

Seminar

EVIDENCE BASED ASSESSMENT OF TRADE POLICY COHERENCE: THE CASE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN 14 LDCs

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Followed by: ***Interactive debate***

The chair of the WTO General Council noted in early December that the WTO membership affirmed that development is a core part of the global trade body's work. The development-focused language tabled at WTO members' informal meetings in early December included, among other items, a call for work to take place in the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD), and would have ministers direct the organisation's membership to fully operationalise the mandate of the CTD in this area.

For such operationalisation to be successful, the WTO membership should bear in mind that the lack of trade policy coherence is one of the root causes hampering the development impact of international aid efforts in trade capacity building.

Existing mechanisms for aid delivery have failed to achieve effective coordination of aid policy and aid programmes amounting to regime failure manifesting itself as duplications, underperformance of resources and ineffective ad-hoc interventions hindering a sustained development of productive capacities.

International organizations need to assume greater responsibility in ensuring coherence and complementarity of their trade policy advice and capacity building in LDCs and DCs.

Evidence regarding tourism development in LDCs substantiates this point and clearly shows insufficient policy coherence of key aid instruments such as DTIS, Action Matrix, PRSP, IPR, RTA and Country Strategy in the tourism sector of 14 LDCs.

Regime failure in tourism development greatly impede LDC's development resulting in delayed export growth, missed opportunities to develop quality and diversified products and services and much needed employment for the less skilled segment of the society.

Corrective actions are urgently needed through greater trade policy coordination and concomitantly enhanced effective trade policy coordination mechanisms and monitoring of trade capacity building at national level. Corrective actions are needed which should reflect the principles of Paris Declaration of aid effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Actions and the Busan Partnership Agreement.

The workshop organizers will present the key findings of their recent study of 14 LDC's tourism development strategies and take their findings as example to illustrate how trade policy coherence should be a core component of all future trade capacity development projects and programmes.