



Report: High-Level Regional Roundtable on the WTO Investment Facilitation for Development Negotiations: Perspectives from Asian and Pacific Economies

30 March 2021, 2pm-6pm Bangkok, Thailand

The ‘**High-Level Regional Roundtable on the WTO Investment Facilitation for Development Negotiations: Perspectives from Asian and Pacific Economies**’ took place on 30 March 2021 and was attended by about 150 participants. The Roundtable was co-organized by the International Trade Centre (ITC), the German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the World Economic Forum (WEF). The Roundtable was organised in the framework of the Investment Facilitation for Development project, jointly implemented by ITC and DIE.

The Roundtable offered a platform for a strategic exchange on the dynamic policy discussions and negotiations on investment facilitation for development among high-level policy makers, government officials, investment promotion agencies, and private sector representatives, as well as eminent academic scholars, focused on Asia and Pacific. The Roundtable offered an opportunity to reflect on the potential benefits and challenges of international frameworks on investment facilitation for development, to help negotiators ensure that their countries’ international engagement is in line with their sustainable development strategies as well as national and regional reform agenda.

Summary of the main outcomes of the workshop

I. The significance of a WTO Investment Facilitation for Development Framework (IFF4D)

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impact on the Asia and Pacific region’s progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is also complicating key aspects of economic globalization, shocking global and regional supply chains and disrupting international trade and flows of foreign direct investment (FDI). Lockdown measures resulted in global FDI flows plummeting by 42% last year, to a low of US\$859 billion. Developing countries in Asia and the Pacific were more resilient with respect to FDI outflows, only mildly dropping by 4%. The severity of the impact on FDI flows varied by sub-region in Asia and the Pacific.

Revitalizing FDI inflows requires effective policy interventions by states and concerted mutual cooperation among states. The IFF4D is a framework for negotiating and implementing such actions. It aims to create an effective investment facilitation regime by promoting a transparent and predictable regulatory environment, making investment-related information more easily available, reducing red tape, helping investors to navigate complex regulations, and helping them to amicably resolve investor complaints. Such a framework would provide a boost in confidence to both domestic and foreign investors. Improving the investment facilitation ecosystem would send a positive signal to both foreign and domestic investors.

Asian and Pacific economies have been at the forefront of new collaborative approaches on investment facilitation. They have been pioneering both voluntary and legally binding frameworks and instruments and utilizing bilateral, national and mega-regional levels for implementing investment facilitation measures. The IFF4D can further help unlock investment flows to the region's economies, thereby stimulating regional recovery.

II. The state of play of the WTO negotiations on an IFF4D

Currently, over 100 WTO members participate in the IFF4D negotiations. The negotiations benefit from wide geographic representation, with many developing and least developed country (LDC) members participating. Participating WTO members have been discussing the following areas in relation to investment facilitation: improving the transparency and predictability of investment measures; simplifying and speeding up administrative procedures; strengthening the dialogue between governments and investors, and between host and home country governments; and promoting the uptake by companies of responsible business conduct, as well as fighting corruption. Participating members generally see special and differential treatment as an important element of the future framework and see the trade facilitation agreement as a good model in this regard.

Negotiations on the IFF4D began in September of 2020. Twenty-six draft proposals and written contributions have been received so far. A draft with a revised, streamlined text of the agreement has been prepared, based on these proposals and on discussions held during the negotiations. This draft continues to evolve in substance, while serving to inform discussions among members. There has also been a clear agreement among members that any future agreement will not cover market access, investment protection and investor state dispute settlement (ISDS). Further work is, however, needed in several areas, including the promotion of sustainable and responsible investment, single information portals, domestic supplier databases, domestic regulatory coherence, and special and differential treatment to strengthen the contribution of an IFF4D to sustainable FDI attraction and retainment.

III. The state of play and priorities for an IFF4D in Asia and the Pacific

The Asia and Pacific region is becoming increasingly receptive to investment facilitation concepts and measures. This is demonstrated by the increasing number of investment and trade facilitation treaties in the region.

Asian and Pacific economies have different levels of commitments in their existing investment facilitation treaties, and some of the treaties include deeper investment facilitation provisions. Data

shows that developed countries in the Asia and Pacific region have initiated many more agreements with investment facilitation provisions than developing countries in the region.

