

Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade (GFP) 2015 Meeting

“The Role of Private Sector in Supporting the Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement”

22 April 2015, at 9:00, Room XXII, *Palais des Nations*, Geneva

Background

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) was adopted in December 2013 at the 9th WTO Ministerial in Bali, Indonesia. The Protocol of Amendment was subsequently adopted in November 2014. The TFA creates binding obligations for WTO members to conduct trade facilitation reforms by making trade processes more transparent and efficient in cooperation with border regulatory agencies and private sector. The Agreement also includes provisions for technical assistance and capacity building to support its implementation in developing and least developed countries (LDCs).

Developing countries and LDCs are currently in the process of self-designating, on an individual basis, all of the agreement's measures into one of the three following categories: provisions that will be implemented upon entry into force of the TFA (category A); measures requiring a transition period prior to their implementation (category B); and measures for which implementation needs both a transition period and external technical and financial assistance for implementation (category C).

The key international organizations active in trade facilitation have pledged to work together to support countries in this process and to assist in providing the necessary technical assistance, along with other players, for implementing the category C measures described above. The private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), must also play an important role in this process as a key implementation partner and significant potential beneficiary.

Objective

This year, Meeting of the Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade (GFP)¹ is organized by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in collaboration with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) and will take place in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 22 April 2015. The meeting will bring together representatives of the private sector, WTO Member States and international organizations to discuss how to best support and coordinate the implementation process of TFA. In particular, it will discuss how the private sector can contribute and share a leading role in such a process.

Participants

Private sector representatives from large corporations and SMEs; national government representatives, officials of international organizations and other relevant organizations and experts in trade facilitation.

Interpretation

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English, French and Russian.

¹ The Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade (GFP) is an alliance of national and international organizations working on facilitating trade and transport facilitation worldwide. More information is available at: www.gfptt.org

Agenda

09:00 - 10:00 REGISTRATION

10:00 - 11:00

OPENING SESSION: WTO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT: AN OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

This session will begin with an overview of the TFA, its key principles and brief explanations of its provisions and an update on the current state of ratification and notifications by WTO Member States. It will also summarise the programme of the Annex D+ organizations, which are supporting the implementation of the Agreement.

Opening Remarks : Tom Butterly, UNECE

Speakers:

- *Nora Neufeld, WTO Secretariat*
- *Donia Hammami, International Chamber of Commerce*

Moderator: *Selina Jackson, The World Bank*

11:00 - 13:00

SESSION 1: GOVERNMENTS' PRIORITIES INCLUDING STRATEGIES FOR FOSTERING PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE TFA IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

This session will discuss how Governments are planning to implement the TFA including the present status of implementation and priority steps and requirements for implementation in respective countries. It will focus on how the private sector is consulted and how an effective participation of the private sector can be facilitated to implement the Agreement. Speakers are expected to come from both developed and developing countries.

Speakers:

- *Jie Zhao, General Administration of China Customs*
- *Ambassador Eduardo Sperisen-Yurt, Guatemala*
- *Luc de Blicq, The Netherlands Customs*
- *Alisher Nazarov, Tajikistan*

Moderator: *Tom Butterly, UNECE*

13:00 - 15:00 LUNCH BREAK

15:00 TO 16:00

SESSION 2: PRIORITIES, PERSPECTIVES, AND EXPECTATIONS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR ON TFA IMPLEMENTATION

This session will deliberate on the perspectives of the private sector, both large corporates and SMEs on how they see the WTO TFA implementation proceeding, the potential benefits from a private sector perspective, and how they can contribute to the national and international initiatives in supporting the implementations of various provisions of the Agreement. Specific topics may include regulatory and commercial (including transport) procedures, electronic business, logistics and trade finance. A diverse group of private sector representatives from the developed and developing countries are expected to be present in this session.

Speakers:

- *Sean Doherty, World Economic Forum*
- *Carlos Grau Tanner, Global Express Association*
- *Adam Salerno, US Chamber of Commerce*

Moderator: *Matthew Wilson, ITC*

16:00 – 16:15

SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG UNECE, UNCTAD AND ITC BY HEADS OF RESPECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS

16:15 – 17:30

SESSION 3: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS’ COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP FOR SUPPORTING TFA IMPLEMENTATION

This session will focus on sharing information and experiences on how, at practical level, the WTO TFA can be implemented based on public-private partnership and on the role of National Trade Facilitation Committees in this process. Presenters from a number of key international organizations, with strong capacity and mandates for supporting the implementation of the WTO TFA will focus on how these organizations can assist the private sector and their governments, for example in developing recommendations and standards, tools and guides, delivering technical assistance and capacity building programmes, and building national competencies, in particular through the support to National Trade Facilitation Committees, as well as committing resources for the implementation of TFA.

Speakers:

- *Tom Butterly, UN Economic Commission for Europe*
- *Poul Hansen, UN Conference on Trade and Development*
- *Mohammad Saeed, International Trade Centre*
- *Marcus Bartley Johns, The World Bank*
- *Otto Loesener-Diaz, UN Industrial Development Organization*
- *Milena Budimirović, World Customs Organization*

Moderator: *Jan Hoffmann, UNCTAD*

17:30 – 18:00

CONCLUDING SESSION: CONCLUDING STATEMENT OF THE MEETING

18:15 – 19:30 ITC – WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM “ENABLING TRADE” RECEPTION RESTAURANT DES DÉLÉGUÉS, BUILDING A, 8TH FLOOR, PALAIS DES NATIONS