



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

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**Summary Report from the Information Sharing
Mechanism Policy Dialogue on WTO-Plus Elements
of Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) / Free Trade
Agreements (FTAs): FTA Chapters that Support
Inclusive Outcomes
(endorsed intersessionally on 15 July 2019)**

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: Australia



**Third Committee on Trade and Investment Meeting
Puerto Varas, Chile
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APEC COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT (CTI)

Second Meeting for 2019: Information Sharing Mechanism Policy Dialogue: WTO-Plus Elements of FTAs/RTAs FTA Chapters that Support Inclusive Outcomes

1. Australia facilitated a policy dialogue on WTO-plus elements of FTAs/RTAs as part of the annual Information Sharing Mechanism at the second Committee on Trade and Investment meeting for 2019 in Viña del Mar, Chile, on 11 May. Participants heard presentations from Chile (experience with gender chapters), Viet Nam (SME chapter of the CPTPP) and Chinese Taipei (Indigenous Cooperation chapter from the ANZTEC) and engaged in a useful discussion on the FTA chapters that support inclusive outcomes.
2. Australia provided some context to the Information Sharing Mechanism, which occurs at CTI2 each year and is aimed at enhancing transparency among regional FTAs/RTAs. The fundamental purpose of the Mechanism is to build momentum towards a high-quality, comprehensive FTAAP, with the Mechanism designed to raise awareness of treatment of issues within FTAs including ones where existing WTO disciplines are limited or non-existent. Discussions have previously covered a range of topics including state-owned enterprises, intellectual property, government procurement, regulatory coherence and competition policy.
3. Chile shared their experience with gender chapters in FTAs, which is part of a broader agenda of inclusive elements in trade. For example, in addition to Chile's FTAs that contain gender provisions (with Uruguay, Canada, Argentina and Brazil), labor and environmental standards were also included in the recently modernised Canada-Chile FTA. There were a number of benefits of including gender provisions within FTAs, including the positive effects of women's economic empowerment on growth and competition; a reduction in inequality; mitigation of adverse impacts from demographics; and increased diversification. Chile noted analytic reports estimated a 'full-potential' scenario of women's economic participation would add up to 26 per cent to annual global GDP in 2025, compared with a business-as-usual scenario. There were challenges in incorporating gender provisions in FTAs, given the relative lack of previous experience and precedent. However, consultation and coordination with key ministries and agencies was important given the cross-cutting nature of gender issues. This would help increase understanding of the gender dimension in FTAs and contribute to better decision-making and ultimately better gender equity.
4. Viet Nam presented an overview of their implementation of the SMEs chapter under the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Activities to implement the SMEs chapter included an official website and CPTPP portal with guidance material for SMEs and contact information, as well as seminars to assist SMEs. A 'Committee on SMEs' had been tasked with assisting SMEs to take advantage of commercial opportunities from the CPTPP; share best practices; capacity building; and advance work to help SMEs integrate effectively into global value chains. Viet Nam's broader implementation of the CPTPP also involved raising public awareness of the benefits of the CPTPP, while improving labor, legal and institutional frameworks, competitiveness as well as environmental and sustainable development policies.
5. Chinese Taipei presented an overview of the chapter on indigenous cooperation in the economic cooperation agreement between New Zealand and Chinese Taipei (ANZTEC). This was aimed at enhancing the cultural and people-to-people links between the indigenous people of Chinese Taipei and New Zealand as well as facilitating trade and economic relations. Chinese Taipei provided examples of indigenous cooperation in business and trade, language revitalisation, tourism and education. A key lesson for

Chinese Taipei is that including indigenous-related provisions in trade agreements improves indigenous people's access to and participation in the opportunities and benefits of trade and investment, and can serve to further deepen the shared principle of inclusiveness in APEC. Furthermore, government, private sector and academia all play a role in ensuring the successful development and implementation of indigenous provisions in trade agreements, which would be a positive development for indigenous empowerment.

6. In closing, Australia thanked the presenters and participants for engaging in this dialogue, noting it is a good example of how the CTI information sharing mechanism can be used to constructively discuss challenging and emerging policy issues.