In terms of priorities for the region, enhancing single window and one-stop shop services is important for improving investment facilitation. To this end, the digitalization of these services, especially with regard to investment approval processes, is important. Relatedly, governments should enhance the use of information and communications technology (ICT) and digital technologies. It is encouraging that the IFF4D provides enhanced avenues for the use of ICT and e-portals.

Several speakers highlighted the importance of including the private sector in country-level and regional discussions of investment facilitation, noting that its input should, where possible, be included in drafting and designing policies aimed at improving investment climates through investment facilitation. Priority should be placed on building long-term partnerships with the private sector, especially with companies that are looking to invest with a long-term outlook. Establishing a mechanism for regular communication between business and governments and promoting public-private partnerships would support this and also help attract and facilitate investment.

Speakers also emphasized that an IFF4D must especially take into consideration the capacity of developing and LDC economies in the region. These economies will have to undertake policy reforms to implement investment facilitation measures. It is therefore important to consider what technical and financial assistance they will need in the future to implement the IFF4D and include capacity building commitments in the framework. Speakers highlighted that while a degree of flexibility should be left in the framework so as not to compel countries to act before they are ready or able to commit to certain measures, too much flexibility in the provisions could make it harder for investors to see what the actual rules are on the ground in any given market at any given moment. Furthermore, too much flexibility may especially be difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as they struggle the most with inconsistent policies.

IV. The opportunities and challenges of an IFF4D in Asia and the Pacific

The aim of the IFF4D is to set up a more transparent, efficient and investment-friendly business climate and to make it easier for foreign investors to invest, to conduct their day-to-day business and to expand their existing investments. The IFF4D will complement and reinforce individual members' efforts to facilitate investment, for example, by creating a clear and consistent global benchmark for investment facilitation. Elements such as transparency of investment measures as well as streamlining and accelerating administrative procedures will boost confidence among investors. Domestic investment facilitation reforms will better ensure that international commitments are implemented. The IFF4D can provide a global forum to promote investment facilitation practices, reduce policy uncertainties, sending a positive signal to investors, enhancing cross-border cooperation and mitigating potential disputes.

The Asia and Pacific region performs relatively well on the investment facilitation index created by DIE, which maps the adoption of investment facilitation measures at the country level. Although scores vary considerably by country, the region as a whole scored an average of 1.2, suggesting that the region is indeed ready for an IFF4D. Because such a framework would hold

the highest reform potential for low- and middle-income countries engaged in the negotiations, it is expected that these countries will gain the most from a multilateral framework on investment facilitation.

Discussions focused on three key challenges:

The need for international law on investment facilitation versus domestic law: Some countries in the region still remain to be convinced that international law and multilateral norms would be more efficient, and that the WTO is the most effective platform for addressing these issues and for enabling countries to boost their attractiveness for investment.

The relationship between the IFF4D and other investment treaties: A key concern of some Asian and Pacific countries is the relationship between the IFF4D and other investment treaties. Although it has been made clear from the outset that the IFF4D would not cover ISDS, some countries are still concerned that there could be an increase in potential cases as a result of spillover and linkages with other investment treaties. Although there have been limited examples of this occurring with other agreements, the issue needs to be better addressed to ease the concerns of current participants as well as non-participants of the negotiations.

Aligning the interests of Asia and Pacific countries: While there is a high level of consensus on a wider range of existing investment facilitation measures outside the Asia and Pacific region, disparate views of members of the Asia and the Pacific region is to be expected, given that the region is much larger than other regions and very diverse in terms of size, level of development, economic structures, etc. A key challenge that remains is how to merge interests of different countries on certain issues, on a provision-by-provision basis.

V. Key institutional mechanisms and measures for enhancing sustainable development

The following institutional mechanisms and investment facilitation measures were elaborated on as key provisions to be included in an IFF4D for promoting FDI flows and enhancing sustainable development.

