



Trade News Digest

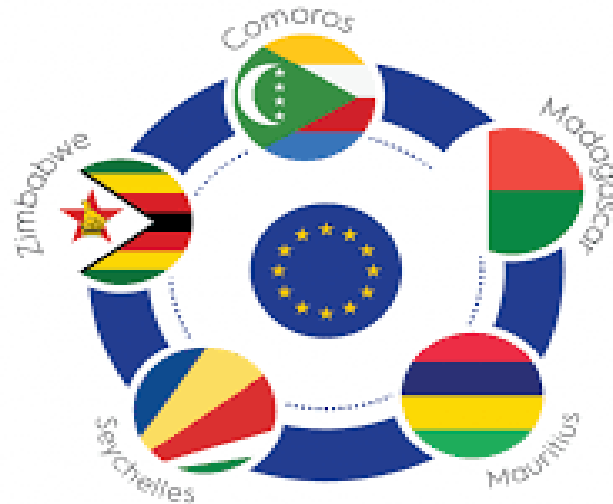
INTERNATIONAL TRADE DIVISION
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REGIONAL
INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL
TRADE

Issue 76

July 2023

In This Issue

- 12th Round of Technical Negotiations between the EU and Five Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA-5) Countries for the Deepening of the currently implemented Economic Partnership Agreement
- Mauritius-Turkey Free Trade Agreement (FTA): First Protocol to Amend the FTA
- Entry into force of Trade (Anti-Dumping, Countervailing and Safeguard Measures) Act 2022
- Non- Tariff Measures Training and Data Collection Workshop on The Development of Non-Tariff Measures Database for SADC Member States
- Commonwealth: Senior Trade Officials and Trade Ministers Meetings, June 2023
- Update on WTO Issues: TRIPS Waiver, Investment Facilitation, Fisheries Subsidies.
- Update on the AfCFTA
- G20: Mauritius participates as Guest Country in G20 Trade and Investment Working Group
- Other International Trade News



12th Round of Technical Negotiations between the EU and Five Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA-5) Countries for the Deepening of the currently implemented Economic Partnership Agreement

The 12th round of technical negotiations between the European Union (EU) and the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA-5) (namely Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Zimbabwe) on the deepening of the iEPA,

was held in hybrid virtual mode from 26 to 30 June 2023. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr Rammos, DG Trade, EU Commission and Mr Boodhoo, Director, International Trade Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade for the ESA-5.

Negotiations were held on 12 issues namely Trade in Services, Investment Liberalisation and Digital Trade, Intellectual Property Rights including Geographical Indications, Trade and Sustainable Development, Rules of Origin, Transparency in Public Procurement, Dispute Settlement & Institutional Provisions, Competition policy, Technical Barriers to Trade, Agriculture, Customs & Trade Facilitation, Economic Development Cooperation and Fisheries.

During this round, the chapter on Agriculture was provisionally concluded. Commendable progress was also made on the other areas under negotiations. Both Parties agreed to pursue internal discussions on the texts and meet intersessionally to advance the negotiations on some issues, namely, Rules of Origin, Intellectual Property Rights, State Owned Enterprises, Subsidies and Fisheries.



The next round of negotiations will be held in November / December 2023 in Comoros. It will include all issues covered by this deepening process. Some meetings will be held via video-conference.



Mauritius-Türkiye Free Trade Agreement (FTA): First Protocol to Amend the FTA



Mauritius and Türkiye are implementing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) since 01 June 2013. The Agreement covers trade in goods with duty free access on all industrial products and preferential access in terms of tariff rate quotas (TRQs) on a list of 46 agricultural products including tropical fruits, preserved vegetables, uncooked pasta, cake decorations, flowers, fish and fish products, animal feed, beer amongst others.



Following discussions between both sides in 2022, Türkiye agreed to provide improved market access to Mauritius in terms of duty free access on beer and wine, and more meaningful tariff rate quotas for several products including fisheries products, pineapples, lychees, and dog or cat food. Türkiye has also included new products in its offer such as vanilla, fruit wine, poultry feed and rum.

