

Report: 8th virtual meeting of the Commentary Group on a Multilateral Framework on Investment Facilitation for Development

The 8th virtual meeting of the Investment Facilitation Commentary Group took place virtually on 2 September 2021, from 9:00am to 10:30am Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

The meeting focused on investment facilitation measures for attracting green, gender-equal, and skills-generating investments (3Gs). The meeting addressed investment facilitation measures that might prove effective in this regard and that a future WTO Agreement on Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) may wish to include to facilitate these kinds of investment, given their importance and prioritization across economies.

The meeting was moderated by Matthew Stephenson, Policy and Community Lead, International Trade and Investment, World Economic Forum, and included the following panelists: Laurie J. Spengler, CEO, Courageous Capital Advisors, LLC; Penny Naas, President, International Public Affairs and Sustainability, UPS; Lamberto Dai Pra', Head of Africa, Asia and Oceania, Enel Green Power; and Sophal Suon, Director, Public Relations and Promotion of Private Investment, Council for the Development of Cambodia. Closing remarks were made by H.E. Kemvichet Long, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the WTO and other International Organizations, and conclusions and the way forward were provided by Karl P. Sauvart, Resident Senior Fellow, Columbia University, CCSI.

A list of the participating members in the meeting and of the programme are attached to this report.

Discussion highlights

The discussion during the webinar focused on the following points, which are further elaborated upon in separate sections below.

- Governments should provide specific investment facilitation measures to support green, gender-equal and skills-generating investment. To establish the criteria for such investment and evaluate its impact on the local economy, capacity building and technical assistance are needed, especially in least developed countries (LDCs). In this respect, the future IFD should include an Article that highlights the need to facilitate green, gender-equal and skills-generating foreign direct investment (FDI). Such an Article—even if general—would be very important to create the basis for any technical assistance that should be part of an IFD.
- It is important to make the business case for the 3Gs and demonstrate case studies that they are aligned with investor needs and interests.
- It was emphasised that, when addressing specifically green and gender-equal investment, governments and investors should go beyond the recognition of the

importance of such investment and promote concrete measures and policies to attract such investment. Such measures could include a power-purchase approach of green energy by governments, establishing green energy industrial parks and including gender-equal requirements in procurement contracts or when evaluating investment projects.

I. Strategies for unlocking green, gender-equal, and skills-generating FDI

The following elements were discussed as important to promote green, gender-equal and skills-generating FDI:

Context: Governments should link the promotion and facilitation of FDI to climate, socio-economic and community voice considerations. In this respect, it is important that governments can showcase investment projects. Investors do not always have sufficient information. It is also important that IPAs have a basket of case studies and empirical evidence that green, gender-equal and skills-generating FDI raises and improves operating efficiency. This requires technical assistance, especially for LDCs.

Commitment: Governments should integrate commitments to promote the 3Gs within their National Action Plans, including through concrete targets, as investors focus on targets. Data transparency is important to assist governments and investors meet these targets.

Capital acceleration: Governments should promote the 3Gs through measures that can include public recognition, tax exemptions and guarantees. It was emphasized that guarantees are one of the most important measures for investors, as they mitigate not only the risk but the perception of risk, especially in developing countries.

II. The business case and government policy for green, gender-equal, and skills-generating FDI

It is important to make the business case for the 3Gs and demonstrate it through case studies. It was noted that, today, because of consumers' demand, renewable energy and labour standards are requirements that come from investors and not only governments. Nevertheless, governments should also undertake policy actions to promote and facilitate green, gender-equal and skills-generating FDI. For example, procurement contracts could require the production of clean energy. The procurement process could also include gender criteria, such as the percentage of women in the supply chain or affordable access to renewable energy in households, specifically in rural areas, which are consumed by women primarily as heads of households.

III. Targeting green, gender-equal and skills-generating FDI – lessons from Cambodia

Cambodia has developed a supplier database with sustainability dimensions (<https://sd2.cdc.gov.kh/>) that include information on green, gender-equal and skills-generating FDI, to facilitate investment that achieves these objectives. Domestic suppliers can register their companies in the database, thus promoting their businesses with potential investors. Besides general information on the company (such as its products and services), the database indicates the sustainability characteristics of selected suppliers. There are six sustainability dimensions that registered companies can highlight (and verify) in the database: quality standards and certifications; responsible supply chains; gender and inclusion; environmental sustainability; employee capacity building; and employee care. Cambodia intends to enact a new investment law that will support all six sustainability dimensions.

