



**G20-OECD-WTO Event on Trade Facilitation and Future Trade Cooperation
30 May 2018, OECD Headquarters, Paris**

Summary

In order for trade to be fully harnessed for the benefit of all, and acknowledging the key role that an open system for trade can play to foster growth in a framework of international economic cooperation, the G20-OECD-WTO event on 30 May discussed the scope for further facilitating international trade, notably through the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The event, opened by OECD Secretary-General Gurría and featuring remarks by Argentina's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship Jorge Faurie, brought together a range of stakeholders, including G20 Sherpas, policymakers, experts, the private sector and international organisations.

Speakers highlighted that the TFA is an example of effective international cooperation, demonstrating that progress is possible when common challenges are tackled by building consensus on shared solutions. Participants emphasised that trade facilitation is critical in today's highly interconnected world and welcomed OECD analysis which finds that the TFA can generate trade cost reductions for countries of between 14% and 18%.

The 2017 OECD Trade Facilitation Indicators also highlighted that the TFA has resulted in real change on the ground, with implementation already well underway. The TFIs show that progress is strong in some areas, but remains uneven and that some significant challenges persist. In particular, domestic and cross-border agency co-operation remain important areas for improvement.

A number of speakers highlighted the importance of the TFA for more inclusive trade – lowering trade costs that are particularly burdensome for small firms, increasing opportunities for young firms to move from the informal to formal economy and to grow (particularly benefiting female entrepreneurs who tend to be concentrated in smaller firms), and reducing opportunities and incentives for bribery and corruption. Moreover, trade facilitation is becoming increasingly important in the digital era, with growing numbers of parcels crossing international borders, raising demand, and creating new challenges, for fast and effective trade facilitation. Private sector representatives underscored the importance of the TFA for businesses around the world, and in particular for global supply chains.

Participants also discussed how the TFA could potentially be a model for new types of trade agreements, with greater flexibility to accommodate country capacity constraints, including in relation to implementation timelines. The TFA was considered to be truly innovative including in linking implementation to practical assistance for countries to undertake reforms. Donors and partner organizations are stepping in to provide support, helping to support the role of the TFA in underpinning domestic reforms. Some participants highlighted that experience with the TFA could help inform possible ways forward on other issues such as e-commerce, services and investment.

Participants concluded that the TFA is a compelling example of effective international cooperation, providing a global solution to a global problem and demonstrating that concrete progress is possible, and that the gains are greater, when all countries act together.

Further reading - see new OECD publication: [Trade Facilitation and the Global Economy](#).