These improved offers have been included in the Protocol amending the FTA between Türkiye and Mauritius and will provide better market access for our exporters on the Turkish market. It is to be noted that Mauritius will not

have to make any further concession on market access to Türkiye in response to its offer.

The Protocol to amend the FTA has been finalised in April 2023. It will enter in force once it is ratified by both sides.

Entry into force of Trade (Anti-Dumping, Countervailing and Safeguard Measures) Act 2022



The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is the only global international organisation dealing with international trade rules to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible between nations. Nonetheless, the WTO permits members to impose trade remedies or trade defense measures against imports to protect their domestic industries from unfair practices such as dumping and subsidies, or to cope with a sudden surge of foreign goods.

The WTO Agreement contains three distinct agreements on trade remedies, namely the Agreement on Anti-dumping, the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures and the Agreement on Safeguards. If a WTO Member State wants to impose trade remedy measures, it will have to incorporate the provisions of these Agreements in its national laws.





In line with our commitments taken at the WTO, the Trade (Anti-Dumping, Countervailing and Safeguard Measures) Act (hereinafter referred as the “Trade Act 2022”) was enacted in December 2022 with a view to protect our domestic industries from unfair trade practices and surges in the imports. It provides a comprehensive legal framework which regroups all the three trade remedy measures under a single umbrella legislation for better clarity and ease of implementation. The former Trade (Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Measures) Act 2010, which did not cover safeguard measures, has been repealed and replaced by the Trade Act 2022.

Any of these trade defence measures can only be applied pursuant to a thorough investigation that should establish a causal link between dumped, subsidised or sudden surge in imports and the injury caused to the domestic industry. The Trade Act 2022 enables the imposition of anti-dumping duties if it is established that the domestic industry has been materially injured as a result of dumped imports. Similarly, countervailing duties can be imposed if it is established that the domestic industry has been materially injured as a result of subsidised imports. Thirdly, the Trade Act 2022 allows the imposition of safeguard measures in the form of tariffs or quotas where a surge in imports cause or threaten to cause serious injury to the domestic industry.

In recent years, various representations have been made by our domestic industries, complaining of sudden surges in imports that have caused serious disturbances/shocks to the price or production of the directly competitive local product. Our domestic industries can now be protected

against such surge in imports based on the provisions on safeguard provided for in the Trade Act 2022.



Investigating Authority

The Trade Act 2022 also provides for a well-structured Investigating Authority which comprises the Director, Trade Policy as chairperson, a representative at Director-Level as vice-chairperson and a representative from the Attorney General's office, the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives, the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection and the Customs Department of the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

The Investigating Authority has the mandate to investigate any allegation or suspicion of dumping, subsidized imports, or increased imports either on receiving a complaint or information which gives a rise to such allegation /suspicion or on its own initiative.

Contact details of the Investigating Authority:

*Chairperson, Investigating Authority
International Trade Division,
4th Floor, Medine Mews,
La Chaussee Street,
Port Louis.*



Non- Tariff Measures Training and Data Collection Workshop on The Development of Non-Tariff Measures Database for SADC Member States



Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) are policy measures other than tariffs that can potentially have an economic effect on international trade in goods, changing quantities traded, or prices or both. They are increasingly shaping trade, influencing who trades what and how much. For exporters, importers and policymakers, NTMs represent a major challenge.

Although many NTMs aim primarily at protecting public health or the environment, they also substantially affect trade through information, compliance and procedural costs.

Cognizant to the impact of NTMs on regional and global trade, in 2020/2021, the SADC Secretariat, embarked on developing the SADC TBT/SPS NTMs database. The development of SADC TBT/SPS NTMs database is in line with the work initiated by Tripartite (COMESA, EAC and SADC) Capacity Building Programme (TCBP) and UNCTAD, aiming at developing national and regional

Non-Tariff Measures:



NTMs databases in 12 tripartite pilot countries. The NTMs database is expected to enhance transparency of Member States vis-a-vis their trading partners given that it will make publicly available the measures adopted by Member States to protect their legitimate objectives. Once developed, the SADC NTM database will be aligned with the Tripartite, AfCFTA and UNCTAD databases.