IV. Including the 3Gs in the IFD

It was proposed that the IFD include an Article that highlights the need to facilitate green, gender-equal and skills-generating FDI. Such an Article, even if general, would be very important for creating the basis for technical assistance. The IFD should have a strong component of capacity building to assist governments and specifically IPAs to promote such investment, as IPAs tend to ignore the potential of impact investment. In addition, the IFD should include provisions on the establishment of partnerships between investment authorities in different jurisdictions to cooperate on both knowledge sharing and two-way investment flows.

Annex I: Participating members in the 5th Commentary Group meeting

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Russell	Curtis	Head, Invest Durban
Khalil	Hamdani	Visiting Professor, Lahore School of Economics
Rifat	Parvez	Executive Director General BOI Pakistan
Sebastian	Reil	Senior FDI Consultant, FDI Center
Karl P.	Sauvant	Resident Senior Fellow, Columbia University, CCSI
Matthew	Stephenson	Policy and Community Lead, International Trade and Investment, World Economic Forum
Markus	Thill	President, Africa, Robert Bosch
Hanna	Tatarchenko Welgacz	Manager, Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (APEXBrazil), Brazil
Philippe	Yvergnaux	Director of International Cooperation, Business France
Speakers		
Lamberto Dai	Pra'	Head of Africa, Asia and Oceania, Enel Green Power
Kemvichet	Long	Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the WTO and other International Organizations
Karl P.	Sauvant	Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI)
Laurie	Spengler	CEO, Courageous Capital Advisors, LLC
Matthew	Stephenson	Policy and Community Lead, International Trade and Investment, World Economic Forum
Sophal	Suon	Director, Public Relations and Promotion of Private Investment, Council for the Development of Cambodia
Additional participants		
Laura	Betancourt	Coordinator, Procolombia
Edgard	Carneiro Vieira	Policy Analyst and Engagement Specialist, World Economic Forum
Yardenne	Kagan	Project Officer, ITC/DIE Project on Investment Facilitation for Development, ITC
Ana	Novik	Head, Investment Division, OECD
Heather	Taylor-Strauss	Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Investment and Innovation Division, Investment and Enterprise Develop Section, ESCAP
Quan	Zhao	Trade Policy Advisor, Division for Market Development, ITC

Annex II: Invitation and agenda

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Deutsches Institut für
Entwicklungspolitik



German Development
Institute



International
Trade
Centre

WORLD
ECONOMIC
FORUM

COMMITTED TO
IMPROVING THE STATE
OF THE WORLD

Invitation: 8th VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE COMMENTARY GROUP ON A MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK ON INVESTMENT FACILITATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

2 September 2021

Dear Madam/Sir,

We would like to invite you to participate in the 8th meeting of the Commentary Group, to take place virtually on 2 September 2021 from 9:00am to 10:30am Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), 15:00 to 16:30 Central European Time (CET), 21:00 to 22:30 China Standard Time (CST).

As a reminder, the Commentary Group's mandate is to provide input on the content of a new framework being developed at the WTO to facilitate cross-border investment and increase its development impact.

The meeting will consider how to facilitate investment that is green, gender-equal, and contributes to generating skills (3Gs).

There is increasing interest in facilitating investment that achieves specific development objectives, including investment that is climate positive ("Green FDI"), contributes to gender-equal (also known as gender-lens investing), and leads to skills generating employment, especially through generating skills. The meeting will therefore seek to understand what measures might prove effective in this regard, and whether some investment promotion agencies (IPAs) are starting to target and facilitate such types of investment. A future WTO Agreement on Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) may wish to include provisions to facilitate these kinds of investment, given their importance and prioritization across economies.

The discussions will be informed by "*Investment Facilitation for Development: A Toolkit for Policymakers*", [available here](#).

As with previous meetings, a summary of the discussions will be made available to the WTO's Structured Discussions.

Moderator: Matthew Stephenson, Policy and Community Lead, International Trade and Investment, World Economic Forum

Panellists:

Laurie J. Spengler, CEO, Courageous Capital Advisors, LLC —“*Strategies for combining and simultaneously unlocking Green, Gender-Equal, and Skills-Generating FDI*”

Lamberto Dai Pra’, Head of Africa, Asia and Oceania, Enel Green Power—“ *Suggestions from an investor on how to facilitate Green, Gender-Equal, and Skills-Generating FDI*”

Sophal Suon, Director, Public Relations and Promotion of Private Investment, Council for the Development of Cambodia— “*Targeting green, gender-equal, and skills-generating FDI – lessons from Cambodia*”

Closing remarks: H.E. Kemvichet Long, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the WTO and other International Organizations— “*Advancing green, gender-equal and skills-generating FDI through investment facilitation at the WTO*”

Conclusions and way forward: Karl P. Sauvant, Resident Senior Fellow, Columbia University, CCSI

To join the meeting, kindly click on the link below shortly before 15:00 am CET on 2 September 2021 and follow the instructions.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

We hope that you will be able to participate and ask that you confirm your participation with Yardenne Kagan (ykagan@intracen.org).

