Thanks etc.

ICTSD has been working on the interaction between the 2030 Agenda and trade policy for several years, connecting the New York and Geneva policy communities with the aim of improving the coherence between the two frameworks.

Very pleased to see, in this workshop, evidence of interest in this relationship, which we think is important.

Couldn’t agree more with the basic premise of the day, that international agencies, and policy communities, should consider how they can contribute to the implementation of this very ambitious agenda.
Role of the trade community is a relevant discussion because trade and trade policy issues are integrated across the 2030 Agenda, including two substantive pillars: the Sustainable Development Goals and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; the outcome of the 3rd Financing for Development Conference.

I’ll highlight some of the clearest references to trade issues in both documents. Some of these are explicit references (e.g. to the reform of agricultural or fisheries subsidies), some are implicit (like cooperation around environmental technology). References in the AAAA are among the most forward-looking.

I’ll then provide a few thoughts on how the trade policy community could think about its role in supporting implementation of the agenda.

Few words of context (echo Karsten?)

SDGs go beyond MDGs in being universal (apply to all UN Members equally) in considering equally social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainable development and in integrating considerations from all three areas into each goal. E.g. SDG 2 integrates objective of ending hunger with idea of developing sustainable
agriculture, including resilience to climate change.

Each of the 17 Goals includes several sub-targets setting out particular things to be achieved, including specific targets to do with “mean of implementation”; targets the achievement of which would support achievement of the goal overall. Most of the trade references in the SDGs are in these “means of implementation” targets. In other words, international trade isn’t identified as an objective in itself, but as an activity that can contribute to the achievement of broader development goals.

AAAA sets out a range of commitments to do with financing of development efforts, including international development cooperation, private finance, debt, and trade. It is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, particularly important as a source of additional means of implementation. 2030 Agenda declaration and the AAAA are substantively linked: all of the MOI in the SDGs were incorporated into in the AAAA. But the AAAA expands on ideas in the SDGs, including in its references to trade.

Go quickly through some examples of trade references in SDGs.
Most of the trade references in the SDGs reflect trade policy issues discussed at the multilateral level for many years, like subsidy reform. For example: SDG 2 includes as a means of implementation target the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies.

Not always a perfect reflection of the way issues are discussed in the trade community, though: slightly different language here to original DDA mandate.

Developments since the target was agreed, of course: Nairobi outcome only a couple of months later on agricultural export subsidies, but also agreement to disagree on whether negotiations would continue in the framework of the DDA.
In other cases the 2030 Agenda references to trade issues go slightly beyond mandates we are familiar with here in Geneva.

SDG 14 on the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources includes a target that reflects the original mandate for the WTO negotiations (underlined) but also adds to it with specific references to subsidies to illegal fishing and a stand-still on certain subsidies, and gives it a deadline of 2020!
Other references, like this one to Aid for Trade as a means of implementing SDG 8 on inclusive and sustained economic growth, are relatively straightforward.
There are also what I would call implicit references to a contribution by trade policy. Here is one example:

One of the means of implementation targets under SDG 7 on clean energy refers to international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy technology; negotiations underway to reduce tariff barriers to environmental goods, including clean energy-related goods, could be considered part of this international cooperation.
Lastly, to note that there are also several trade-related targets under SDG 17, the goal on a Global Partnership for Sustainable Development that groups together means of implementation that would support the achievement of the entire network of goals.

For example, Target 17.10 refers to universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable MTS under the WTO and the conclusion of the DDA. 17.11 and 17.12 refer to increasing developing country exports and to increasing DFQF market access.
Which brings us to the other set of references to trade in the AAAA. Addis outcome explicitly reflects all of the SDG MOI targets, including the trade references seen above. But also elaborates on them, including other crucial trade policy issues:

- Calls on WTO Members to ratify the Trade Facilitation Agreement, and underlines importance of trade facilitation in regional economic integration.
- Emphasises the importance of access to trade finance to help countries fulfil their trading potential
- Commitments to strengthen regional cooperation and trade agreements, but also to ensure that regional trade and investment agreements are compatible with WTO rules.
- Calls for support for the integration of small scale enterprises, particularly from developing countries, into global value chains.
- Also underlines the importance of a coherent domestic policy framework in ensuring that trade can support sustainable and inclusive development.
So in thinking about the role of the trade system, and the WTO in particular, how could it contribute to this very ambitious agenda? Keep these generic as others may answer the question more specifically in subsequent sessions.

First general suggestion is that governments could use existing policy review mechanisms, like the TPRM, as forums for review of progress towards some of the trade-related elements of the 2030 Agenda. Paper published in June by ICTSD and IISD, available on our website, that sets out some ideas for how this could work. Idea is not to try and replicate or replace the global review of the 2030 Agenda that will take place in New York, but to use existing mechanisms to review how trade policies are contributing to the Agenda objectives. So governments could use WTO or UNCTAD policy review mechanisms, perhaps with an additional focus on 2030 Agenda objectives, and incorporate the results of that review in their reports to New York.

[Next three broad ideas are generified versions of ideas set out in a series of think pieces published just in the last few weeks that examines exactly this question. First three, looking at food security and nutrition – gender equality – and poverty reduction with a focus on Africa – are on our website and at the back of the room.]
First, governments have an opportunity to negotiate new agreements on trade issues that contribute to sustainable development objectives; link between 2030 Agenda and negotiations on disciplines on fisheries subsidies has already been made by a number of delegations.

Second is that the implementation of existing commitments could also help. Think piece on trade and gender points to the potential benefits of implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement for the economic empowerment of women traders, for example.

Third kind of contribution is not so much through the WTO but through regional trade and investment agreements, per AAAA. Think piece on poverty reduction in Africa, for example, explains how greater regional trade integration could have significantly positive distributional effects on income for the poorest.

I have deliberately skimmed over these ideas because they could each be a day’s worth of discussion, but am looking forward to the deep dives!