



Abad delivers lecture on WTO SPS Measures in Tokyo

Anthony A. Abad delivered a lecture during the Workshop on World Trade Organization (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures held in Tokyo, Japan on 9 – 12 December 2008. Mr. Abad presented an overview of the WTO SPS Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreements as a framework for food safety regulations.

Officials of various relevant ministries from different countries in Asia participated in the Workshop to discuss the dynamics of international food safety regulations, especially in relation to the WTO SPS and TBT agreements and related agreements and international standards. The main thrust of the Workshop was to discuss trade in agricultural products in the Asian region, its impacts and the role of the WTO SPS Agreement, to share experiences of Asian countries in SPS measures to further facilitate cross – border trade, and to enhance regional cooperation in this field.

The Workshop was divided into 6 sessions: International Framework for Food Safety System; SPS Related Topics (I); SPS Related Topics (II); Food Safety Compliance and Roundtable Discussions; Sharing Experiences in SPS Measures; and Japan's Contribution to SPS Area and Evaluation. During each session, participants were able to obtain additional information specifically on the international framework for food safety, including Codex, SPS requirements on farming, issues on traceability, and the main activities of the WTO and food standards. Roundtable discussions were also held, discussing the impact of private food safety standards in global trade with food and agricultural products, including the sharing of experiences in SPS measures by China, Viet Nam, and Japan.

The Workshop was sponsored and organized by the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), in cooperation with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN).

WTO works to mitigate impact of economic crisis on trade

World Trade Organization (WTO) Director-General Pascal Lamy remarked that the WTO will soon be "issuing periodic reports on global trends in international trade and trade policy developments as part of our surveillance mandate. These reports will be factual and we hope will facilitate discussions among members on how to better cope with this crisis," in his speech at the United Kingdom's Department for International Development in London on 22 January 2009.

"Today it is clear that trade is one of the casualties of this economic crisis and that we run the risk that one of the engines of growth—in fact, one that is very important for many developing countries—stalls. With this worsening global economic situation in mind, the key question we have asked ourselves is how can we ensure that trade or rather lack of trade does not further exacerbate the negative impact of the economic crisis. And what can the WTO contribute towards mitigating the impact of this crisis, particularly on developing countries?"

"The reality is that the multilateral trading system is an insurance policy against protectionism. By investing further in this system, by strengthening it and increasing its robustness, the international community will be investing in an insurance policy against the deterioration of market conditions, such as protectionism. We all know that when the world decides to turn itself towards protectionism, the most vulnerable will suffer the most. It is therefore safe to conclude that the WTO insurance policy is even more indispensable for the poor at this juncture."

- Pascal Lamy, Director-General, WTO

Go to www.wto.org to read the full speech.

READ MORE

Asia CDM market grows; CaFiS, Inc. gears up for 2009

Asia's emerging dominance in the global carbon market is evidenced by its rapid growth of nearly 200% from 2006 to 2007. Currently, 65% of the total Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) registered projects is from the Asia Pacific region, representing roughly 80% of all preliminary Carbon Emissions Reduction (CERs) traded in the global carbon market.

CaFiS, Inc. and other players in the field gear up for 2009, starting off the year with CDM project

development with Mariwasa Siam Ceramics, Inc. and Pan Century Surfactants, Inc. Various project opportunities abound, in consonance with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Lito Atienza's declaration that the Philippines would forge ahead with climate change projects and commitments by aggressively pursuing CDM projects. The Philippines is currently ranked 8th globally in terms of CDM projects.

NEWS BITS

WTO launches new database on regional trade agreements

The WTO announced, in its press release on 14 January 2009, that it has launched a new database on regional trade agreements (RTAs) which contains all the notifications, links to the content of the relevant RTAs, legal provisions and information on the WTO's assessments of the RTAs. The full database may be accessed through the WTO's official website, www.wto.org.

International Conference on Competition to be held in Hamburg on April 2009

The Bundeskartellamt (or the Federal Cartel Office, an independent higher federal authority in Germany tasked to protect competition) will hold the 14th International Conference on Competition on 26-28 April 2009, the first to be held in Hamburg. The Conference will take an overall theme of "Dominant Companies - The Thin Line between Regulation and Competition Law."

The Conference, which has been organized by the Bundeskartellamt every other year since the early 1980s, is a highly renowned event in the international realm of competition law. The participants from different countries are invited from the fields of competition law practice and jurisprudence, academe, politics, business and international organizations to discuss competition issues of international importance.

UN Climate Change Conference to be held in Copenhagen on December 2009

The year 2009 will be topped off with the 15th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark on 07-18 December 2009. The goal of the Conference is to establish a global climate agreement to take effect after 2012, when the first commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol lapses, effectively deciding the future of the carbon market post 2012.

The Conference proposed outcome is to provide clarity on four key issues: first, clarity on the emission reduction targets that industrialized countries will commit to; second, clarity on the nationally appropriate mitigation actions that developing countries could undertake; third, defining stable and predictable financing to help the developing world reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the inevitable effects of climate; and finally, identifying institutions that will allow technology and finance to be deployed in a way that treats the developing countries as equal partners in the decision-making process.

Participation in the Conference is restricted to duly nominated representatives of the parties of the UNFCCC, observer States, accredited observer organizations and accredited press/media.

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