

MIKTA Workshop on Trade and Investment

Monday 20 March, 10:00-16:30

Australian opening remarks

Good morning everyone. On behalf of the Permanent Missions of Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey, and Australia – which make up MIKTA – it is my pleasure to welcome you all to the MIKTA Workshop on Trade and Investment.

We would like to acknowledge the presence of the WTO Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo, the many distinguished speakers we are privileged to have with us today, Ambassadors and investment experts. We are grateful for the opportunity to bring together so many Members, relevant international organizations and institutions, business and non-government stakeholders to share views on trade, investment and development, and the role of the WTO.

MIKTA is an innovative partnership, bringing together a diverse group of Members in a consultative forum with the aim of advancing the common interests of the international community. In the WTO context, MIKTA seeks to facilitate open discussions among WTO Members by arranging opportunities to enhance information-sharing and exchanges on issues relevant to international trade to contribute to strengthening the multilateral trading system, and especially the role of the WTO.

MIKTA WTO activities held in 2016, including the Workshop on Electronic Commerce (July 2016) and the Workshop on the WTO and Agenda 2030 (October 2016) provided a useful platform for advancing discussions on contemporary trade issues.

When we were reflecting on what next for MIKTA in the WTO, trade and investment was a logical choice. There is growing recognition of the vital link between trade and investment and sustainable development.

Discussions on trade and investment policy coherence are underway in many other international organizations, including the G20, UNCTAD and the OECD. As the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade, and given its broad membership, the WTO has an important role to play in these discussions.

Furthermore, with work underway in the WTO following the entry into force of the Trade Facilitation Agreement and more recent discussions on trade facilitation for services, we increasingly find ourselves reflecting on the role of investment and particularly investment facilitation.

Today's workshop is focused around three main themes.

In Session one, Why the WTO?, speakers will consider the interlinkages between trade and investment, the relevance of WTO disciplines, particularly in relation to foreign direct investment, and how and why the WTO factors into discussions in other international forums.

The second session on Recent Developments in Trade and Investment Policy Making will focus on the increasing interaction between trade and investment policy at the national and international level, trends in foreign investment and the relationship between efforts to increase FDI and promote inclusive growth and development, opportunities and challenges facing investors and policy maker, and how this is relevant to work in the WTO.

Session Three will focus on Trade and Investment Facilitation for Development, examining what is meant by investment facilitation at the national and international level, how countries are using regulatory and administrative frameworks for investment to attract FDI, support sustainable development and responsible business conduct, and what national experiences tell us about the opportunities and challenges associated with trade and investment facilitation.

We have built plenty of time into the agenda for comments and questions following each panel session. We encourage workshop participants to share their views and experiences on these important topics. We hope to facilitate an open and free flowing discussion that reflects the views of the many participants registered for the workshop.

In the final Wrap-up Session, MIKTA Ambassadors will share their reflections on the key messages they took from the workshop discussions linking back to the question of what role the WTO could play in investment discussions. This will be followed by an open discussion with workshop participants.

Evidently, we have a very full and interesting program ahead of us, so let me now hand over to Director-General Azevêdo to deliver opening remarks.