It is under this backdrop that the SADC Secretariat organized a training workshop on the Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) database in Mauritius from 20-21 April 2023. Representatives of various Ministries and institutions attended the training namely from Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Ministry of Health and Wellness, Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives, Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection, Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, Mauritius Standards Bureau, Competent Authority, Customs Department, Legal Metrology and MAURITAS.

The objective of the workshop was to train the participants to collect all legislations and regulations pertaining to Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) measures to be uploaded on the SADC NTMs database. The participants were also trained to pursue the collection, amendment and verification of existing TBT and SPS measures on the SADC database. The classification of the NTMs would be undertaken by the SADC Secretariat. The aim of the database is to provide a transparent, harmonized platform for SADC Member States and traders in an effort to prevent these measures turning into trade barriers.

Commonwealth: Senior Trade Officials and Trade Ministers Meetings, June 2023



The Commonwealth Senior Trade Officials Meeting and the Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting took place on 2-3 June 2023 and 5-6 June 2023 respectively at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. Mauritius was present in both meetings.

Commonwealth members exchanged views on current issues and challenges facing the global economy, marked by multiple and interconnected crises, and emphasised the importance of building inclusive, sustainable and resilient economies for post-COVID recovery.

Mauritius mentioned that it supports an incremental approach towards the development of a trade agenda with a view to deepening trade and economic linkages among Commonwealth members. To this end, The Ministerial Outcome Document reflected that the Working Group on Trade and Investment (either physically or virtually) would be reconvened to discuss ways of deepening intra-Commonwealth trade and investment”.

Mauritius underscored the need for the Secretariat to undertake further work on the issue of Fisheries Subsidies. Mauritius proposed reference to special and differential treatment in the paragraph on fisheries subsidies in the Ministerial Statement on WTO issues and this was adopted by the Meeting.

Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda



The five connectivity clusters set up by the Commonwealth Secretariat includes the following Digital Connectivity, Physical Connectivity, Regulatory Connectivity, Supply side Connectivity and Inclusive and Sustainable Trade Issues. The Senior Trade Officials Meeting welcomed the decision by Mauritius to take over as Chair of the Digital Connectivity Cluster and thanked the United Kingdom and South Africa for their previous leadership of the Cluster.

Ministerial Outcome Document



The Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting endorsed the 2023 Ministerial Outcome Statement which had been thoroughly discussed by Senior Officials. South Africa submitted proposals for the document to reflect the extension of the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver to cover therapeutics and diagnostics. India insisted on making reference to the public stockholding issue. Some Commonwealth members were against this and ultimately the agreed language was as follows:

“We recognise that member countries have differing views and official positions on various issues on the WTO agenda, such as public stockholding for food security purposes. We underscored the importance of continuing discussions on these issues”.

Declaration on WTO issues



The Senior Trade Officials agreed for Rwanda (as chair of Commonwealth) to circulate a Declaration on WTO issues on behalf of the whole group ahead of MC 13.

Since MC13 would be held in 2024 in Abu Dhabi, the Declaration on WTO issues would remain open for amendment and was finalised closer to MC13.

What's happening at the WTO



TRIPS Agreement Waiver Decision

At a meeting of the WTO Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) held in June 2023, WTO members continued their discussion on whether or not to extend the TRIPS Decision adopted at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) to Covid-19 therapeutics and diagnostics. To support a fact and evidence-based discussion, members agreed to hold a one-day thematic session with outside stakeholders in tentatively **September/October 2023**, to take stock of Covid-19-related developments.



The Chair of the TRIPS Council, Ambassador Pimchanok Pitfield of Thailand, said that since the last TRIPS Council meeting in March 2023, she had met with members in various configurations to try and find common ground on the TRIPS Waiver Decision extension. The Chair recognised that no significant progress was made as some domestic consultations were ongoing but stressed her intention to keep working to bridge the existing differences.

