



2019/CTI/WKSP4/003
Session: Opening

Opening Remarks by the Director General, Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Commerce

Submitted by: China



**Workshop on Optimizing Investment Measures in
the Asia-Pacific Region
Shanghai, China
11-12 April 2019**

**Opening Remarks at
the APEC Workshop on Optimizing Investment Measures in the Asia-Pacific Region**

Zhang Shaogang

Director General, Department of International Trade & Economic Affairs,
Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China Shanghai Municipal Commission of Shanghai,
China, April 11, 2019

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

It gives me great pleasure to join all of you here in Shanghai in the lovely spring for the APEC Workshop on Optimizing Investment Measures in the Asia-Pacific Region. On behalf of the Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of China, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to all the attendees from APEC economies, international organizations and academia.

APEC commits itself to promoting trade and investment liberalization and facilitation. All APEC members are keenly aware that foreign direct investment is an indispensable driving force for global economic growth, trade expansion, job creation and social development. Therefore, one of the major tasks of APEC is promoting and facilitating foreign investment in the Asia-Pacific region, ensuring a fair investment environment. Amid APEC's efforts towards the eventual realization of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, or the FTAAP, investment is a major topic. The workshop today comes as one specific activity under the FTAAP Work Program on Investment.

Generally speaking, APEC economies are taking active measures to open the door wider to FDI, facilitate FDI, and include more provisions in trade agreements to reduce barriers to FDI. With these measures, FDI has gained more access to sectors such as transport, energy and manufacturing. APEC economies are also attracting and facilitating investment by streamlining administrative procedures, offering incentives, providing one-stop service and establishing new special economic zones. Thanks to the open and favorable investment environment in the region, Asia-Pacific remains the largest recipient of foreign investment.

At the same time, we should be vigilant that rising unilateralism and protectionism bring greater uncertainty to investment. The misuse of the 'national security' rationale in the investment vetting system as well as restrictions to block investment by certain foreign companies gives investors jitters.

In response to the current situation, this workshop offers APEC economies an opportunity to deliberate on how to optimize investment measures and share best practices in such areas as investment liberalization, facilitation, promotion and protection. We expect our discussions will yield useful ideas and recommendations for APEC's future work on the FTAAP and investment so as to cultivate an open, convenient, non-discriminatory and sustainable investment environment in the Asia-Pacific region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Committed to promoting free and open trade and investment, China keeps opening up. The economy is the world's largest host economy of net FDI inflow. According to the "Doing Business 2019" report newly released by the World Bank, China's global ranking jumped from the 78th to the 46th in one year's time. This demonstrates the huge improvement in China's investment environment. Last month, the economy's national legislature approved the *Foreign Investment Law of the People's Republic of China*, which has become the principal law on foreign investment in China in the new era. The law stipulates a system of pre-establishment national treatment plus negative-list management for foreign investment, ensuring that domestic and foreign enterprises are subject to a unified set of rules and compete on a level playing field. The legislation also steps up the protection of intellectual property rights and spells out the plan to establish and improve a system serving foreign investment in order to better protect the legitimate rights and interests of foreign investors and ensure the establishment of an open, transparent and predictable legal environment for enterprises of various ownerships.

Meanwhile, China is also actively investing overseas. The Belt and Road Initiative, following the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefit, is contributing to the development of economies along the Belt and Road by bringing investment, driving growth and improving the living standards of local people. This Chinese initiative has received a big welcome and thumbs-up from governments and peoples along the Belt and Road.

Shanghai is at the forefront of China's opening-up and it's been an appealing destination for foreign investment. The city thrives on an investment environment which is open, fair and transparent. I'm sure that Shanghai will provide a vivid case for our discussions.

To conclude, I wish the workshop a huge success and all of you a pleasant stay with a fruitful exchange of views here in Shanghai.

Thank you.