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## **INVITATION: 18 February 2021, 6<sup>th</sup> VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE COMMENTARY GROUP ON A MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK ON INVESTMENT FACILITATION FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Dear Colleague,

We would like to invite you to participate in the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Investment Facilitation Commentary Group, to take place virtually on 18 February 2021, from 09:00 to 10:30 Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), 15:00 to 16:30 Central European Time (CET).

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

**The 6<sup>th</sup> meeting will focus on how to structure effective mechanisms to identify and resolve investment-related issues early, before they become a risk to the investment climate or even a legal dispute.**

As background documents, please find the following attached:

- a) The undated *Inventory of Concrete Measures to Facilitate the Flow of Sustainable FDI*, available at <https://www.intracen.org/itc/Investment-Facilitation-for-Development/>.
- b) The summaries of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Commentary Group meetings (which were shared with WTO negotiators), available at <https://www.intracen.org/itc/Investment-Facilitation-for-Development/>.
- c) The Informal Consolidated Text of the WTO Structured Discussions on Investment Facilitation for Development, February 4, 2021, [available here](#). For the meeting you might want to go over Section IV, 18: Contact/Focal points/Ombudsperson types and mechanisms.

As with previous meetings, a summary of the discussions will be made available to the WTO negotiations on Investment Facilitation for Development.

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

**Opening remarks: Priyanka Kher**, Private Sector Specialist, Investment Policy and Promotion, World Bank Group

**Panelists:**

**Lilanie Gudeta**, Legal Advisor, Ethiopian Investment Commission

**Anthony L. Assassa**, Board Member, European Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lao PDR and Director of Operations, BDO Francophone West Africa

**Philippe Yvergniaux**, Director of International Cooperation, Business France

**Sebastian Reil**, Manager, FDI Center

**Concluding remarks: 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 18 February and follow the instructions. If you are not able to connect online, you could connect using the dial-up options provided at the end of this email.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

If you face any technical difficulties or have general questions, please do not hesitate to contact Yardenne Kagan (ykagan@intracen.org).

With best regards,

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cc Rajesh Aggarwal (ITC), Axel Berger (DIE), Sean Doherty (WEF), Yardenne Kagan (ITC), Jean-Sébastien Roure (ITC), Quan Zhao (ITC)

**Bios of speakers**

**Anthony L. Assassa**

Anthony L. Assassa is an international expert covering Asia and Africa coverage with professional services offered to investors and businesses in Audit, Accounting and Tax, Advisory fields. He is currently serving as Board Member of the Executive Committee of the EuroCham Laos (the European Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Laos) and as Director for an international audit firm in Africa. With a focus on implementing executive plans and views in a context of increasing uncertainty, his references include the OECD, the Customs and Tax Authority of Congo DRC, Cameroon and Comoros, and multinationals operating in Energy (Renewables, Oil and Gaz), Mining, Financial Services, Consumer Goods and Logistics.

## **Lilanie Gudeta**

Lilanie Gudeta is a legal advisor at the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC), currently leading the Investment Grievance Management Procedure unit at EIC. She also works on various assignments as per the direction of the EIC management with a special focus on the Industry Parks Division. Prior to joining the EIC, she has served in litigation and legal consulting for various private companies in Ethiopia. She holds a Master's in Business Law and an MA in Environment and Sustainable Development.

## **Priyanka Kher**

Priyanka Kher is a Private Sector Specialist in the Investment Climate Unit of the World Bank Group. She leads research and policy advisory projects in developing countries in Asia and Africa on investment climate reforms, dispute prevention, investment retention and expansion and international trade and investment law. Prior to joining the World Bank Group, she practiced law at law firms in India and Singapore. She has also worked with UNCTAD and the Commonwealth Secretariat on investment policy. She holds a master's degree in law from Harvard Law School and is a dual qualified attorney admitted to practice in New York and India.

## **Sebastian Reil**

Sebastian Reil is a Manager at FDI Center, a leading advisory firm in the field of foreign direct investment. He works with countries, regions, cities, special economic zones, and industrial parks from around the world to develop and implement successful strategies for attracting and retaining investment. Previously, he worked as a management consultant and as a researcher at a think tank on topics of industrial development. He holds master's degrees from Peking University and the University of Groningen as well as a bachelor's degree from Heidelberg University.

## **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). In 2012, he stepped down as its Executive Director, to focus his work, as a CCSI Resident Senior Fellow, on teaching, research and writing.

## **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.

### **Philippe Yvergniaux**

Philippe Yvergniaux has 27 years' experience in FDI attraction, as international director then general manager of French regional IPAs from 1993 to 2005, then country director at Invest in France Agency for the British Isles (2005-2009) and North America (2009-2015); in January 2015 he was appointed Director of International Cooperation at Business France. In this role, he is charged with leading efforts to develop partnerships with, and provide technical assistance to, trade and investment promotion agencies throughout the world. Prior to 1992, Philippe worked as a civil engineer on rural development projects in Africa, Indonesia, and Haiti. He is married with 4 children and 4 grandchildren.