Dispute prevention and management: Investor grievance management is a basic investment facilitation measure. The establishment of grievance management mechanisms would be useful for both developed and developing countries. An effective grievance management mechanism helps to prevent disputes by identifying and resolving investment-related issues early. World Bank surveys show that, typically, when a dispute arises, the foreign investor attempts to interact with the government to try to resolve the problem. Moreover, investors have high levels of dissatisfaction with how governmental agencies deal with their grievances when there is no institutional structure in place for dealing with grievances. This leads to high levels of withdrawals and cancellations of investment, leading to the closure of operations. The World Bank developed an investor grievance management tool that can be implemented by government agencies to achieve a minimum institutional capacity to identify, track and manage conflicts between governmental agencies and investors, thereby helping to avoid escalation of grievances into legal disputes. Typically, such a tool should be implemented by an investment promotion agency (IPA) or some other governmental body responsible for FDI. Currently, investor grievance management mechanisms do not exist in most countries. With the World Bank tool, governmental agencies

could attempt to resolve grievances that could result in ISDS, or could be operationally disruptive and could lead to divestment, or which could represent a political or reputational risk. It is important to develop a coordination protocol between agencies to recognize, capture and track grievances starting at an early stage.

Risk-based approvals: Policymakers should consider risk-based assessment, whereby low-risk investment projects are approved with more limited, if any, need for assessment, while high-risk projects receive careful assessment. Governments may consider limiting the requirement of obtaining authorization to categories associated with higher risk.

Ex-ante conditional approval for SMEs: Under this measure, authorization is given to SMEs to start operations without the requirement of approvals from the government for an initial period of time. This can help encourage FDI by SMEs, given that they have fewer resources to cover high costs of foreign establishment. India, for instance, has recently adopted such an approach for SMEs to be able to invest for up to 36 months without the same approval requirements.

Silence is consent: Such a mechanism could include granting permits or licenses automatically if no government action is taken within statutory time limits. Many economies have found this to be an important measure for approvals not to get stuck in the administrative process, while also providing authorities to retain policy control if they proactively indicate that they require more time to evaluate a certain proposal.

IPA-IPA cooperation: Governments can support not only inward FDI but outward FDI as well, and partnerships between IPAs from different economies could support two-way flows of investments, leading to win-win outcomes.

Linkages between foreign investors and suppliers: Connecting foreign investors to domestic suppliers of goods and services facilitates investment decisions and activities. Supplier linkages provide direct benefits to contracted firms, while also dispersing the benefits of investment widely within the domestic economy, thereby enhancing the development dimension of investment. Linkages can be facilitated through supplier databases that include sustainability dimensions, an approach Cambodia is pioneering in the region. Governments should develop supplier development programmes to allow suppliers to provide quality goods and services at the cost, quality and scale required by foreign investors. In this regard, the World Bank operates a supplier development programme.

Behavioural and targeted incentives: Incentives should be offered to induce particular investment behaviour or activity that is aligned with development goals and priorities. Clear criteria can help ensure that policy objectives are realized in practice. Clear criteria underpin ‘smart incentives’ that achieve policy objectives in an efficient manner.

VI. Looking forward

The IFF4D negotiations must remain open and transparent with broad participation of WTO members. The focus should also be placed on ensuring that the sustainable development of economies is a key element of the framework. Cooperative and collaborative action is needed to move the multilateral framework forward. Enhanced international cooperation, information sharing and the exchange of best practices will be essential to creating a more transparent, efficient and predictable environment for facilitating cross-border investment. Relatedly, it would be beneficial to hold more awareness-raising sessions with non-participating WTO members, to keep

them abreast of developments during the negotiation rounds and to also provide them with a platform to share their concerns.

It would also be useful to consider enhancing regulatory coherence for investment facilitation at the regional level in the Asia and Pacific region. This could in turn serve as a starting point or foundation for participating members in the IFF4D negotiations. The economies in the Asia Pacific are well positioned to shape a future investment facilitation framework that reflects their interests and needs. An IFF4D would add value to current national and regional efforts by promoting good practices. In addition, an IFF4D would act as a catalyst in facilitating technical assistance and capacity building in the region.



High-Level Regional Roundtable on the WTO Investment Facilitation for Development Negotiations: Perspectives from Asian and Pacific Economies

30 March 2021, 2pm-6pm Bangkok, Thailand (GMT+7)

This ‘**High-Level Regional Roundtable on the WTO Investment Facilitation for Development Negotiations: Perspectives from Asian and Pacific Economies**’ is co-organized by the International Trade Centre (ITC), the German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the World Economic Forum (WEF). This Roundtable is organised in the framework of the Investment Facilitation for Development project, jointly implemented by ITC and DIE. The Roundtable will take place on 30 March 2021, 2pm-6pm Bangkok, Thailand (GMT+7).

