



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

2023/SMEWG55/005

Agenda Item: 5

APEC 2023 Theme and Priorities

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: United States



**55th Small and Medium Enterprises
Working Group Meeting
Hong Kong, China
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Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation



APEC 2023

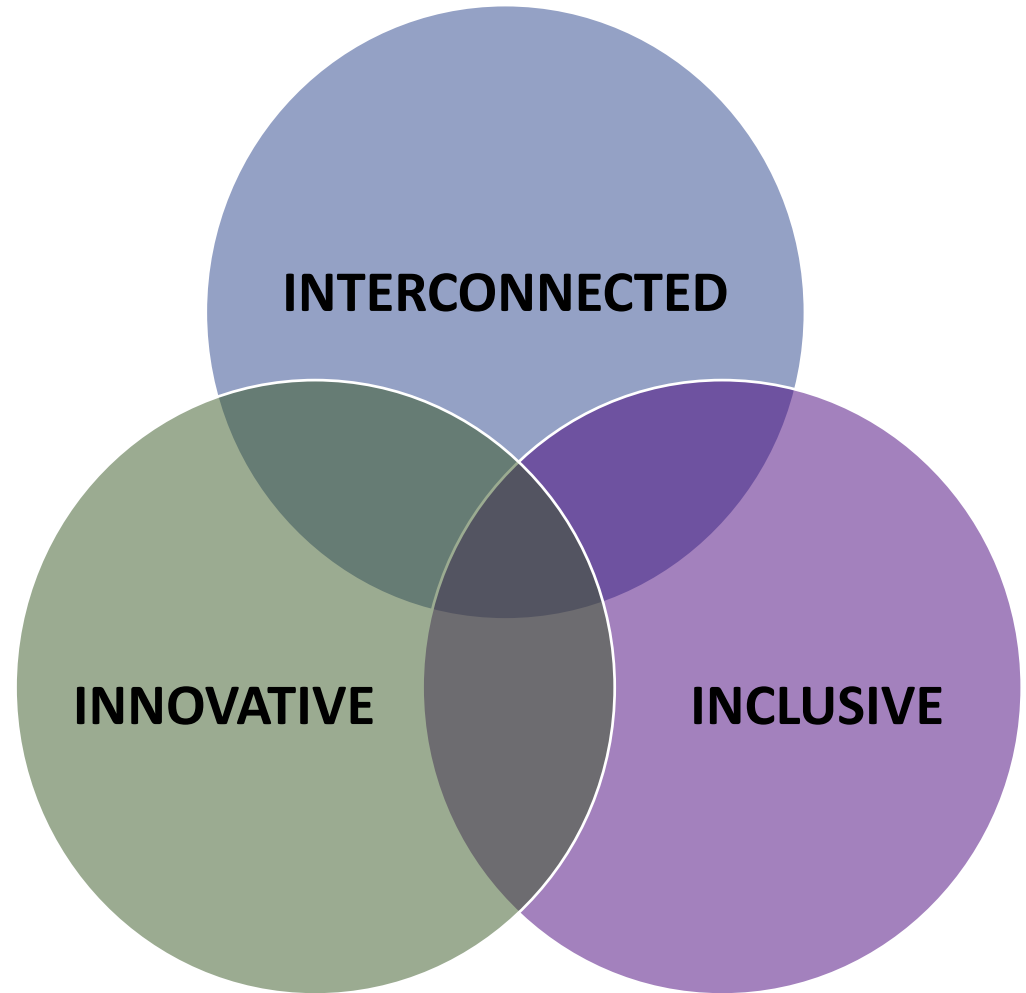
U.S. THEME AND PRIORITIES

Creating a **Resilient** and
Sustainable Future for All.

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APEC 2023 THEME

“Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All”



1 INTERCONNECTED

Building a resilient and interconnected region that advances broad-based economic prosperity.