Extension of the set deadline

It must be highlighted that under paragraph 8 of the Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement, adopted on 17 June 2022 at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference, members had agreed to make a decision within six months on whether to extend the Decision to cover the production and supply of Covid-19 diagnostics and therapeutics. The set deadline was **17 December 2022**.

However, at a formal TRIPS Council meeting in December 2022, members recommended to the General Council to extend the deadline for such a decision. The General Council accepted this recommendation in December 2022 and resolved [in March 2023] to keep the issue open for discussion while substantive discussions would continue in the TRIPS Council.

Forthcoming informal thematic session

WTO Members reiterated their well know-positions and recognised the importance of continuing to have a substantive debate on this issue while some members continue with their domestic consultations. In this context, it was agreed to hold an informal thematic session for





external stakeholder input in order to gather facts and take stock of relevant Covid-19-related developments with the participation of international organizations, civil society, business representatives and academia. The event will take place in **late September or early October 2023**.

Some members noted the need to have a broader exchange on Intellectual Property-related experiences beyond the focus of paragraph 8 of the Ministerial Decision on TRIPS, adopted in June 2022 at MC12, taking up paragraph 24 of the Ministerial Declaration on the Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic and Preparedness for Future Pandemics, which mandates members to analyze lessons learned from and challenges experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

WTO Members expressed their preference for a balanced composition of participating stakeholders from diverse geographical and organizational backgrounds. External stakeholder participation will be limited to the thematic session and negotiations and substantive deliberations will remain reserved exclusively for members, Ambassador Pitfield explained.

Limitation of exclusive rights provided under TRIPS

It is to be recalled that WTO 12th Ministerial Conference adopted a decision for a waiver from the TRIPS Agreement to stimulate the production of Covid-19 vaccines. It was decided that, notwithstanding the provision of patent rights under its domestic legislation, an eligible Member may limit the exclusive rights provided for under the TRIPS by authorizing the use of the subject matter of a patent required for the production and supply of Covid-19 vaccines without the consent of the right holder.

If ever the TRIPS Waiver Decision is extended to diagnostics and therapeutics, this would have the effect of overriding the exclusive effect of patents and provide greater scope for Members to take direct action to diversify production of Covid-related products (diagnostics and therapeutics).



The stand of developing countries

According to developing countries, “the waiver on Covid-19 vaccines falls short of the expectation of developing countries and is not enough to help developing countries comprehensively address current and future health challenges. Equitable access to therapeutics and diagnostics, as pointed out by the World Health Organization (WHO), is critical in helping detect new cases and new variants”.

Developing countries have also highlighted the joint statement made by the respective Director Generals of the WHO, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the WTO in June 2021 reaffirming their commitment to intensifying cooperation in support of access to medical technologies worldwide to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, including vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.

On the other hand, developed countries such as the US are arguing that “*an extension would allow countries with anti-competitive approaches to innovation to unfairly obtain and use [American] innovation to benefit their domestic economies*”.

Investment Facilitation: Negotiators announce deal on Agreement's text



WTO members participating in the talks on investment facilitation for development (IFD) announced on **6 July** the conclusion of the negotiations on the text of the Agreement following three years of intense text-based negotiations amongst over 110 delegations at all levels of development.

The announcement marks a new turning point in the negotiations and reflects the common aspiration of IFD participants that the IFD Agreement will reach another key landmark at the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) to be held in Abu Dhabi in February 2024.

IFD participants firmly believe that the proposed IFD Agreement will contribute to creating a more transparent, efficient, and predictable environment to facilitate not only more investment, but also more sustainable investment, as well as to anchor and support IFD participants' domestic, bilateral, and regional reform efforts.

The proposed IFD Agreement comprises seven sections. Its objectives are notably to improve the transparency of measures (Section II); streamline administrative procedures relating to investment activities (Section III); promote domestic regulatory coherence and international

13th WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Week of 26 February 2024 in
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates





cooperation between home and host economies (Section IV); and provide technical assistance and capacity building (TACB) support to developing and least-developed country (LDC) Members (Section V). Emphasizing its role in fostering sustainable investment for sustainable development, the Agreement includes provisions on responsible business conduct as well as on measures against corruption (Section VI). Promoting greater developing and LDC Members' participation in global investment flows and fostering sustainable development are the Agreement's core objectives.