The Roundtable is meant to offer a platform for strategic exchange on the dynamic policy discussions and negotiations on investment facilitation for development – taking place on various levels and international fora – among a select group of high-level policy makers, government officials, investment promotion and private sector representatives as well as eminent academic scholars, focused on Asia and Pacific. The event will provide an opportunity to reflect on the potential benefits and challenges of international frameworks on investment facilitation for development. Such a reflection process will help negotiators to ensure that their countries’ international engagement is in line with their sustainable development strategies and in line with their national and regional reform agenda.

Investment policy makers face a huge challenge to tackle declining foreign direct investment (FDI) flows as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the United Nations Conference for Development (UNCTAD), global FDI contracted by 42% in 2020, compared to the previous year. Flows to members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) contracted by 31%. The consequences of the pandemic necessitate a discussion of the kind of policies and frameworks that are needed to facilitate FDI and domestic investment, especially investment that directly helps to promote sustainable development. While many governments are reconsidering levels of investment protection and liberalisation enshrined in their international investment agreements (IIA) and are participating in the reform discussions on investor state dispute settlement in the context of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), discussions on a distinct set of investment facilitation policies have gained momentum in recent years. Investment facilitation can be understood as a set of measures concerned, among other things, with improving the transparency and predictability of investment frameworks, streamlining procedures related to foreign investors and enhancing coordination and cooperation between different stakeholders.

Negotiations on investment facilitation policies involving Asian and Pacific economies are ongoing in different fora at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. The different forms of investment frameworks, such as the the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Investment Facilitation Action Plan, the investment chapter of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the current World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on a multilateral framework on investment facilitation for development and ASEAN's current discussions on a possible investment facilitation framework, will play a key part in helping to attract and facilitate investment and advance Asian and Pacific economies sustainable development strategies, in particular in light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Roundtable will provide a brief background on the progress of the discussions on investment facilitation for development at various levels as well as an exchange on the types of concrete measures that such frameworks could contain. The Roundtable will address the main challenges and concerns that ought to be taken into consideration when negotiating international investment facilitation frameworks that are beneficial for sustainable development, also in the broader context of investment agreements.

The objective is to facilitate joint learning and capacity building among participants. The Roundtable will be held under the Chatham House Rule to facilitate open and results-oriented discussions. A report will distil key policy recommendations from the discussion at the Roundtable.

PROGRAMME

2:00-2:35

Opening addresses

Chair

Yann Duval, Officer-in-Charge, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Speakers

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary General, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, International Trade Centre (ITC)

Anna-Katharina Hornidge, Director, German Development Institute / Deutsches Institute für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)

Børge Brende, President, World Economic Forum (WEF)

Guest addresses

Yi Xiaozhun, Deputy Director General, World Trade Organization (WTO)

Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, Executive Director, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat

2:35-3:45

1st Session and High-level segment: The WTO negotiations of an Investment Facilitation Framework for Development: What is at stake for Asian and Pacific economies?

Chair

Joo-Ok Lee, Head of Asia Pacific, World Economic Forum (WEF)

Introduction

Mathias Francke, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Chile to the WTO and Coordinator of the Structured Discussions on Investment Facilitation for Development

Speakers

H.E. Faiyaz Siddiq Koya, Minister for Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport, Republic of Fiji

H.E. James Bule, Minister of Tourism, Commerce, Trade and Ni-Vanuatu Business, Vanuatu

H.E. Chea Vuthy, Deputy Secretary General, Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), Cambodia

H.E. Li Chenggang, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of China to the WTO

H.E. Syamsul B. Siregar, Deputy II Permanent Representative, Ambassador of Indonesia to the WTO

H.E. Rashidi Said, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the WTO

Discussants

Craig Burchell, Senior Vice President, Global Trade Affairs, Public Affairs & Communications Dept., Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.

