

INTERNATIONAL



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India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Partnership Agreement (CECPA): 7th Round

Mauritius and India are currently negotiating a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA).

So far 7 rounds of talks have been held and progress has been noted in the various areas under negotiations, namely Trade in Goods, Trade in Services and Economic Cooperation.

It is expected that the CECPA will provide a new dimension to the trading relationship between both countries. It will unlock business opportunities for

Mauritian operators, provide access to a market of 1.3 billion people and greater certainty to service suppliers and investors. It will cover economic cooperation in more than 20 sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, research and innovation.

African Continental Free Trade Agreement - 7th meeting of the African Union Ministers of Trade

The seventh meeting of African Union Ministers of Trade (AMOT) took place from 12-13 December in Cairo, Egypt with the Ministers reaching agreement on crucial aspects of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) modalities for tariff liberalization.

AMOT considered the roadmap for finalization of outstanding work on AfCFTA negotiations; designation of percentages for sensitive products and exclusion lists, the AfCFTA adjustment facility that will see the implementation of flanking measures for countries that will be negatively affected by the Agreement and Rules of Origin, among others.

Under the 'Cairo Package', the Ministers agreed that products to be excluded from liberalization will represent no more than 3 percent of tariff lines accounting for no more than 10 percent of the value of imports from other African countries. Sensitive products will be liberalized over 10 years for developing countries and 13 for the least developing countries (LDCs). A transitional period of 5 years or less may be used for countries which require so before the start of liberalization of sensitive products. During this period, tariffs applicable to sensitive products may be maintained, provided that they are eliminated by the end of the phase-down period provided for under the modalities.

On tariff negotiations, submission of the negotiated market access offers are expected for adoption by January 2020.



Towards One African Market



On services modalities, Ministers endorsed the Guidelines for development of Schedules of Specific Commitments and Regulatory Frameworks for Trade in Services. However, the minimum threshold as starting point of the negotiations is referred to the Negotiating Forum and Specialized Technical Officer meeting for further discussion.

On services negotiations, submission of the negotiated market access offers are expected for adoption by January 2020.

Regarding rules of origin, the AMOT agreed to give a six-month extension to negotiators.

With regard to phase 2 issues, AMOT requested the NF to develop the TORs of the Technical Working Group on Intellectual Property Rights, competition policy and investments by April 2019. AMOT requested the African Union Commission (AUC) and technical partners to conduct situational analysis studies on Phase II issues by April 2019. The Ministers also directed the NF to complete phase 2 negotiations by June 2020.

The AMOT further adopted a declaration pertaining to the latest development at the WTO.

First Intra- African Trade Fair (IATF) 2018

The first intra- African Trade Fair (IATF) 2018 organised by the African Export-Import Bank in collaboration with the African Union Commission will take place from 11-17 December 2018 at the Egypt International Exhibition Center in Cairo, Egypt.

The Intra-African Trade Fair is the first of its kind in Africa, consisting of a 7-day trade show that provides a platform for sharing trade, investment and market information and enabling buyers and sellers, investors and countries to meet, discuss and conclude business deals. It provides an opportunity for exhibitors to showcase their goods and services, engage in Business to Business (B2B)

Trademark Exhaustion

exchanges and conclude business deals. IATF is particularly relevant to the creation of a single market of over one billion people under the African Continental Free Trade. The IATF2018 will be the major first deliverable of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) following its successful launching in March 2018.

Exhaustion of trademark rights: Study on the socio-economic impact of adopting an international regime

Following public consultation on the draft Industrial Property (IP) Bill, it was agreed to conduct a study on the socio-economic impact of adopting the regime of international exhaustion of trademark rights.

The European Union has provided funding to carry out the study upon a request for technical assistance from this Ministry.

The socio-economic analysis is being conducted by Dr Ana María Pacón, international consultant and law professor from P&S-Pacón&Schiantarelli.

The study focuses on the legal as well as the economic and commercial aspects of the exhaustion of trademark rights in Mauritius. The aim is to bring certainty and influence future direction of intellectual property policy, especially at a time when the IP legislation is being reviewed.

Dr Pacón has had a series of meetings and working sessions with different stakeholders. A national workshop will be organized tentatively in February 2019 to present the findings and recommendations of the study.

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA): High Level Panel on Enhancing Maritime Cooperation

IORA High Level Panel on Enhancing Maritime Cooperation for Inclusive Growth in the Indian Ocean Rim was held in Bali, from 07-08 December 2018.

The above mentioned dialogue aimed to facilitate IORA Member States' governments and experts in further discussing the current state of cooperation, including obtaining inputs from related stakeholders. Having taken the lead on IORA's Trade and Investment Priority Area, Mauritius moderated the session focusing on "Promoting Trade and Investment Cooperation".

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has proposed to host a high level experts' meeting to enhance intra-regional trade and investment within IORA, early in 2019.

In this context, a Concept Note has been submitted by Mauritius to the IORA Secretariat for transmission to Member States.



Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP):

Mauritius to consider a proposal to join the Agreement

Ministry is currently engaged in broad consultations with stakeholders on the possibility of Mauritius acceding to the CPTPP. The CPTPP could open up market access opportunities for Mauritius both in the goods and services sectors as well as provide a framework for investment promotion.



