

APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting
Boracay, Philippines
23-24 May 2015

Statement on Supporting the Multilateral Trading System

1. We, the APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade, gathering for our 21st meeting in Boracay, Philippines, join in the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Since the WTO's establishment in 1995, the Asia Pacific has been one of the fastest-growing trading regions, benefiting significantly from the stability and predictability of the multilateral trading system.
2. We reaffirm the value, centrality and primacy of the multilateral trading system under the auspices of the WTO in promoting trade expansion, economic growth, job creation and sustainable development, as well as in supporting developing economies to integrate into the global trading system. We will continue to work closely together to strengthen the rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading system as embodied in the WTO.
3. The WTO has significantly contributed to the fight against protectionism since the onset of the 2008 financial crisis. We note that, while global economic growth continues, there is potential for stronger growth, including through more robust international trade. Recognizing that protectionist measures impede this growth, we reaffirm the pledges made by our Leaders against all forms of protectionism. We reiterate our Leaders' commitment to a standstill until the end of 2018, and to roll back protectionist and trade-distorting measures. We recognize the need to exert further efforts to comply with our Leaders' commitment. We remain committed to exercising maximum restraint in implementing measures that may be consistent with WTO provisions but have a significant protectionist effect, and to promptly rectifying such measures, where implemented. In this context, we support the ongoing work of the WTO and other international organizations in monitoring protectionism, within their existing mandates, including the work of the standing WTO bodies, which are on the frontline of our efforts as the global economy faces persistent challenges. In support of such work, we encourage transparency in our trade policies, including through the open provision of information, and call on other WTO Members to do the same.
4. We are encouraged by the progress made by the WTO towards the full implementation of the Bali Package achieved at the 9th Ministerial Conference (MC9). We welcome the adoption of the Protocol of Amendment for the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which has opened the Protocol for acceptance by WTO Members. APEC Economies have shown leadership through the timely notification of Category A commitments. In the same spirit, we are committed to submit our instruments of acceptance to the WTO as soon as possible, ideally by MC10, in order to express strong APEC support for a successful Ministerial Conference. We encourage other WTO Members to do the same, contributing to the expeditious entry into force of the TFA. We also welcome the decision by WTO Members, which clarifies the interim mechanism agreed by Ministers in Bali, to engage constructively to negotiate and make all concerted efforts to agree and adopt a permanent solution on the issue of public stockholding for food security purposes by 31 December 2015.
5. We welcome the resumption and continuation of work to agree on the Post-Bali Work Program by 31 July 2015 as a key stepping-stone to promptly concluding the

Doha Round. We strongly commit to prioritize and contribute positively to the formulation of a clearly defined work program. We also believe that it is essential to continue to respect the Doha mandate and its development dimension, taking note of the progress that has been made towards formulating the work program.

6. We warmly welcome Kenya's hosting of the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC10) in Nairobi on 15-18 December 2015. We commit to contribute to the achievement of concrete and meaningful outcomes at MC10 including our work towards the successful conclusion of the Doha Round. Achieving entry into force of the Trade Facilitation Agreement by MC10 would bring significant contribution to the sustainability of global trade, and highlight the value of the WTO to its stakeholders around the world. Recognizing the importance of facilitating access to medicines as set out in the Paragraph 6 System, we urge all WTO Members to ratify the Protocol Amending the TRIPS Agreement. Entry into force of the Protocol by MC10 would also demonstrate the potential of the WTO to deliver practical, development-oriented outcomes.
7. In urging the WTO to continue to give priority to the effective integration of developing economies into global trade, we look forward to the 5th Global Review of Aid for Trade in Geneva on 30 June - 2 July 2015. The theme, "*Reducing Trade Costs for Inclusive, Sustainable Growth*," is in line with APEC's theme this year of "*Building Inclusive Economies, Building a Better World*". We welcome initiatives to reduce the costs and facilitate the increased participation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from developing economies in international trade. We support the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building activities to promote inclusive, sustainable growth.
8. We acknowledge that bilateral, regional and plurilateral trade agreements can play an important role in complementing global liberalization initiatives. We will continue to work together to ensure that they are consistent with WTO agreements and contribute to strengthening the multilateral trading system. APEC economies agree to promptly notify their RTAs to the WTO RTA Transparency Mechanism, and urge all WTO members to intensify their engagement in that mechanism. We likewise take note of efforts to explore possibilities of factoring into the multilateral negotiations possible contributions by participants in concluded plurilateral ITA expansion and EGA initiatives.
9. Recalling the AELM Declaration in 2014, we underscore the importance of concluding the ITA expansion negotiations in the shortest timeframe possible. A final ITA expansion outcome should be commercially significant, credible, pragmatic, balanced, and reflective of the dynamic technological developments in the information technology sector over the last 18 years, and contribute to the multilateral trading system. APEC economies participating in the ITA expansion negotiations recognize that a successful deal is within reach. We, therefore, encourage those Economies who are participating in ITA expansion negotiations to return to Geneva to finalize an Agreement without delay.
10. We recognize the importance of green growth and trade enhancing solutions to address global environmental challenges and reaffirm our commitment to reduce applied tariffs on the APEC List of Environmental Goods to five percent or less by end of this year as endorsed by Leaders in 2012. We also take note of the progress made in the Environmental Goods Agreement negotiations, which include a number of APEC Economies.