Wenhua Shan, Dean, School of Law & School of International Education, Xi'an Jiaotong University

3:45-3:50

Coffee break

3:50-4:50

2nd Session: Key issues related to investment facilitation in Asian and Pacific economies

Chair

Marc Proksch, Chief of Investment and Enterprise Development Section, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division (ESCAP)

Speakers

Manjiao Chi, Professor and Founding Director, Centre for International Economic Law and Policy (CIELP), Law School, University of International Business and Economics (UIBE), China – “***Developments in Asia concerning investment facilitation***”

Zoryana Olekseyuk, Senior Researcher, German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) – “***The economic impact of investment facilitation frameworks***”

Deborah Elms, Executive Director, Asian Trade Centre, President, Asia Business Trade Association – “***Learning from the TFA experience the role of needs assessments to support implementation***”

4:50-4:55

Coffee break

4:55-5:50

3rd Session: Key institutional mechanisms and measures for enhancing sustainable development

Chair **Rajesh Aggarwal**, Chief Trade Facilitation and Policy for Business, International Trade Centre (ITC)

Speakers **Ivan Nimac**, Global Lead, Investment Policy and Promotion, World Bank Group – **“Dispute prevention management”**

Matthew Stephenson, Policy and Community Lead, International Trade and Investment, World Economic Forum (WEF) – **“Important, effective, and innovative investment facilitation measures for development”**

Michael Lim, Executive Director, Crowe Malaysia – **“Facilitating investment in practice: what do investors need?”**

Discussants **Rifat Parvez**, Additional Secretary, Board of Investment, Pakistan

Clarence Hoot, Managing Director, Investment Promotion Authority, Papua New Guinea

5:50-6:00 **Concluding remarks**

Zhanar Aitzhanova, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Mission of Kazakhstan to the World Trade Organization

Background materials

Axel Berger and Zoryana Olekseyuk, “Investment Facilitation for Sustainable Development: Index maps adoption at domestic level”, Bonn: German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), October 2019, [available here](#).

ITC, DIE, “What have we learned in the framework of a project on Investment Facilitation for Development: A summary”, [available here](#).

Ahmed Omic and Matthew Stephenson, “What Can Governments Do to Facilitate Investment? Important measures identified through surveys” (World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) and World Economic Forum (WEF), December 2019), [available here](#).

Karl P. Sauvant and Evan Gabor, “Facilitating sustainable FDI for sustainable development in a WTO Investment Facilitation Framework: four concrete proposals”. Journal of World Trade, vol. 55 (2021), pp. 261-286., [available here](#).

Karl P. Sauvant, Matthew Stephenson, Khalil Hamdani, and Yardenne Kagan, “An Inventory of Concrete Measures to Facilitate the Flow of Sustainable FDI: What? Why? How?” (Geneva and Bonn: International Trade Centre (ITC) and German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), November 2020), [available here](#).

Bios

Rajesh Aggarwal

Rajesh Aggarwal is Chief of the Trade Facilitation & Policy for Business Section of the International Trade Centre (ITC), Geneva. He is leading a program of assisting the private sector in developing countries to be the change agent for trade policy reform and engage in business advocacy with their governments in design and implementation of trade policies and negotiating positions that reflect the business interests. Before joining the ITC, he worked for the Indian Government and participated in WTO Doha Round of trade negotiations. He has published papers in the area of trade negotiations, including a paper titled “Dynamics of Agriculture Negotiations in WTO” in the Journal of World Trade.

Zhanar Aitzhanova

Zhanar Aitzhanova is Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the WTO. She held the following positions within Kazakhstan government: Minister of Economic Integration of Kazakhstan, Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and Vice-Minister of Industry and Trade and Chief Negotiator on Kazakhstan's Accession to WTO. She completed her graduate studies at the Department of History, Kazakh State University, Almaty, and studies in Economics and Finance, Joint Vienna Institute, Austria. She holds a Master's in Public Administration from the John F Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific took office on 1 November 2018. She was Professor of Economics at Universitas Padjadjaran and was Minister of National Development Planning and the Head of the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS), Indonesia from 2009 to 2014. In 2016, she was a member of the High-Level Independent Team of Advisors to support the ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations for the 2030 Agenda. She obtained her Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Washington, USA.

