



Post-WTO Ministerial Breakfast Meeting with Kenyan private sector, 16 March 2016

The 10th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO MC10) was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15 to 18 December 2015. Ahead of the Ministerial Conference, tralac hosted a breakfast meeting in conjunction with the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), which aimed at sensitizing the Kenyan private sector on important WTO issues in light of the Ministerial.

KEPSA is the voice of the private sector in Kenya and is the umbrella body for private sector associations and corporate bodies in all sectors of the economy including trade associations and provides a platform for the private sector to engage in Public Private Dialogue at local, national and international level. Tralac is a capacity-building organisation developing trade-related capacity in Eastern and Southern Africa. It aims to enhance trade law and policy capacity in these regions and works with governments and non-state actors including the private sector.

Following on from the November workshop and the 10th Ministerial, tralac again partnered with KEPSA to host a post-MC10 breakfast meeting with the Kenyan private sector. The aim of this meeting was to reflect on the outcomes of MC10 and to consider other contemporary trade and regional integration developments on the African continent.

The meeting was held at Nairobi Serena Hotel on 16 March 2016. In attendance were representatives from tralac, KEPSA officials and members, Representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and Parliament.

The meeting was opened by Mr. Japh Olende (KEPSA Director on Trade and Investment). He thanked tralac for the continued technical support prior to and after the WTO Ministerial Conference. He noted the importance of the Ministerial for Kenya as a global player and regional hub, and how a reflection on outcomes of the Conference is pertinent for the private sector – hence the importance of the current meeting. He gave a brief overview of the outcomes of the Conference, and highlighted efforts being made at the national level to enhance Kenya's competitiveness in production and trade. He encouraged the private sector to continue engaging in the multilateral trade discourse as decisions affect the way they do business and provide opportunities for business growth. He then wished participants fruitful deliberations

In his opening remarks, Dr. Henry Mutai (tralac Associate) also welcomed participants to the meeting, which was a follow up to the commitment made at the pre-Ministerial workshop in November. He thanked KEPSA for again partnering to host the meeting. He informed participants of a research and capacity building programme that tralac is drawing up for the East African region, and invited suggestions on the Kenyan private sector's involvement in this programme.

Discussions during the meeting were based on presentations delivered as follows: Mr. Elijah Manyara, TMEA Lead Consultant, Trade Facilitation Implementation Program presented the historical evolution of trade negotiations in the WTO and an overview of the Nairobi package; Dr. Miriam Omolo, Programmes Coordinator, Institute for Economic Affairs discussed implications of agriculture outcomes for Kenya and least developed countries (LDCs); Dr. Henry Mutai, tralac Associate discussed implications of LDC outcomes for Kenya and its Partner States in the East African Community (EAC); Mr. Joseah Rotich provided an overview and current status of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (T-FTA) and the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA); and Mr. William Mwanza, tralac Researcher, discussed the market integration and industrial development nexus in the context of the EAC.

Present at the meeting was Honourable David Ochieng (Member of Parliament for Ugenya Constituency, Siaya County) who noted nationalistic considerations as countries participate in market integration. He emphasised the need for integration efforts to be geared towards national development particularly through developing the resource base, and harnessing technology and innovation. He noted the importance of effectively implementing the market integration agenda in a way that promotes industrial development in all countries and noted the importance for Kenya to take a leading role in this regard. He also stressed the need to ensure that the benefits of trade and regional integration could be explained in a manner that was understandable to the ordinary small scale farmers and traders who made up the majority of the population.

In closing, Dr. Mutai thanked the presenters and participants for the part they played in ensuring a fruitful meeting. He reiterated an invitation for suggestions on further workshops, research and capacity building.

Mr Gichinga Ndirangu (KEPSA Legal Advisor) thanked tralac for co-hosting the meeting and all participants for attending. He noted that the WTO issues are dynamic and remain pertinent to integration into the global economy, how the terrain seems skewed against developmental objectives and how progress needs to be unlocked. Apart from the multilateral level, he noted the importance for countries to engage at all other levels. The regional level was particularly emphasised, where EAC Governments need to engage to remove non-tariff barriers and enhance the entrepreneurial spirit within respective countries.