1. Strengthening supply chain resilience
2. Enhancing services trade
3. Promoting digital trade
4. Restarting cross-border travel
5. Enhancing infrastructure and transportation networks
6. Strengthening health systems
7. Implementation of the FTAAP Agenda Workplan
8. Support for the WTO



1a INTERCONNECTED

Strengthening Supply Chain Resilience

- **Strengthen supply chain resilience** and further implement the **WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement**.
- Support the **development of benchmarks** that are targeted and measurable for the third APEC Supply Chain Connectivity Framework Action Plan (“S-C-FAP”).

Enhancing Services Trade

- Continue APEC’s progress in creating an **open, predictable, and inclusive environment for services trade**.
- Strive to **raise performance across all services sectors by improving data** about those sectors and by broadening adherence to transparency and good-governance principles.
- Support sustainability by **promoting trade in environmental services**
- Continue to **develop guidance on promoting a healthy logistics sector** in the region.

Promoting Digital Trade

- Hold **trade policy dialogues** across key digital trade topics to highlight how regulatory frameworks can promote and facilitate more trade and increased interconnectedness.
- **Promote and expand participation in the *Pathfinder on Building Blocks for Facilitating Digital Trade* and the *Pathfinder on a Permanent Customs Duty Moratorium on Electronic Transmissions, Including Content Transmitted Electronically***
- Seek support to **expand APEC’s work on emerging technologies**, focusing on connecting hubs of innovation to export ecosystems to spur growth and economic development.

Restarting Cross-border Travel

- **Promote the importance of travel facilitation** of all business travelers in the region.
- **Modernize the traveler experience** through improvements and development in technology.

1b INTERCONNECTED

Enhancing Infrastructure and Transportation Networks

- Host a **Transportation Ministerial during SOM 2** in Detroit, focused on sustainability, promoting alternative fuels in aviation and maritime industries, and looking at opportunities to position APEC as a leader in adopting zero-emissions vehicles.
- Use lessons learned from the pandemic, along with digitization and greater innovation, to **make supply chains and freight transportation networks more resilient.**

Strengthening Health Systems

- Focus on **digital health, health security and pandemic preparedness, immunization programs, mental health, cancer prevention and control and regulatory harmonization and convergence.**
- **Address gender and health equity** in the context of health systems and strengthened pandemic preparedness and response.
- Work with the private sector to examine policy solutions to **strengthen care infrastructure, identify and address the burden of unpaid care work, and fully value domestic work.**

Implementation of the FTAAP Agenda Work Plan

- Advance discussions on **best practices in bilateral and regional trade agreements.**
- **Support inclusive and sustainable trade outcomes** with a focus on 'next-generation' trade and investment issues

Support for the WTO

- Advancing **implementation of MC12 [the Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference] outcomes**
- Supporting **capacity building** opportunities to help ensure WTO members better fulfil existing obligations.

2 INNOVATIVE

***Enabling
an
innovative
environment
for a
sustainable
future.***

1. Enhancing climate mitigation and resilience
2. Reducing disaster risk and improving emergency preparedness and response
3. Promoting the digital economy and enhancing digitization
4. Promoting food security, food safety, and agricultural biotechnology
5. Tackling environmental challenges
6. Fostering an enabling environment

2a INNOVATIVE

Enhancing Climate Mitigation and Resilience

- **Promote clean energy policies and technologies, climate adaptation and resiliency, and disaster preparedness response by endorsing updated and ambitious clean energy and sustainability targets.**
- Seek APEC support to **advance work on a Just Energy Transition initiative.**
- Host an **Energy Ministerial Meeting during SOM3.**
- **Lead efforts toward coastal resilience** and help facilitate regional transport decarbonization ambitions.
- **Adopt clean technologies and fuels** and identify/advance **green maritime corridors** to connect APEC ports
- **Support convergent standards and regulatory approaches**, the increased adoption of **electric and autonomous vehicles** and related infrastructure to accelerate the transition to a clean energy future.

