

# ADB-ESCAP-WTO Conference

Promoting Connectivity for an Inclusive Asia and the Pacific

27-28 June 2018 | Miran Hotel, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

## Key Thematic Issues

International trade is a key driving force behind economic growth that since 1990 has lifted more than a billion people out of poverty in Asia and the Pacific. However, in the years since the global financial crisis, trade growth has fallen behind GDP growth, after outpacing it for many decades. Despite early signs of a recovery in the growth of world trade, the global economic environment is still uncertain, and much remains to be done to realize potential trade outcomes for inclusive growth.

Towards this end, emerging digital technologies, such as e-commerce, offer a new set of modern trade facilitating solutions and opportunities to achieve inclusive trade-driven growth. However, realizing the full potential of cross-border e-commerce calls for coordinated regional and global efforts. Moreover, official development assistance targeted at tradable sectors, or aid for trade, and other regional trade facilitation initiatives are important modalities for multilateral development banks and other donors to help maximize the benefits of trade liberalization.

Asian economies and stakeholders must work together to reinvigorate trade growth—through measures that reduce trade costs and improve the business climate, as well as cooperation to lower trade barriers to better leverage the potential of intra-regional trade and investment linkages. Landlocked nations face especially unique logistical challenges to their engagement in international trade having no territorial access to the seas, limited border crossings and transit dependence on neighboring countries, and hence suffer from high transaction costs to trade. Given the challenge of geography, it is especially important for these nations to undertake reforms to improve the business environment, minimize barriers to trade, and pursue closer regional cooperation.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is the largest international development finance institution in Asia and the Pacific dedicated to reducing poverty in the region. Promoting trade and investment is one of the pillars of ADB's regional cooperation and integration strategy. In this regard, Aid for Trade and trade facilitation forms an integral part of ADB's efforts to boost connectivity for inclusive growth, including through loans, grants, technical assistance, and research.

In collaboration with Uzbekistan's Ministry of Foreign Trade, ADB will bring together stakeholders from Central Asia, including policymakers, representatives from international organizations, the donor community, and academia to discuss the unique challenges of connectivity facing the landlocked economies of Central Asia, and facilitate trade for inclusive growth.

The conference will showcase key findings from three recent ADB research reports – produced in collaboration with key development partners, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) – through a combination of presentations and high-level roundtable discussions spanning three sessions. (i) ADB-ESCAP study on E-commerce Development in Asia and the Pacific 2018 (ii) ADB-ESCAP biennial 2017 report *Trade Facilitation and Better Connectivity for an Inclusive Asia and the Pacific* (iii) ADB-WTO's biennial 2017 Aid for Trade in Asia and the Pacific report *Promoting Connectivity for Inclusive Development*. ESCAP and WTO will also lead sessions to discuss topical issues relating to digital trade facilitation and WTO accessions.

## Agenda

Day 1, 27 June 2018	
8 a.m.–9 a.m.	Registration
<b>Opening Ceremony</b>	
9 a.m.– 9:05 a.m.	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> Takeo Konishi, Country Director, Asian Development Bank (ADB)
9:05 a.m.– 9:15 a.m.	<b>Opening Remarks</b> Shishir Priyadarshi, Director, Development Division, World Trade Organization (WTO)
9:15 a.m.– 9:25 a.m.	<b>Opening Remarks</b> Mia Mikic, Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
9:25 a.m.–9:40 a.m.	<b>Keynote Speech 1</b> Bambang Susantono, Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, ADB
9:40 a.m.–9:55 a.m.	<b>Keynote Speech 2</b> Sahib Saifnazarov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, Government of Uzbekistan
9:55 a.m.–10:25 a.m.	Photo Session and Coffee Break
<b>Session 1: Harnessing the Potential of E-commerce</b> <b>Chair:</b> Bambang Susantono, Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, ADB	
10:25 a.m.–10:55 a.m.	<b><i>Embracing the E-commerce Revolution in Asia and the Pacific</i></b> Jong Woo Kang, Principal Economist, ADB  Q&A
10:55 a.m.–12:10 p.m.	<b>Roundtable Discussion</b>  Michael Roberts, Head, Aid for Trade Unit, WTO Mia Mikic, Director, ESCAP Botir Arifdjanov, founder of Paynet and Lebazar.uz Farhod Karimov, Westminster University
<b>Lunch Break, 12:10 p.m.–2:15 p.m.</b>	
<b>Session 2: Progress Towards Digital Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Yann Duval, Chief, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP	
2:15 p.m.– 2:45 p.m.	<b>Overview of Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation</b> Yann Duval, Chief, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP

	Q&A
2:45 p.m.–4 p.m.	<p><b>Presentations and Discussion</b></p> <p>Yelena Vassilevskaya, Director, Study and Training Centre, Kazakhstan  Ali Aliyev, Head of Project Management Department, State Customs Committee, Government of Azerbaijan  Professor Hong Xue, Director of Institute for Internet Policy and Law, Beijing Normal University  Larissa Kokareva, Regional Manager, Crown Agents for Overseas Development</p>
<b>Day 2, 28 June 2018</b>	
<p><b>Session 3: Aid for Trade and Trade Facilitation for Inclusive Development</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Michael Roberts, Head Aid for Trade Unit, WTO</p>	
9 a.m.–9:20 a.m.	<p><b><i>Aid for Trade and Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific: Promoting Connectivity for Inclusive Development</i></b></p> <p>Cyn-Young Park, Director of Regional Cooperation and Integration, ADB</p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
9:20 a.m.–10:15 a.m.	<p><b>Roundtable Discussion</b></p> <p>Saeed Qadir, Senior Research Officer, CAREC Institute  Yann Duval, Chief, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP  Dilshor Akbarov, Project Manager, Aid for Trade Project, United Nations Development Programme  Umida Haqnazar, Independent Consultant</p>
10:15 a.m.–10:35 a.m.	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<p><b>Session 4: Progress and Challenges in WTO Accession</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Jong Woo Kang, Principal Economist, ADB</p>	
10:35 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	<p><b><i>Progress and Challenges in WTO Accessions</i></b></p> <p>Michael Roberts, Head, Aid for Trade Unit, WTO</p> <p><b><i>Donors Perspective</i></b></p> <p>Farkhod Sherzatov, Coordinator of 'Trade Facilitation in Central Asia' Program,</p>

	<p>GIZ</p> <p>Bahtiyor Mirzabaev, USAID</p> <p><b>Country Lessons and Experiences</b></p> <p>Askar Mirsaidov, Head of Department, Ministry of Foreign Trade, Government of Uzbekistan</p> <p>Meruyert Syzdykova, Chief Expert, Foreign Trade Activity Department, Ministry of National Economy of Kazakhstan</p> <p>Umida Haqnazar, Independent Consultant</p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
<p><b>Lunch Break, 12:30 p.m.–2:00 p.m.</b></p>	
<p><b>Session 5: The Future of Inclusive Trade-Driven Growth</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Cyn-Young Park, Director of Regional Cooperation and Integration, ADB</p>	
<p>2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Roundtable Discussion</b></p> <p>Michael Roberts, Head, Aid for Trade Unit, WTO</p> <p>Yann Duval, Chief, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP</p> <p>Alfiya Musina, Manager, USAID’s Competitiveness, Trade and Jobs Project</p> <p>Saeed Qadir, Senior Research Officer, CAREC Institute</p> <p>Nishanbay Sirajiddinov, Scientific Supervisor, Center for Economic Development</p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
<p><b>Closing Remarks:</b> Takeo Konishi, Country Director, ADB</p>	