

Round Table on Future Contours of India's Trade Policy organised by the Centre for WTO Studies, IIFT, New Delhi

(17-18 December 2013)

Centre for WTO Studies, IIFT, organised a Round Table on Future Contours of India's Trade Policy on 17-18 December 2013. It was organised as a part of year-long golden jubilee celebrations of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade. Senior officers of the government involved in trade policy, trade policy experts and trade economists participated in the round table.

Inaugurating the round table Shri S.R. Rao, Commerce Secretary, Government of India, highlighted the need to strengthen institutional structures at federal, State and local-levels of Government for formulating a coherent long term vision of India's trade policy. While emphasizing the need for securing level playing field in global markets, he pointed out that domestic investors and producers in India are constrained on account of fragmented domestic markets, inadequate infrastructure and regimented labour markets. These constraints adversely affect the efficiency of operations domestically as well as our economic interaction with other nations.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Surajit Mitra Director IIFT, was of the view that India's trade policy should articulate and project a comprehensive set of national interests which can be pursued on a sustained basis in the long term. "Given the diversity of policy objectives that can be secured through trade policy, it is imperative that the country establishes suitable institutional mechanisms to address this challenge", said Dr. Mitra .

Delivering the keynote address in the meeting, Dr. Harsha Singh, former deputy director-general of the WTO, was of the view that planning the contours of future trade policy requires approaching it in terms of removing constraints in two different but interlinked domains, one domestic and the other emphasizing opportunities abroad. "India needs to develop a strategy for transition towards the kinds of regulatory standards and disciplines which reflect the future, such as those encompassed in the policy regimes of the OECD countries", highlighted Dr. Singh.

In the absence of a long term comprehensive trade policy, "it is quite possible that other efforts to improve domestic capacities may have limited positive effects and India may be caught unprepared or even unable to maintain present levels of market access for its products", concluded Dr Singh.

During the technical sessions detailed discussions were held on different determinants of trade policy including challenges emerging from mega FTAs, demographic changes, natural resource requirements, trade through global value chains, investment, innovation and technology developments.

**ROUND TABLE ON FUTURE CONTOURS OF INDIA'S TRADE POLICY
(17-18 December 2013)**

**Venue: Inaugural Session- 2nd Floor Conference Hall, IIFT
Other Sessions- Nalanda Hall, IIFT**

17 December 2013

Time	Session	Speaker
10:00 am – 11:00 am	Inaugural Session	
10:00 am – 10:10 am	Welcome Address	Dr. Surajit Mitra, Director IIFT
10:10 am – 10:35 am	Keynote Address	Dr. Harsha V. Singh, former Deputy Director General WTO
10:35 am – 10:55 am	Inaugural Address	Shri S.R. Rao, Commerce Secretary
10:55am – 11:00 am	Vote of Thanks	Abhijit Das, Head Centre for WTO Studies
11:00 am – 11:30 am	Tea	
11:30 am – 12:15 pm	Providing context to the Round Table	Abhijit Das, Head Centre for WTO Studies
12:15 pm – 1:00 pm	What could be India's approach to trade policy including FTAs	Dr. V.S. Seshadri, Former Ambassador to Myanmar
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Lunch	
2:00 pm – 2:45 pm	TPP, China and other developments in Asia and India's trade policy	Dr. Amitendu Palit, Head (Partnerships and Programmes) Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore
2:45 pm – 3:30 pm	Natural Resources and trade policy	Dr. Nitya Nanda, Teri
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Tea	
4:00 pm – 4:45 pm	Demographic changes, Services and trade policy	Prof. Rupa Chanda, IIM Bangalore
4:45 pm – 5:30 pm	Global value chains and trade policy	Dr. Jayanta Roy

18 December 2013

Time	Session	Speaker
10:15 am – 11 :00 am	Inward and outward investment and trade policy	Dr. Biswajit Dhar, Director General, RIS
11:00 am - 11:30 am	Tea	
11:30 am – 12:15 pm	Industry interests and trade policy	Dr A. Didar Singh, Secretary General, FICCI
12:15 pm – 1:00 pm	Technology, Innovation and trade policy	Dr. K.J. Joseph, Ministry of Commerce Chair, CDS Trivandrum
1:00 pm – 1:30 pm	Wrap up	
1:30 pm -2:30 pm	Lunch	

Eminent Expert for the Round Table: Prof. Manoj Pant, JNU