The IFD Agreement explicitly excludes market access, investment protection, and Investor-State dispute settlement.

Next Steps in the Second Semester of 2023 and Run-Up to MC13

In the second semester of 2023 and leading up to MC13, IFD participants will intensify their work along the following four parallel complementary tracks:

- I. IFD participants will advance the discussion on legal incorporation of the IFD Agreement into the WTO legal architecture and further analyse the procedural aspects in full respect of the WTO Agreement;
- II. IFD participants will reach out to and engage constructively with all WTO Members, including non-participating Members, in light of their objective to incorporate the IFD Agreement into the WTO legal architecture. Outreach efforts will become a main focus in this new phase;

- III. IFD participants will intensify their support to the investment facilitation needs assessment process for developing and LDC Members, to help these countries identify their implementation gaps and TACB support needs, as well as to self-designate the different categories of commitments that they will notify for the implementation of the Agreement. In this context, a Self-Assessment Guide has been developed together with seven International Organizations, and needs assessments pilot projects are underway; and
- IV. IFD participants will complete the following final refinements to the text at the latest by the end of October 2023.

Fisheries Subsidies



At the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), on 17 June 2022, the WTO members adopted the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and endorsed the establishment of a new funding mechanism to provide developing countries and least developed countries with targeted technical assistance and capacity building.

Two-thirds of WTO members must formally accept the Protocol of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies for the Agreement to enter into force. So far, 13 countries (**Belize, Canada, China, EU, Iceland, Nigeria, Seychelles,**



Singapore, Switzerland, UAE, US, Japan and Gabon) have deposited their instrument of acceptance.

Contribution to the WTO Fisheries Funding Mechanism have been received from **Australia** (AUD 2 million), **Netherlands** (EUR 1 million), **Japan** (JPY 90 million), **Canada** (CAD 1.4 million), **Germany** (EUR 500,000) and **France** (EUR 1 million). Iceland has also pledged CHF 500,000 to the Fund.

At MC12, WTO agreed to continue negotiations on outstanding issues namely overcapacity & overfishing and special & differential treatment, with a view to making recommendations by the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13) that would further enhance the disciplines of the Agreement. This “second wave” of negotiations is expected to be focused and able to deliver results by MC13. The Agreement provides a moratorium of four years to complete these negotiations from the date of entry into force of the Agreement.

In this context, three Fish Weeks have been held to initiate discussions on the best approaches for curbing subsidies contributing to overcapacity and overfishing whilst including provisions on special and differential treatment (S&DT) in the Agreement. Countries such as China, Australia, Norway, Fiji, Argentina & Others and the ACP Group have made proposals during these Fish Weeks.

The Chair of the fisheries subsidies negotiations, Ambassador Einar Gunnarsson of Iceland, on 10 July opened the fourth of a series of “Fish Weeks” with the aim of seeking WTO members’ views on what elements from the various documents before members, including new

proposals, would form the best basis for text-based discussions as from September 2023.

Update on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)



11th Meeting of the AfCFTA Council of Ministers



Hon Minister A. Ganoo attended the 11th Meeting of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Council of Ministers in Gaborone, Botswana on 11-12 February 2023. The meeting was preceded by the 14th Meeting of the Senior Trade Officials, during which several issues were deliberated.

Amongst them are the rules of origin for Textiles and Clothing as well as Automotives, the Ministerial

regulations on Special Economic Zones and the nomination of candidates on the Appellate Body of the Dispute Settlement Body.

During his intervention, Hon Minister A. Ganoo emphasized on the need to conclude the outstanding issues most particularly for the textiles and clothing sector, which is one of the main economic sector for the African Continent. He further emphasized on the need for Africa to have predictable rules to encourage investment in the special economic zones and boost employment. It is to be recalled that Mauritius has partnered with several countries in Africa to harness the industrial potential of the region. For example, Madagascar, Tanzania, Cote D'Ivoire and Senegal.