The CPTPP was signed by 11 countries in Chile, in March 2018. The CPTPP is a comprehensive trade and investment agreement. Participating countries are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. The CPTPP market is characterized by a population of 499 million consumers.



Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Mauritius and Indonesia

The Government of Mauritius and the Government of Indonesia have agreed to start negotiations on a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA). The proposed agreement is expected to improve bilateral trade and investment relations and further deepen economic cooperation between the two countries.

Indonesia has the largest economy in Southeast Asia and is one of the emerging economies of the world, with a GDP of some USD 1.011 trillion and a population of 266.1 Million .It is an active player in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Indonesia has signed and implemented a number of free trade agreements with countries and regions around the world as an independent market as well as a member state of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

It is to be noted that since 93.8% of our tariffs line are already duty free in Mauritius, a PTA with Indonesia will have a marginal impact on revenue. Regarding exports, a trade potential exercise undertaken indicates that Mauritius may substantially increase exports of chemical fertilisers, wheat or meslin, tubes, textiles, sugar, pasta, watches, printed books, sunglasses, fish, fermented beverages, and medical devices, amongst others on the Indonesian market. It is to be noted that these products face high duty in Indonesia. For example, sugar has duty in the range between 8%-15%, fish 7%-20%, fermented beverages 5%

- 90%, textiles 15%-25%, tubes and pipes 12%, pasta, 20% and sunglasses 10%.

National Workshop on “The State of Play of the WTO Negotiations”

WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, in collaboration with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) organized a two day National workshop on “The State of Play of the WTO Negotiations” on 14-15 November 2018 at Le Maritim Hotel, Balaclava. The objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Update stakeholders on the WTO Doha Development Round of Negotiations, the escalating tensions between major trading partners, the proliferation of trade-restrictive measures among members of the WTO and other challenges that could potentially disrupt the functioning of the WTO;
2. Foster a better understanding of the complex WTO rules and disciplines; and
3. Enhance the capacity of participants to effectively engage in trade policy discussions / negotiations and formulation that would benefit and contribute to the development of our economy.

The Workshop was officially opened by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Hon. S Lutchmeenaraidoo. In his address, he emphasised the need to understand the role and contribution of the WTO in the creation of favourable conditions at the international level for trade to evolve.

Some 50 participants from the public sector, private sector and from the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) attended the workshop.

WTO, UNCTAD, ITC sign MoU to provide businesses with better access to trade data

The WTO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) signed on 23 November 2018 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance the development of an online platform — the Global Trade Helpdesk — aimed at providing businesses, and particularly small businesses, with faster and easier access to trade data and information on potential export markets.



Under the MoU, the WTO, ITC and UNCTAD agree to further develop the platform established at the WTO 11th Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires. The objective is to improve the quality and accessibility of trade information needed by businesses – and in particular, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) - to access market opportunities. As part of the agreement, the three organizations will provide technical assistance to developing countries to help them maintain up-to-date information in the Global Trade Helpdesk and will raise awareness among MSMEs about how to benefit from this trade information.

By making trade data freely available through a user-friendly interface, the Global Trade Helpdesk will make it easier for companies across the world to increase their participation in world trade and reduce trade costs. It will help policymakers make better-informed decisions about trade and investment policies and will ensure that the international community provides better support to MSMEs.

The Helpdesk will contain comprehensive information from various sources on market requirements (such as tariffs, taxes, relevant health and safety standards for export products), export and import procedures (such as pre-shipment formalities, certification and inspection processes), business opportunities (such as market prices and upcoming events) and current trade statistics. Development of the Helpdesk will take place over three

three-year phases. However, it is scheduled to be fully functional in phase 1.

In addition to drawing on data from ITC, UNCTAD and the WTO, the Global Trade Helpdesk will integrate trade information from a number of other international organizations and development banks, including the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the World Bank Group.

WTO Notification- Technical Barriers to Trade

In line with its transparency obligations under the World Trade Organisation, Mauritius notified the WTO on the amendments being brought to the steel bars, steel wires and steel fabrics (Mauritian Standard Specification) Regulations 1988.

As per the WTO Agreement (Art 2.12), Members should allow a reasonable interval (at least 6 months) between the publication of technical regulations and their entry into force in order to allow time for producers in exporting Members to adapt their products to the requirement of the importing country.

The new regulations will be implemented by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Commerce Division) as from May 2019.

Performance of Mauritius in world innovation: Setting up of a Think Tank to improve our ranking

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (International Trade Division) is a group member of two working groups set up in the context of the institution of a national Think Tank to improve our country's ranking in the Global Innovation Index (GII).



The two working groups, led by the Mauritius Research Council, focus on the industrial property/intellectual property legal and regulatory framework as well as on Information and Communication Technologies Infrastructure.

The aim of the technical working groups is to brainstorm on the factors impacting on the innovation performance of Mauritius and to identify potential strategies to enable the country to strive towards an innovation-driven economy. As at early December 2018, group members had already identified and responded to gaps, missing information in response to strategic indicators used in the GII ranking.

Mauritius has registered a constant drop in ranking in the Global Innovation Index from 40th in 2014 to 75th in 2018.



International Trade Division

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

CONTACT DETAILS: motas@intnet.mu

The views reflected in the Trade News Digest are those of the staff of the International Trade Division and should under no circumstances be considered as binding upon the Ministry.