H.E. James Bule

H.E. James Bule (MP) is a Member of Parliament for Ambae in the current 12th Legislature of the Republic of Vanuatu and is the current Minister of Tourism, Trade, Industry, Commerce and Ni-Vanuatu business. As Minister he is actively engaged in leading policy formulation and implementation in all portfolio in the Ministry. In particular creating a strong framework for attracting Foreign Direct Investment into Vanuatu while at the same time taking affirmative action in promoting the Cooperative Network to become the main marketing platform for movement of organic products to promote controlled movement of goods to domestic and international markets. Mr. Bule was Vanuatu's main WTO accession advocate and played an essential role in ensuring Vanuatu acceded to the WTO in 2012.

Børge Brende

Børge Brende is President of the World Economic Forum. He served as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister of the Environment for the government of Norway. He was also a member of the Norwegian Parliament for many years, Secretary General for the

Norwegian Red Cross and Chairperson of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development, Board Member of Equinor, and Member of the Board of the Norwegian School of Economics.

Craig Burchell

Craig Burchell, a trade lawyer, is Senior VP Public Affairs at Huawei, Shenzhen, China & corporate spokesperson on Digital Trade. He served 20 years at Philips Electronics, Amsterdam, as Global Head of Trade and CEO Sherpa. He advocates globalisation for shared prosperity and technology for all, based on law, business and policy experience. Advisory Boards on “Digital FDI” (WEF), B20 Trade & Investment Global Task Force, OECD-EMNet, and DIE-ITC’s International Expert’s Group on WTO’s “Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement”. He led business delegations to 3 WTO Ministerials for European technology companies, and represented Dutch business VNO-NCW in Business Europe.

H.E. Li Chenggang

Li Chenggang is the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of China to the World Trade Organization. Prior to the current position, Mr. LI served as Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Commerce of China (MOFCOM), Director-General of the Department of Treaty and Law, MOFCOM, and Vice Mayor of Qingdao. He was a key member of the negotiating team for China’s accession to the WTO, as well as the Chief Negotiator representing China for the investment treaties’ negotiations with the European Union and the United States.

Manjiao Chi

Manjiao Chi is professor, Law School of University of International Business and Economic (UIBE), China, and founding director of the School's Center for International Economic Law and Policy (CIELP). He is also founding editor-in-chief of the Asian Yearbook of International Economic Law. His recent research focus includes international economic law, dispute settlement and sustainable development. He frequently advises international organizations, government bodies as well as private firms on legal and policy issues of his research fields.

Pamela Coke-Hamilton

Pamela Coke-Hamilton has served as Executive Director of the International Trade Centre since 1 October 2020. She joined ITC from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, where she was Director of the Division on International Trade and Commodities. She served with the Jamaican Government, the Caribbean Forum in trade negotiations, and multilateral institutions, including the Organization of American States and InterAmerican Development Bank. She previously served as Executive Director of the Caribbean Export Development Agency, strengthening the private sector and MSMEs through investment promotion. She holds a Juris Doctor in Law from the Georgetown University School of Law in Washington, DC.

Yann Duval

Yann Duval is Officer-in-Charge of the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division and Chief of the Trade Policy and Facilitation Section at the UNESCAP. Over the past 19 years, he has conducted research, delivered technical assistance and advisory services on trade and development throughout Asia-Pacific. He spearheaded the development of the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade, the creation of the ESCAP-World Bank Trade Cost Database, the UN

Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, and led the UNESCAP team supporting the UN treaty on the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade in Asia and the Pacific.

Deborah Elms

Deborah Elms is the Founder and Executive Director of the Asian Trade Centre (ATC). She is President of the Asia Business Trade Association (ABTA). She served as Co-Chair of the Trade Policy Committee of the Global Trade Professionals Alliance (GTPA), was a senior fellow in the Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry's Trade Academy, and was on the Trade and Investment Council of the World Economic Forum from 2017-2019. She received a PhD in political science from the University of Washington, a MA in international relations from the University of Southern California, and bachelor's degrees from Boston University. She publishes the Talking Trade Blog.

Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria

Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria is the executive director of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, or APEC, Secretariat based in Singapore where she advises and provides support for the forum's 21 diverse member economies. She was a top-level civil servant and trade negotiator in Malaysia, and played an integral role in Malaysia's participation in multilateral trade and cooperation. As Secretary-General of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry she often represented Malaysia in minister-level APEC meetings. She also oversaw the formulation of Malaysia's positions in agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and chaired the body that drafted ASEAN's economic community blueprints for 2015 and 2025.

Mathias Francke

Mathias Francke is Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Chile to the WTO and Coordinator of the Structured Discussions on Investment Facilitation for Development. Previously, he was APEC SOM Chair (2019), and Director General for Multilateral Economic Affairs, Director for Bilateral Economic Affairs, and senior advisor of the Chilean Vice Minister of Trade. He has been posted at the Embassy of Chile in the UK (as Deputy HM from 2014 to 2018), Chile's Mission to the WTO (2000 to 2005, and as Deputy HM from 2006 to 2010) and the Trade Office of the Embassy of Chile in the USA (1992 to 1996). He is a lawyer from the Catholic University of Chile and has a graduate degree from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

Dato Lim Jock Hoi

Dato Lim Jock Hoi was the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam since 2006. During his tenure, he served as Brunei Darussalam's Senior Official for the ASEAN Economic Community Pillar (SEOM), APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) and the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting). He was a member of the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration (HLTF-EI) since 2001, serving as the HLTF-EI Chair in 2017. He was Brunei Darussalam's Chief Negotiator for the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP), as well as for the P4, precursor to the TPP negotiations.

Clarence Hoot

Clarence Hoot is the Managing Director of the Investment Promotion Authority of Papua New Guinea. As Managing Director, he sits in various Boards such as the Petroleum Advisory Board,

the National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology and the Investment Promotion Authority. He has represented Papua New Guinea in numerous capacities, including in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in which he was the first Papua New Guinean to be appointed as a Co-chair to lead discussions in the Investment Expert Group. He is also an active member of the Regional Investment Analysis Group with APEC Study Centre at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia.

Anna-Katharina Hornidge

Anna-Katharina Hornidge is Director of the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) and Professor for Global Sustainable Development at the University of Bonn. Before joining DIE in March 2020, she was Professor of Social Sciences in the Marine Tropics at the University of Bremen and Head of Department “Social Sciences” and the research group “Development and Knowledge Sociology” at the Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) in Bremen. From 2006 to 2015, she worked as Senior Researcher for the Centre for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, where she held the position of Professor and Director in the Department of Social and Cultural Change from 2014 to 2015.

H.E. Faiyaz Siddiq Koya

Lawyer by profession and politician since 2014, Faiyaz Siddiq Koya is the Fijian Minister for Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport.

Joo-Ok Lee

Joo-Ok Lee is Head of the Regional Agenda for the Asia-Pacific at the World Economic Forum, responsible for institutional collaboration with governments and public sector stakeholders in the region. Earlier positions with the Forum include Head of Strategy and Community Development for the Asia-Pacific and Head of International Organizations. Prior to the Forum he worked with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO leading its public-private partnership initiative and projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. He received an MBA from INSEAD and a B.S. in Political Science from Seoul National University.

Michael Lim

Michael Lim is the Managing Director for Crowe Growth Consulting, a division covering regional markets focused on assisting companies to catalyse growth through improving performance, innovating itself or accelerating business expansion. He is the youngest to have graduated at the age of 17, cumma-sum-laude from University of Queensland, under the faculty of Business & Economics School, in the field of Accounting and Finance with scientific research in the field of Artificial Intelligence. His working experiences include working with top notch research company, world-class consulting firm and well-known global accounting firms before he was head-hunted to be a Global Associate Director and head the first ever turnaround consulting division globally.

Ivan Nimac

Ivan Anton Nimac has been the World Bank Group’s (WBG) Global Lead for Investment Policy and Promotion since July 2018. His team supports a portfolio of activities, including government advisory, development lending and an array of learning and knowledge activities to help countries attract and retain FDI. Before joining the WBG in 2006, he held positions in law, diplomacy and

international development with the Australian and Croatian governments and the United Nations. He holds degrees in economics, law and international relations.