The meeting approved the recommendation of the Senior Trade Officials to engage in further consultation to devise the Africa Strategy on Automotives and Textiles & Clothing and has in this context, instructed the Senior Trade Officials to conclude their work on the pending rules on these two most important sectors for Africa by June 2023.

The meeting also recommended the appointment of five persons to the Appellate Body to the AU Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government for adoption.

36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union

The 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU) took place from 18 to 19 February 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Mauritian delegation was led by the Hon Minister A. Ganoo, Minister of Land Transport





and Light Rail and Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU Assembly) endorsed the AU theme of the Year 2023 - “Acceleration of African Continental Free Trade Area Implementation”, which coincides with the 60th commemoration of the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity.

The adoption by the African Union of the theme of the Year 2023 as the “Year of AfCFTA: Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area Implementation”, is expected to generate greater political commitment and accelerate the effective implementation of the AfCFTA to fully benefit the African citizenry and achieve the Aspirations and goals of Agenda 2063.

The implementation of the theme of the Year will be accompanied by a roadmap which will consist of the implementation of other flagship projects such as the African Commodities Strategy, the African Passport and Free Movement of People, the Single African Air Transport Market, and the Continental Financial Institutions.

The year-long activities will enhance the existing collaboration among the member states, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), AU institutions, the private sector, development partners, and other stakeholders, to mobilize and implement actions that boost intra-Africa trade, particularly trade in value-added production and trade across all sectors of Africa’s economy.



Second Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the AfCFTA Council of Ministers, Nairobi-Kenya

While trade under the AfCFTA started in January 2021, there are still negotiations ongoing on some key issues, including the rules of origin for the Textiles & Clothing sector as well as automotive sector. Since the beginning of the negotiations on the AfCFTA Rules of Origin, rules covering around 88.03% of the tariff lines have already been agreed. However, the rules of origin for Textiles and Apparels accompanied by the Automotive Chapters remained outstanding due to the high level of divergence among countries.

With the aim to advance discussion on these two important sectors, namely textiles and Clothing and the automotive sectors, a second Extra-Ordinary Sessions of the Council of Ministers responsible for Trade was convened in May 2023.

The meeting, which took place in Nairobi-Kenya, was attended by the Hon M. Seeruttun, Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance and then Ag Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and Mr D. Luximon, Deputy Director- Trade Policy.

At the 2nd Extra-Ordinary Session of the AfCFTA Council of Ministers, the Ministers considered, amongst others, (i) the outstanding Rules of Origin on Auto, Textiles & Clothing; (ii) Ratification, domestication and utilisation of AfCFTA Agreement; (iii) Implementation of AfCFTA operational tools focusing on Expanding the Guided Trade Initiative (GTI) and Introduction of AfCFTA National

Trading Companies; and (iv) Customs, Transit and Trade Facilitation under the AfCFTA.

With respect to the textiles and clothing sector, the meeting concluded the outstanding rules for Chapter 62 (Articles of Apparel and Clothing – not knitted). Remaining chapters have been agreed to be finalised by the end of this year.

G20: Mauritius participates as Guest Country in G20 Trade and Investment Working Group



In view of the special relations between Mauritius and India, Mauritius has been invited by India, in its capacity as G20 Chair, to participate as a Guest Country in all the G20 meetings during India's presidency from 01 December 2022 to 30 November 2023. The G20 process comprises a Sherpa Track and a Financial Track. The Financial Track specifically addresses issues related to the financial sector, namely financial inclusion, sustainable financing, climate finance and tax matters. The Sherpa Track covers issues outside the financial sector such as agriculture, education,

employment, health, energy, environment and climate sustainability, tourism, trade and investment.

The G20 Trade and Investment Working Group (TIWG), under the Sherpa Track, pursues discussions on the Indian Presidency's priorities for global trade and investment, namely the following five priorities: Trade for Growth and Prosperity; Trade and Resilient Global Value Chains (GVCs); Integrating MSMEs in Global Trade; Logistics for Trade; and WTO Reform.

