

Conference on "Multilateralising Regionalism"

Sponsored and organized by WTO - HEI
Co-organized by the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR)

10-12 September 2007

Conference Room II, WTO, Geneva, Switzerland

Background

The explosion of regional agreements in many parts of the world over the last decade and a half raises important questions about what this trend means for multilateral trade relations in an increasingly globalized world. There is much literature that seeks to explain and understand what motivates regionalism. But little has been written about the consequences for future trade relations of a continued splintering of trading arrangements into dozens of often overlapping and potentially inconsistent agreements. Is there a point at which this process finds its own saturation level? Or will the political and economic costs of increasing fragmentation lead to a reversal of regionalism?

Multilateralising Regionalism is a two and a half day conference dedicated to exploring these issues, and in particular, the relationship between regionalism and the multilateral trading system. The first two days of the conference will explore how regional trade agreements might be tamed through a multilaterally based approach to redefining trade cooperation. The final half-day will consist of a high-level discussion by policymakers and scholars of the issues teased out in the first part of the conference.

Programme (03.09.07)

Monday 10 September

08:30 – 09:00 Registration at WTO – Venue: CR11

09:00 – 09:20 **Welcome and opening remarks**

Pascal Lamy (Director-General, WTO)
Philippe Burrin (Director, Graduate Institute of International Studies)

09:20 – 09:40 **A brief introduction to the issues**

Richard Baldwin (Graduate Institute of International Studies)

Taming Tangles: Lessons and Challenges

Session Chair: Simon Evenett (University of St. Gallen)

09:40 – 10:40 **Multilateralising Regionalism: Relaxing Rules of Origin**

Michael Gasiorek (University of Sussex)

Discussant: Vera Thorstensen (Chairperson, WTO Committee on Rules of Origin)

10:40 – 11:00 Break

11:00 – 12:00 **The Information Technology Agreement: Sui Generis or Model Stepping Stone?**

Written by: Catherine L. Mann (Brandeis University)
Xuepeng Liu (Kennesaw State University)

Presented by: Chad Bown (Brandeis University)

Discussant: Alejandro Jara, Deputy Director-General, WTO Secretariat

Sponsors

The conference is jointly organised by the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI), Geneva, and the WTO Secretariat with the help of CEPR. It is financed by the generous support of HEI, the Swiss Government (SECO), the NCCR Trade project (IP3), the UK's Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR, formerly DTI), the WTO, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and CEPR.

- 12:00 – 13:00** **Fitting Asia-Pacific Agreements into the WTO System**
 Gary Hufbauer (Peterson Institute for International Economics)
 Jeffrey Schott (Peterson Institute for International Economics)
- Discussant: Joe Francois (Linz University)
- 13:00 – 14:30** Lunch (own arrangements)
- Session Chair: L. Alan Winters (University of Sussex)*
- 14:30 – 15:30** **Multilateralising Regionalism: Case Study of African Regionalism**
 Peter Draper (South African Institute of International Affairs)
 Mzukisi Qobo (South African Institute of International Affairs)
- Discussant: Cédric Dupont (Graduate Institute of International Studies)
- 15.30 – 16:30** **Multilateralising RTAs in the Americas**
 Antoni Estevadeordal (Inter-American Development Bank)
 Kati Suominen (Inter-American Development Bank)
- Discussant: Marcelo Olarreaga (University of Geneva)
- 16:30 – 16:50** Break
- 16:50 – 17:50** **Services Provisions in Regional Trade Agreements: Stumbling or Building Blocks for Multilateral Liberalization?**
 Carsten Fink (World Bank)
 Marion Jansen (WTO Secretariat)
- Discussant: Juan Marchetti (WTO Secretariat)
- 17:50** **End of First Day**
- Tuesday 11 September**
- Some Specific Issues***
Session Chair: Gary Hufbauer (Peterson Institute for International Economics)
- 09:00 – 10:00** **A Private Sector Perspective: Living with Regionalism**
 Michael Treschow (Chairman of the Board, Ericsson)
- 10:00 – 11:00** **Harmonizing Preferential Rules of Origin Regimes around the World**
 Antoni Estevadeordal (Inter-American Development Bank)
 Jeremy Harris (Inter-American Development Bank)
 Kati Suominen (Inter-American Development Bank)
- Discussant: Olivier Cadot (Université de Lausanne)
- 11:00 – 11:20** Break
- 11:20 – 12:20** **Beyond Tariffs: Multilateralising Deeper RTA Commitments**
 Richard Baldwin (Graduate Institute of International Studies and CEPR)
 Simon Evenett (University of St Gallen)
 Patrick Low (WTO Secretariat)
- Discussant: Sébastien Miroudot (OECD)
- 12:20 – 13:50** Lunch (own arrangements)
- 13:50 – 14:20** **Introduction:** Philippe Burrin (Director, Graduate Institute of International Studies)

Keynote Speech:

Jean-Daniel Gerber (State Secretary for Economic Affairs, Switzerland)

Session Chair: Alejandro Jara (Deputy Director-General, WTO Secretariat)

14:20 – 15:20 Multilateralising Regional Trade Arrangements in Asia

Masahiro Kawai (Asian Development Bank Institute)

Ganesh Wignaraja (Asian Development Bank)

Discussant: Inkyo Cheong (Inha University, Korea)

Some Systemic Issues

15:20 – 16:20 Legal Avenues to “Multilateralising Regionalism”: Beyond Article XXIV

Joost Pauwelyn (Graduate Institute of International Studies)

Discussant: Roderick Abbott (European Centre for International Political Economy)

16:20 – 16:40 Break

16:40 – 17:40 Multilateralizing ‘Deep Regional Integration’: A Developing Country Perspective

Bernard Hoekman (World Bank)

L Alan Winters (University of Sussex)

Discussant: Philip I Levy (American Enterprise Institute)

17:40 – 18:40 The Challenge of Negotiating PTA’s for Developing Countries: What Could the WTO do to Help?

Jim Rollo (University of Sussex)

Discussant: Claude Barfield (American Enterprise Institute)

18:40 End of Second Day

19:00 HEI Reception for the Geneva trade community (*venue HEI*)

Introduction: Alexander Swoboda (Graduate Institute of International Studies)

Keynote speech: *Coping with the Pandemic of Preferential Trade Agreements: What will work?*

Jagdish Bhagwati (Columbia University and Council of Foreign Relations)

Wednesday 12 September

09:30 – 10:00 Report to the high-level segment from the conference

Patrick Low (WTO Secretariat)

10:00 – 12:30 Roundtable open debate

Chair: Pascal Lamy (Director-General, WTO)

Academic panellists:

Jagdish Bhagwati (Columbia University and Council of Foreign Relations)

Richard Baldwin (Graduate Institute of International Studies)

Panellists from delegations:

H.E. Ambassador Arsene Balihuta (Permanent Mission of Uganda)
H.E. Ambassador Eirik Glenne (Permanent Mission of Norway)
H.E. Ambassador Mario Matus (Permanent Mission of Chile)
H.E. Ambassador Sun Zhenyu (Permanent Mission of China)

12:30

Closing Remarks

Pascal Lamy (Director-General, WTO)

The published output from the conference will include a short monograph summarizing the conference findings, together with a conference volume containing the papers prepared for the conference and discussants' comments. The conference volume will also contain a paper surveying the current situation regarding regional and bilateral trade agreements. This paper will be prepared by WTO Secretariat staff.

Organizers

Richard Baldwin (Graduate Institute of International Studies and CEPR)
Theresa Carpenter (Graduate Institute of International Studies)
Patrick Low (WTO Secretariat)
Paulette Planchette (WTO Secretariat)