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TRTA 2 holds trade strategy and negotiations consultation workshops

The Trade Related Technical Assistance Project 2 (TRTA 2), a joint project of the European Union and the Republic of the Philippines, conducted consultation workshops this month to discuss and gather stakeholder feedback on RP trade strategy and negotiations framework draft documents that are being prepared with the assistance of TRTA 2.

The workshops were divided into three sessions: one for civil society organizations held last 18 June; another for concerned government agencies held on 21 June; and the third for the business sector conducted on 24 June. Among those who attended the first workshop were representatives from the labor sector, development organizations and other non-governmental organizations, while the second workshop was participated in by representatives from the National Economic Development Authority, different bureaus under the Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Agriculture, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Foreign Affairs, Tariff Commission, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Philippine International Trading Corp., and other agencies concerned. Participants in the third session included garment exporters, manufacturers and outsourced services providers.

TRTA 2 was launched in early 2009 by the NEDA and the European Commission with the aim of enhancing the capacity of concerned government agencies and other stakeholders for RP's better integration into international trade systems. Its overall objective is to support poverty reduction through enhanced trade and increased exports. Atty. Anthony Amunategui Abad (*photo on right*), TRTA 2's Key Expert for Trade Policy and Export Development, served as facilitator for the three workshops.



Asia holds 5th forum on clean energy

The 5th Asia Clean Energy Forum 2010 was held from 22 to 25 June at the ADB Headquarters in Pasig City. The event gathered policymakers, representatives from the private sector and non-government organizations across the continent to discuss issues and concerns regarding clean energy development.

This year, the forum focused on "Meeting the Technology Transfer Challenge" and aimed to push policy and finance practices that best respond to the challenges facing clean energy. In particular, the forum explored the following: 1) ways of scaling up the process of technology transfer and diffusion; 2) best practices in and around Asia; and 3) effectively linking clean energy projects to financing sources.

Participants to the 5th Asia Clean Energy Forum included stakeholders from both public and private sectors, representatives from banks and investment funding organizations, environmental regulators, academe, development organizations, and clean energy project developers and service providers such as CaFiS, Inc.

NEWS BITS

EU calls for removal of protectionist measures

The European Union recently called on its major trading partners to remove trade restrictive measures that were introduced during the economic downturn, as it reported nearly 280 of these measures that have been put in place by the 30 economies covered.

The report was based on 18 months of monitoring, from October 2008 to April 2010, and cites restrictions ranging from classical trade barriers such as tariff increases and import bans to other discriminatory and 'behind-the-border' policies. A major concern was that many of these new barriers are easily becoming permanent trade measures.

"An exit strategy from protectionism," is what is needed, according to EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht, to provide the necessary boost to global recovery. Reportedly, less than 20 protectionist measures have expired or have been removed between November 2009 and April 2010 despite signs of recovery seen during this period. Read the published report on <http://trade.ec.europa.eu>.

ASEAN works on customs transit system

ASEAN's new system for the seamless movement of goods within the region recently gained in-principle endorsement at the 19th meeting of the organization's Directors-General of Customs held in Phuket, Thailand. The ASEAN Customs Transit System or ACTS is an automated system to be implemented by ASEAN member states to synchronize and monitor goods being transported within the region using uniform documentation. The development of the ACTS was stipulated in the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Goods in Transit. A technical working group will be formed to work on its technical and operational aspects.

World trade value up 25% in Q1 2010

According to a trade statistics report by the World Trade Organization early this month, global merchandise trade value was 25% higher in the first quarter of this year compared to that in the same period of 2009. An increase of 27% was seen in world exports, while imports also rose at 24%, based on year-on-year quarterly comparisons. Go to <http://www.wto.org> to view the full report.

UPDATE

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