Reducing Disaster Risk and Improving Emergency Preparedness and Response

- **Reduce disaster risk and prioritize equity in emergency management** programs by furthering the APEC Disaster Risk Reduction Framework.
- Hear from regional, local, and tribal/Indigenous communities, as well as women and others most vulnerable to the impacts of disasters, who play an important role in **reducing the unequal effects of natural disasters.**
- Host a **Senior Disaster Management Officials Meeting during SOM3** to advance climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, and equity in emergency management.

Digital Economy and Digitization

- Advance APEC's work on the digital economy and **facilitate inclusive innovation**, including in digital trade, digital assets and payments, data privacy, telecommunication networks, cybersecurity, digital health, e-commerce, and emerging technologies.
- **Host a "Digital Week"** to promote telehealth solutions, open network architectures, cloud computing, and the responsible development of digital assets and digital payments.

2b INNOVATIVE

Promoting Food Security, Food Safety, and Agricultural Biotechnology

- Share policies and best practices that **incentivize innovation and adoption of climate-smart agriculture technologies** and **commodities that support climate adaptation**.
- Focus on **innovation, science-based and risk-proportionate practices, and use of global standards**, to accelerate the pace of achieving sustainable, equitable, and resilient agri-food systems that deliver safe and nutritious products.
- Better equip agri-food system contributors to **increase technical capacities to build sustainable and resilient agricultural systems** and help create a safer and more traceable and robust food systems to contribute to supply chain efficiency.
- Host a **Food Security Ministerial during SOM3** focused on food security, sustainable productivity growth, promotion of innovation and science-based and risk-proportionate policies, and the role of agriculture in addressing the climate crisis.

Tackling Environmental Challenges

- **Improve waste management systems** and services, and facilitate greater reuse, recycling, and recovery of materials.
- Support efforts to reach the **APEC Roadmap on Marine Debris 2025** targets through innovative opportunities.
- **Promote trade in bioplastics and compostable plastics**.
- Support efforts to **address deforestation by combatting illegal logging and associated trade** and using technological innovation to support timber legality frameworks.
- **Combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing** through implementation of the APEC Roadmap to Combat IUU Fishing.

Fostering an Enabling Environment

- **Improve regulatory compliance** to allow goods and services to flow freely and reliably between APEC economies.
- Promote the **adoption and enforcement of sound competition laws** and create an **anti-corruption roadmap** to address the cross-cutting nature and impacts of corruption.
- Enable increased **consumer and producer access to science-based and reliable information on safe food and global trade standards** through consistent regulatory risk communication across APEC economies.
- **Seek consistent and well-regulated food safety conformance** that is based in scientific principles and risk.



3 INCLUSIVE

***Affirming
an
equitable
and inclusive
future
for all.***

1. Advancing gender equity
2. Strengthening SMEs
3. Addressing inclusion in trade
4. Expanding economic potential and opportunity through investments in infrastructure and workers
5. Elevating workers' voices
6. Engaging historically underserved and underrepresented segments of the population

3a INCLUSIVE

Advancing Gender Equity

- **Prioritize equity and tap into the talent of women, girls, and gender-diverse persons of every background and in all their diversity.** Ensure equal opportunities across health, education, science and technology, and economic spheres.
- Engage economies, civil society, and the private sector to **advance policies which focus on enhancing protections for women** while creating a pipeline to high quality, decent work, including through entrepreneurship and business ownership.
- **Highlight the importance of a strong middle class**, which allows risk-taking, “incubates” entrepreneurs, and reduces social barriers for women and minority-owned businesses.
- **Mainstream gender across APEC’s sub-fora and work**, including in areas like agriculture, customs, infrastructure, and STEM fields.
- Elevate discussion on **inclusion in the digital economy** and the **gender/climate nexus**, including the role of technology in an inclusive clean energy economy.
- Emphasize the importance of **women’s leadership and participation in all sectors.**
- Host a **Health Ministerial in SOM3** focused on gender equity in health and the economy as well as in pandemic preparedness and response and advance APEC’s work on “Healthy Women, Healthy Economy.”