With best regards,

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Matthew Stephenson
World Economic Forum
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Background information:

ITC-DIE project on [Investment Facilitation for Development](#)

Axel Berger and Karl P. Sauvant, eds., *Investment Facilitation for Development: A Toolkit for Policymakers* (Geneva: ITC, 2021), [available here](#).

Ali Dadkhah, “Developing Comprehensive General and Sector-Based Indicators for Assessing the Contribution of Foreign Direct Investment to Sustainable Development”, 2021, UNESCAP, [available here](#).

GenderSmart, “Gender & Climate Investment: A strategy for unlocking a sustainable future”, 2021, [available here](#).

OECD, “FDI Qualities Indicators: Measuring the sustainable development impacts of investment”, 2019, [available here](#).

UNCTAD, “Promoting Green FDI: Practices and Lessons from the Field”, 2016, [available here](#).

Bios:

Lamberto Dai Pra'

Lamberto Dai Pra' is Enel Green Power's Head of Africa, Asia and Oceania area. He has been part of the Enel Group since 1991 and has worked in various sectors related to both traditional and renewable electricity generation. He began his career as an engineer in Enel's Construction Division. In 1999, he transferred to the Business Development and M&A areas in the International Division. He then held roles in Business Development for Eastern Europe, New Countries and Solar Photovoltaic, as well as General Manager in France and South Africa. He was born in Goa, India in 1966. He received his degree in Chemical Engineering in 1990.

H.E. Kemvichet Long

Kemvichet Long joined the Ministry of Commerce in 2008. He was appointed as Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the WTO in June 2021. In his previous capacity as Deputy Director General at the Ministry of Commerce, he was a member of various committees including the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Cambodia's Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework and Committee on the Digital Government Policy Framework. In term of trade negotiations, he was a member of the Trade Negotiation Committee for the recently-concluded Cambodia-China Free Trade Agreement and the Cambodia-Korea Free Trade Agreement, in charge of Technical and Economic Cooperation negotiations.

Karl P. Sauvant

Karl P. Sauvant introduced the idea of an International Support Program for Sustainable Investment Facilitation in the E15 Task Force on Investment Policy in 2015. From there, the proposal was taken forward in the WTO. He has written extensively on this subject (see <https://ssrn.com/author=2461782>), participated in various events relating to it and currently assists the ITC and DIE on a project on Investment Facilitation for Development. He retired in 2005 as Director of UNCTAD's Investment Division and established, in 2006, what is now the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI). He stepped down as the Center's Executive Director in 2012, to focus his work, as a CCSI Resident Senior Fellow, on teaching, research and writing.

Laurie J. Spengler

Laurie J. Spengler is CEO of Courageous Capital Advisors, LLC, an impact investment advisory firm dedicated to generating positive impact. She is an impact investment banker and an active contributor to impact investment. She serves in the Council on Foreign Relations and is a non-executive director of the CDC Group (UK DFI), Lendable, the UK Impact Investing Institute and Bridges Insights. As Ambassador to the Global Steering Group on Impact Investing, she speaks at convenings on impact investing, value-based banking, gender-smart investing and more. She is an alumna of Harvard and Stanford Universities.

Matthew Stephenson

Matthew Stephenson is Policy and Community Lead for International Trade and Investment at the World Economic Forum, where he manages the Global Investment Policy and Practice initiative. Previously, he worked at the IFC, where he led the workstream on outward FDI. He has also worked at the OECD on Africa and investment and served as a diplomat for the U.S. Department of State, leading the economic team on Afghanistan and managing economic programs in the Middle East. He is a member of the T20 Task Force on Trade and Investment. He has a PhD from the Graduate Institute in Geneva, a master's from the Harvard Kennedy School and a bachelor's from Oxford University.

Sophal Suon

Sophal Suon is currently Director of Public Relations and Promotion of Private Investment at the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), and Lead Negotiator on investment for Cambodia. At the CDC, he has been involved in regional economic cooperation including ASEAN Investment Area, the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) Economic Cooperation Program, UNESCAP Asia-Pacific Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Network, ACMECS and the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation. Prior to the CDC, he served as a Senior Official in charge of Public Procurement at the Ministry of Economy and Finance. He is a graduate of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.