Zoryana Olekseyuk

Zoryana Olekseyuk is a Senior Researcher at DIE. Her work focuses on economic integration/disintegration, trade, FDI, and investment facilitation, mainly with respect to developing and emerging economies. Being an experienced computable general equilibrium (CGE) modeler, she developed many innovative CGE models, e.g., incorporating data from heterogeneous firms and FDI in services. She has contributed to many international research projects and acts as a consultant for the World Bank. Her research is published in such journals as World Economy, Empirica, Review of Development Economics, Economic Modeling, and the Journal of International Trade and Economic Development.

Rifat Parvez

Rifat Parvez is working in Pakistan Board of Investment. He has vast experience of public policy, investment policy, policy advocacy, investment, promotion and facilitation. He has been the Chief negotiator of Pakistan dealing with International Investment Agreements. He has been involved in drafting Foreign Private Investment Act, Investment Strategy and Bilateral Investment Strategy for Pakistan. He was the lead officer for drafting Bilateral Investment Treaty template for Pakistan.

Marc Proksch

Since 2020, Marc Proksch is Chief of the Investment and Enterprise Development Section in the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division of UNESCAP. The Section covers work related to research, capacity building and promoting regional cooperation in the areas of development of small and medium-sized enterprises, promotion and facilitation of investment for development and the promotion of responsible business practices. Prior to 2010 he worked ESCAP's Trade Policy Section with particular interest in the multilateral trading system and Doha Development Agenda, including regional and bilateral trade agreements and their relationship with the multilateral trading system. He started his career in ESCAP in 1990 in the Industry and Technology Division.

H.E. Rashidi Said

Rashidi Said has professional experience of more than twenty years of service in various types of institutions from the semi-government body, the Malaysia Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MiGHT) to several departments at the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) such as APEC and Multilateral Trade Policy and Negotiations divisions. He assumed his role as the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the WTO in 2019. He chaired the WTO Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology in 2019; Working Group on Trade, Debt and Finance in 2020; and APEC Geneva Caucus in 2020.

Wenhua Shan

Wenhua Shan, holds a PhD from Trinity College, Cambridge. He is Yangtze River Chair Professor of International Economic Law (by Ministry of Education, China) and the Dean of the Law School and the School of International Education, Xi'an Jiaotong University, PR China. He is an ICSID Conciliator and an Expert of the SPC International Commercial Expert Committee. His research focuses on International investment and arbitration law, in which he authored a dozen books by

publishers including OUP and CUP and numerous articles in journals such as European Journal of International Law and American Journal of Comparative Law. He has talked at the WTO Public Forum among others on investment facilitation matters.

Matthew Stephenson

Matthew Stephenson is Policy and Community Lead for International Trade and Investment at the World Economic Forum, where he manages the Global Investment Policy and Practice initiative. Previously, he worked at the IFC, where he led the workstream on outward FDI. He has also worked at the OECD on Africa and investment and served as a diplomat for the U.S. Department of State, leading the economic team on Afghanistan and managing economic programs in the Middle East. Since 2017 he has been a member of the T20 Task Force on Trade and Investment. He has a PhD from the Graduate Institute in Geneva, a master's from the Harvard Kennedy School and a bachelor's from Oxford University.

H.E. Chea Vuthy

H.E. Chea Vuthy has been Deputy Secretary General of the Cambodian Investment Board, with Rank of Secretary of State, since 2018. In 2006 he was appointed as Deputy Secretary General of the Cambodian Special Economic Zones Board and Chairman of the Administration of the Special Economic Zone. He joined the Cambodian ministry in 1992, starting in the Ministry of Planning. In 1994 he was positioned in the Council for Development of Cambodia, and in 1997 was appointed Director of Public Relations and Promotion. In 2005 he was appointed as Permanent Vice Chairman of the Subcommittee on Investment for three provinces. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration.

Yi Xiaozhun

Yi Xiaozhun has been a Deputy Director-General at the WTO since October 2013. He has extensive experience in world trade and economics, both as a senior government official and subsequently as China's ambassador to the WTO. He represented China as a key negotiator in China's WTO accession process, making an important contribution to the negotiations. Prior to becoming China's ambassador to the WTO in 2011, he was Assistant Minister and subsequently China's Vice Minister of Commerce in charge of multilateral and regional trade negotiations and cooperation. Besides his contribution to China's WTO accession, he played a leading role in negotiating numerous free trade agreements.