitoring their implementation in the future years. The main findings of the report are highlighted in the Note by the Secretary-General on Monitoring commitments and actions in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (E/FFDF/2016/1).

Guiding questions

Trade:

- 1. In light of recent developments in international trade negotiations, how can the international community ensure that trade growth is inclusive, and that regional trade agreements, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and preferential agreements, do not further exacerbate the marginalization of LDCs or small and vulnerable economies in world trade?*
- 2. How can Member States translate the outcomes of the Nairobi Ministerial Conference into sustainable-development-oriented progress?*
- 3. What measures have Member States taken or planned to ensure that trade and investment agreements do not undermine countries’ ability to pursue public policy objectives but rather support them in their pursuit of sustainable development?*

Science, technology, innovation and capacity building:

1. *What has been the progress and what are the remaining gaps in innovation and technological capabilities in developing countries?*
2. *What are the experiences in mobilizing long-term capital required to finance innovation? What policies and regulatory environments have helped incentivise investment into R&D?*
3. *What contributions can the Forum on Financing for Development make to a successful Technology Facilitation Mechanism?*

Biographies



H.E. Mr. Alfredo Suescum A. (Panama) is the President of the Trade and Development Board, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Ambassador Suescum is a lawyer by training, a diplomat, and consultant in international trade law and commercial diplomacy, with 27 years of professional experience. He has been assigned to Geneva in his current position since July 2009. His portfolio includes the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the International Standards Organization (ISO), and the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV).



Mr. Puvan Selvanathan heads the ITC Office to the UN. He was formerly a UN Special Rapporteur on Business and Human Rights and Head of Food and Agriculture at the UN Global Compact. Prior to joining the UN, he was Group Chief Sustainability Officer at a diversified conglomerate operating in over 140 countries. Puvan is an Architect by profession with an MBA and a DBA in Corporate Strategy and Sustainability. He has designed townships, innovated IT and PPPs for development, and formulated e-government strategies. Puvan consulted in the public and private sectors on ethics, governance and the Green Economy.



Mr. Hans-Peter Werner is Counsellor and Head of Unit of the Committee on Trade and Development with the Development Division of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva, Switzerland. His main areas of responsibility concern the CTD and the Work Programme on Small and Vulnerable Economies. Mr. Werner is also responsible for the WTO's links to Agenda 2030, including follow-up activities for Financing for Development, and for WTO relations with Members without representation in Geneva. Mr. Werner has worked for the WTO in a variety of functions since its establishment in 1995.



Ms. Deborah James is the Director of International Programs at the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR). She has over fifteen years of expertise working on issues of trade and democratic global governance. At CEPR, her work focuses on the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and US policy towards Latin America. Prior to CEPR, she was the Director of the WTO Program of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, where she worked to inform civil society and governments worldwide about the potential impacts of the WTO's proposed Doha Round expansion.



Mr. Andrew Hirsch is the Director General of the International Intellectual Property Institute. He is a recognized intellectual property expert with over 20 years of diversified public and private sector professional experience in global intellectual property policy, law, entrepreneurial business creation, and technology innovation and commercialization. Mr. Hirsch's career has focused on improving the global intellectual property ecosystem and on fostering sustainable technology driven economic growth.



Mr. Ambuj Sagar is the Vipula and Mahesh Chaturvedi Professor of Policy Studies at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. Prof. Sagar's interests broadly lie in science and technology policy, environmental policy, and development policy, with a particular focus on the interactions between technology and society. While his current research focuses mainly on energy innovation and climate policy, he also studies, more broadly, various facets of technology innovation, environmental policy politics and processes, and engineering education and research. His recent papers have dealt with energy innovation policy and strategies (in areas such as biofuels, coal power, and automobiles), climate change policy, and capacity development for the environment.