3b INCLUSIVE

Strengthening SMEs

- **Grow the resilience, diversity, and number of SMEs** to increase prosperity and improve inclusivity in APEC and promote broader SME economic engagement.
- **Reduce barriers to SMEs in the digital economy** through human capital development, strengthening trade promotion services, promoting interoperability of data privacy regimes, and standardizing digital rules.
- **Reduce barriers to SMEs in the e-commerce market** through logistics improvements and streamlining trade procedures.
- **Integrate SME and equity-related workstreams**, including through a joint session of SME Ministers and the High-Level Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy.
- **Host the SME Ministerial in SOM3** focused on expanding access to cross-border e-commerce; promoting a level playing field for SMEs; strengthening MSMEs' green transitions; and advancing an initiative related to the intersection between women-operated businesses, SMEs, and global value chains.

Addressing Inclusion in Trade

- **Better understand how some communities may be disproportionately impacted by the benefits that trade can provide.**
- Identify **new ways to engage all relevant stakeholders**, to better target trade policy outcomes.
- **Advance the FTAAP work on inclusion and multi-stakeholder engagement**
- Host the **16th Conference on Good Regulatory Practices**
- Explore themes of how digital tools, including through digital trade, can support inclusivity objectives.

Expanding Investment in Infrastructure and Workers

- **Create the conditions for a more productive and inclusive labor force** by using targeted public expenditures and supporting policies to invest in high-quality infrastructure, promote workforce development, and facilitate the participation of workers who have traditionally faced barriers to entry to the labor market.

3c INCLUSIVE

Elevating Workers' Voices

- **Elevate workers and their voices in setting economic policy throughout the region.**
- **Increase APEC's outreach to existing and new stakeholders** to reduce barriers to participation in APEC, helping disadvantaged groups and smaller, less-enfranchised labor organizations engage in the policy process.
- **Promote a Just Energy Transition** that evaluates how workers are affected by climate change and occupational safety and health as a fundamental workers' right.
- Encourage **workforce training** to bring more workers into the formal economy and help current workers adjust to the rapidly changing digital work environment.
- Promote **upskilling and reskilling programs.**

Engaging the Historically Underserved and Underrepresented

- **Include and elevate the voices of underserved and underrepresented segments of the population,** aiming to ensure that economic policies are developed with representation from all communities, affording equitable economic opportunities to all people.
- **Mainstream inclusion** so that APEC's work is responsive to the unique needs of diverse groups.
- **Elevate the voices of Indigenous communities** to guide and improve a Just Energy Transition and improve climate resilience
- **Broaden multistakeholder engagement in trade policy consultations.**
- **Improve the enabling environment for SMEs** through anti-corruption and regulatory compatibility.
- Advance workstreams aiming to **increase women's economic participation.**
- **Address the impacts of regulation on marginalized and underserved communities**

2023 Calendar

DATES	VENUE	MEETING
December 2022	Honolulu, Hawaii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Senior Officials' Meeting (ISOM)
February 2023	Palm Springs, California	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Senior Officials' Meeting and Related Meetings (SOM1) • Finance and Central Bank Deputies' Meeting (FCBDM)
May 2023	Detroit, Michigan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Senior Officials' Meeting and Related Meetings (SOM2) • Transportation Ministers' Meeting (TMM) • Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting (MRT)
August 2023	Seattle, Washington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Senior Officials' Meeting and Related Meetings (SOM3) • Senior Finance Officials' Meeting (SFOM) • Senior Disaster Management Officials' Forum (SDMOF) • SME Ministerial Meeting (SMEMM) • Women and the Economy Forum (WEF) • Energy Ministers' Meeting (EMM) • Food Security Ministers' Meeting (FSMM) • High-level Meeting on Health and the Economy (HLMHE)
November 2023	San Francisco, California	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance Ministers' Meeting (FMM) • APEC Economic Leaders' Week (AELW)