During the first meeting of the TIWG held in Mumbai from 28 – 30 March 2023, deliberations focused on four of those five priorities. Accordingly, discussions focused on issues such as achieving shared outcomes for making growth inclusive and resilient, increasing the participation of developing countries and LDCs in GVCs, making GVCs work for inclusive development and building resilient GVCs to withstand future shocks. The Indian Presidency also aimed to carry forward the work done by past G20 Presidencies to better integrate MSMEs into global trade. G20 Members also deliberated on the ways of developing robust logistics infrastructure that could reduce transaction costs both across borders and in the hinterlands.

Discussions on the priorities continued during the 2nd TIWG meeting held in Bengaluru from 23 – 25 May 2023. One of the main issues discussed was WTO Reform, focusing on WTO's foundational principles, thus recognizing the need for open, inclusive and transparent functioning of WTO. G20 participants also discussed deliverables emerging from the first TIWG, namely digitalization of paper documents, developing an action plan to create Meta Information Portal for MSMEs,





Mr N. Boodhoo, Director Trade Policy, at the third meeting of the TIWG

creating a framework for mapping GVCs, a compendium of best practices on Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) and on G20 Regulatory Dialogue.

The third meeting of the TIWG was held in Gujrat from 10-13 July. The Mauritian delegation was led by the Director, Trade Policy, Mr N. Boodhoo. The meeting was different from the previous ones as it focused on negotiating and drafting five Annexes to the Ministerial Statement, namely:

- I. High level principles on digital trade;
- II. Mapping of Global Value Chains;
- III. Beta portal for MSME's;
- IV. Regulatory Cooperation; and
- V. Information sharing on Mutual Recognition Agreements.

After intense deliberations, emerging consensus could be observed on the first three Annexes, even though some issues have yet to be conclusively agreed.

It is hoped that that all outstanding texts will be finalised at the next meeting to be held in Jaipur on 21-22 August and will be endorsed by the G20 Ministerial meeting on 24-25 August 2023. The Ministerial Statement is also expected to be finalised in that meeting for consideration by the G20 summit.





WTO: Co-convenors of e-commerce negotiations review progress, reflect on way forward: At a heads of delegation meeting on 6 July, participants in the e-commerce talks reaffirmed their commitment to a substantial conclusion of the negotiations by the end of 2023

WTO: Goods Council reviews work on MC12 follow-up: At a meeting of the Council for Trade in Goods on 6-7 July, WTO members discussed how the Council should move forward in implementing some of the outcomes of the MC12 related to improving the functioning of the Council and its subsidiary bodies.

WTO issues new edition of World Tariff Profiles: The WTO issued the 2023 edition of “World Tariff Profiles”, an annual publication providing comprehensive information on tariffs imposed on imports by over 170 countries and customs territories.

Read more on:
https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news_e.htm

EU and New Zealand sign ambitious free trade agreement: On 09 July, the EU and New Zealand signed a FTA. The deal will cut some €140 million a year in duties for EU companies from the first year of application. The agreement is now sent to the European Parliament for its consent.

EU acts against dumped kegs from China: On 04 July 2023, the Commission imposed definitive anti-dumping duties on imports of stainless steel refillable kegs originating in China for a period of five years. The duties imposed range from 62.6% to 69.6%.

Brexit: On 30 June 2023, the Commission amended the EU’s steel safeguard regulation to create two new tariff rate quotas (TRQs) for steel products released for free circulation in Northern Ireland from other parts of the UK.

Read more on:
https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/news_en

EU New Rules on Deforestation: On 9 June 2023, the European Commission published a Regulation of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation. The new rules respond to the alarming rate of deforestation resulting from the expansion of agricultural land to produce certain commodities. As European consumption of these commodities and related products indirectly contributes to deforestation, the EU aims to curb this practice and reduce the associated greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss. The new rules will have significant implications for operators in the cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil and soya value chains in low- and middle-income countries.

EU Review of Generalised Scheme of tariff Preferences (GSP): Negotiations of new GSP on hold as Parliament and Council disagree. The current GSP is due to end on 31 December 2023.

Read more on:
<https://agrinfo.eu/>



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.

