

Unblocking benefits of the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement

Session at the 9th WTO Global Review of Aid for Trade
28 June 2024, 9:00-10:00 CET, in person at the WTO

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the International Trade Centre (ITC), we cordially invite you to a session on:

“Unblocking benefits of the WTO Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement”
28 June 2024, 9:00-10:00 Central European Time (CET)
in person in Room W, The World Trade Organization

This session is held in the framework of the ITC’s [project](#) on Investment Facilitation for Development. It is organized as a session in the context of [the 9th WTO Global Review of Aid for Trade](#).

It is necessary to register to attend the session in person at the WTO (to register please [click here](#))

The session will be moderated by Quan Zhao, Senior Programme Officer, Division for Market Development, ITC, and have the following agenda and speakers:

Opening Remarks

Johanna Hill, Deputy Director-General, WTO – *“How can the IFD Agreement help developing countries attract high quality FDI?”*

Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, ITC – *“The role of Aid for Trade initiatives in assisting developing countries to make use of the IFD Agreement”*

Panel discussion

- **Sofia Boza**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Chile to the WTO, co-Coordinator of the Structured Discussions on Investment Facilitation for Development – *“State of Play of the WTO Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement”*
 - **Chenggang Li**, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of China to the WTO – *“How can the IFD Agreement support investment for sustainable development”*
 - **Carlos Sebastian Guevara Aguirre**, Counsellor, Permanent Delegation of Ecuador in Geneva – *“The experience of Ecuador in conducting investment facilitation needs assessments”*
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The session will be conducted in English and in an interactive manner to allow for questions by participants.

Focus of the session:

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is key for economic development and job creation, especially in developing and least-developed countries. However, attracting FDI becomes increasingly challenging due to decreasing FDI flows. Facilitating investment through improving investment climate has emerged as a new policy trend for attracting FDI inflows.

At the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi, a ministerial event was held on 25 February 2024, at which 125 WTO Members announced the finalization of the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement, and made the text of the Agreement publicly available. The participating Members represent three-quarters of the WTO's Membership, including close to 90 developing economies, among which 27 least-developed economies.

This new Agreement is an effective tool to support countries in enhancing investment environment through increased transparency and streamlined procedures, and aims to facilitate FDI flows, particularly to developing and least developed countries, with the overarching goal of fostering sustainable development.

The session will discuss the role of the IFD Agreement in addressing investment gaps and explore how aid for trade initiatives can help developing countries make use of the Agreement to advance investment facilitation reforms. The session will also share experiences from conducting needs assessments as the first step towards implementing the IFD Agreement. It will highlight the importance of technical assistance to support developing countries to make use of the IFD Agreement and explore the efficient modalities for technical assistance on this topic.

We look forward to welcoming you to the session!

With kind regards,

Quan Zhao, Senior Programme Manager (Trade Policy), International Trade Centre

Background information:

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

Karl P. Sauvant, “[The new WTO Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement](#)”, *Columbia FDI Perspective*, no. 363, 7 August 2023.

Karl P. Sauvant, “[Three Reasons Why a WTO Agreement on Investment Facilitation for Development is Important](#)”, *International Economic Law and Policy Blog*, 21 November 2022.

Karl P. Sauvant, Matthew Stephenson and Yardenne Kagan, “[An Inventory of Concrete Measures to Facilitate the Flow of Sustainable FDI: What? Why? How?](#)” (Third edition) (2022).

Bios:

Carlos Sebastian Guevara Aguirre

Carlos Guevara entered the Ecuadorian Foreign Service in 2006. Currently, he is Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the WTO. Previously, he served at his country’s Embassy in Japan. He has a bachelor’s degree in economics from the Ecuadorian National Polytechnic School, and a master’s degree in the same field from the University of Tsukuba (Japan). During his career, he has specialized in trade and trade related matters, working in both, Ecuador’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Trade. He has been involved in the investment facilitation negotiations since 2019.

Sofia Boza

Sofía Boza is the Ambassador of Chile to the World Trade Organization since July 2022. She has also taken over the co-Coordination of the Structured Discussions on Investment Facilitation for Development. Prior to that, she was an Associate Professor and Chief at the Department of Rural Management and Innovation at the University of Chile and Professor at the Institute of International Studies at the same University. She holds a bachelor’s degree in economics from the University of Seville and a PhD in Economics from the Autonomous University of Madrid.

Li Chenggang

Li Chenggang is the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of China to the World Trade Organization. Prior to the current position, Mr. Li served as Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Commerce of China (MOFCOM), Director-General of the Department of Treaty and Law, MOFCOM, Vice Mayor of Qingdao and Deputy Director-General of the Bureau of Fair Trade for Imports & Exports, MOFCOM. He was a key member of the negotiating team for China’s accession to the WTO, as well as the Chief Negotiator representing China for the investment treaties’ negotiations with the European Union and the United States.

Pamela Coke-Hamilton

Pamela Coke-Hamilton has served as Executive Director of the ITC since 1 October 2020. She joined ITC from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, where she was

Director of the Division on International Trade and Commodities. She served with the Jamaican Government, the Caribbean Forum in trade negotiations, and multilateral institutions, including the Organization of American States and InterAmerican Development Bank. She previously served as Executive Director of the Caribbean Export Development Agency, strengthening the private sector and MSMEs through investment promotion. She holds a Juris Doctor in Law from the Georgetown University School of Law in Washington, DC.

Johanna Hill

Johanna Hill has been Deputy Director-General at the World Trade Organization since 13 November 2023. She is a trade expert with more than 25 years' experience in international trade. She previously served as Managing Partner at the CA Trade Consulting Group in San Salvador, advising firms on international trade and FDI. Her previous roles included Executive Director of El Salvador's Chamber of Telecommunications and member of the Board of Directors of Banco Azul. She has also served as Vice Minister of Economy, responsible for conducting and implementing trade policy and negotiations.

Quan Zhao

Quan Zhao is a Senior Programme Officer (Trade Policy) in the Division for Market Development, International Trade Centre (ITC). He covers policy research and project management in the areas of trade in services, e-commerce, digital economy and cross-border investment, and he also advises the management on G20 matters. Prior to joining the ITC, Zhao served as a trade negotiator and diplomat at the Permanent Mission of China to the World Trade Organization and the Ministry of Commerce of China. He has served as the Chair for WTO's Committee on Trade in Financial Services, and as the lead services negotiator in China-Peru, China-Costa Rica and China-Pakistan FTAs.