

Environmental Goods Agreement
Statement by the Chair
The Hon Andrew Robb AO MP, Minister for Trade and Investment, Australia

Nairobi, Kenya
14 December 2015

In January 2014, ministers from 14 WTO members – representing more than 40 economies – met in Davos, Switzerland and agreed to explore ways to liberalise trade in environmental goods. This initiative followed a similar positive initiative in APEC in 2012-13.

Negotiations on the Environmental Goods Agreement were formally launched in Geneva in July 2014. Australia has been pleased to act in the role of Chair of the negotiations since that time.

The EGA is being negotiated in line with WTO rules and will support the WTO and the multilateral trading system. Once finalised, it will represent an important trade-focused contribution that the WTO and its Members will make towards the protection of the environment and sustainable development.

Since the launch of the negotiations, considerable progress has been achieved in eleven negotiation rounds over eighteen months.

In the early rounds, EGA members worked to build up a broad list of possible EGA products. This included close consultations with experts from international organisations, government agencies, academia and industry. EGA members also started nominating the products they would like to see included in the EGA, including detailed explanations of the technologies involved, and the environmental rationale behind them.

More recently, negotiators have been working to refine the full list of nominations towards a final, agreed EGA list. There has been a high degree of convergence in many areas. Customs officials have also provided significant technical input, helping to ensure that the products on the final list are environmentally credible and that the agreement is implementable and workable once it is put to the test at the border.

We have welcomed the active participation and contribution of the three new members that have joined the EGA since the negotiations were launched¹. The EGA remains very much open to all WTO Members who are interested in joining our ambitious efforts.

EGA members are also working on ways to make the EGA a future-oriented agreement, able to address other issues in the sector and to respond to changes in technologies in the years to come.

Wishing to capitalise on the positive atmosphere and momentum that has characterised the EGA negotiations to date, EGA members will re-engage early in 2016 to continue on the path towards a positive conclusion.

¹ The current 17 EGA members are Australia; Canada; China; Costa Rica; the European Union; Hong Kong, China; Iceland; Israel; Japan; Korea; New Zealand; Norway; Singapore; Switzerland; Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu; Turkey; and the United States.