



STAKE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE DOHA ROUND: ASEAN PERSPECTIVE

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ASEAN: SOME BASIC INFORMATION

- ASEAN is a staunch supporter of the WTO where member states have actively participated in the multilateral process
- Trade policy in ASEAN member states pursued in three tiers: multilateral (WTO); regional (ASEAN, ASEM, APEC), bilateral
- More than 75% of ASEAN trade go to non-ASEAN countries, e.g. US, Japan, EU, China, etc.
- ASEAN is building a Community: the ASEAN Economic Community 2015
- ASEAN is into regional trading arrangements
- One member state has yet to be a WTO member



ASEAN AND THE DOHA ROUND: WHAT THE ASEAN MINISTERS SAY

- a “successful Doha Round will spur economic growth and offer a tangible means to reduce poverty globally and in the ASEAN region”
- the Round “provides a unique opportunity to boost the drive towards development and prosperity in ASEAN”
- “ASEAN counts on a credible and open multilateral trading system to guide and see the region through this vision [AEC]”
- “faith on the Doha Development Agenda and its ability to bring about a much stronger and credible WTO, in promoting global economic growth and in providing developing and least developing countries vast opportunities for sustainable growth and development”



DOHA ROUND: ISSUES FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

- launch of a new round of multilateral trade negotiations, with the needs of developing countries at the heart of its agenda, a welcome development
- Key interests of ASEAN, as developing countries:
 - reforms in agriculture
 - greater market access for industrial goods
 - trade facilitation
 - stronger rules and disciplines, i.e. anti-dumping and subsidies
 - liberalization of trade in services
 - technical cooperation
 - effective dispute settlement mechanism



DOHA ROUND: A BALANCED OUTCOME

- recent pronouncements – renewed hope for the conclusion of the Round
- living up to the hype – balanced outcome:
 - a comprehensive package in agriculture including substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support
 - substantial market access improvements
 - elimination of export subsidies
 - services agreement that would create commercially meaningful and real market access opportunities
 - clearer and improved rules related to administered protection, e.g. anti-dumping, subsidies
- desired outcome: real, effective and operational development benefits to all developing and least-developed countries



ASEAN AND MULTILATERALISM

- WTO and the conclusion of the Doha Round remains high in ASEAN's economic agenda
- for ASEAN economic integration initiatives to succeed, it needs the institutional and legal framework that the WTO provides for the conduct of global trade
- the Doha Round if prolonged further may cause a serious dent on the relevance and credibility of the multilateral trading system
- despite ASEAN's engagement in regional trading arrangements, it still believes in the importance of the WTO in promoting free and fair trade



ASEAN AND REGIONALISM

- FTAs part of ASEAN's overall economic integration framework and not exactly a response to the lack of progress in the Doha Round
- FTA negotiations started almost at the same time the Doha Round started
- ASEAN's external economic relations, from 2002 to the present, produced 4 FTAs, with: China, Korea, Japan and, Australia and New Zealand; FTA with India in the works
- consolidation at some point in time – EAFTA or CEPEA
- expansion of global networks: EU, GCC, Mercosur



MULTILATERALISM VS REGIONALISM

- engagement in FTA negotiations does not diminish the importance ASEAN gives to the WTO
- primary objectives: secure market access, remain competitive, accelerate integration into the global supply chain, enhance bargaining leverage
- FTAs designed to be building blocks to the multilateral trading system (WTO Plus): tariff elimination on substantially all trade; comprehensive (trade in services, investment); economic cooperation; special and differential treatment
- rules and discipline follow that of the WTO



FINAL WORD

- welfare gains from RTAs may or would not be as significant as the gains from liberalizing trade at the multilateral level
- being dependent on trade for growth and development, developing countries need to continue seeking market opportunities and securing export interests
- given the uncertainty in the protracted multilateral trade negotiations, regional trading arrangements may yet be the best option for ASEAN member states, in the meanwhile

