Joint Working Party on Trade and Environment

THE OECD GLOBAL FORUM ON TRADE FOR 2009

4-5 December 2008

Background: This note provides background on recent discussions on the role of, and participation in, Global Forums and outlines the preparations for the 2009 Global Forum on Trade which will focus on trade and climate change and be organised in co-operation with the World Bank.

Financing: This GFT is in the TAD 2009-10 PWB. A voluntary contribution has been secured from the World Bank which will allow participation by a few developing countries. Further VCs are being sought in order to allow broader-based participation.

Context and co-operation: In addition to the usual co-operation between TAD and ENV, the IEA has been consulted.

Action: The document is submitted for discussion in the JWPTE with a view to soliciting ideas to develop the agenda for the Forum.

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THE OECD GLOBAL FORUM ON TRADE FOR 2009

1. This note provides background on recent discussions on the role of, and participation in, Global Forums and outlines the preparations for the 2009 Global Forum on Trade.

Background

2. The OECD Global Forums were reviewed in 2007-08 with the intention of strengthening their role as the principal mechanism for global relations after observership. One of the main outcomes was to establish a more functional link between the Global Forums and the Committees. To this end, Committees desiring to retain or launch a Global Forum beyond 2008 were required to submit a request to Council with mission statement and designated participants. The Trade Committee discussed and approved the continuation of the Global Forum on Trade in May 2008 [TAD/TC/M(2008)3].

3. The concept of the OECD Global Forums emerged in 2000 as a vehicle for enhancing the work of the OECD via policy dialogue with key non-Member economies. The Global Forums represent one part of the OECD Framework for Global Relations, and they are specifically designed to address issues of global importance that cannot be solved by OECD Members alone. The Mandate of the Trade Committee states that it will “engage invited non-Members in the analytical work and policy dialogue of the Committee as appropriate”¹. The OECD Global Forum on Trade has been a regular event since the founding of the Global Forums, and it is an important component of the Trade Committee’s global relations strategy. The Global Forum on Trade regularly brings together trade policy makers, academics, industry representatives and other experts from OECD and non-Member countries to discuss the opportunities for promoting trade relations among OECD and non-Member economies.

4. Provisional guidelines have been developed for the management of Global Forums [ERC/RD(2008)10/ANN1/PROV]. Among these are that the Committee should designate a Chair, be involved in setting the agenda and will be informed in advance of which ad hoc (non-designated) participants will be invited. The guidelines also encourage inviting the media as observers and making documents available on a dedicated website, as this can help raise the profile of the Forum and disseminate the key messages.

5. As part of the review of the OECD Global Forums, the Trade Committee has been asked by Council to submit to the ERC a note outlining the contribution of the Global Forum on Trade to the objectives of the Trade Committee (Mission Statement) as well a description of future designated participants. This note will directly contribute to Council’s decision whether or not to maintain the current list of Global Forums, including the Global Forum on Trade. Appended is the Mission Statement and list of designated participants, as approved by the Trade Committee at its 151st session in May 2008.

6. Previous GFTs focusing on trade and environment and held under the aegis of the Joint Working Party on Trade and Environment (JWPTE) were held in Delhi, India in December 2002 and San José, ¹ See C(2006)6, which was approved at Council’s 1128th session [C/M(2006)2, item 16].
Costa Rica in November 2005. The decision has since been taken to hold most of the Global Forums on Trade in Paris with the view to ensuring wider participation of Delegates.

The 2009 Global Forum on Trade

7. As foreseen in the 2009-10 Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), the theme for the 2009 Global Forum on Trade is *Trade and Climate Change* and is being organised in co-operation with the World Bank. It will provide an outlet to present the results of recent analytical work prepared in the JWPTE as well as studies by the World Bank on trade and climate change. The overall aim will be for experts to examine how trade policy and climate change policy can be mutually supportive, in concrete terms. One suggestion is to hold it on 10-11 June 2009, back-to-back with the 8-9 meeting of the JWPTE, which has the advantage of allowing the JWPTE co-Chairs to chair the Forum. The World Bank, through its Global Development Facility, has provided a voluntary contribution to finance participation which will allow participation by a few developing countries. The Secretariat is seeking further contributions to support broader-based non-Member participation in this event.

8. Following the information session on trade and climate change on the afternoon of 4 December, at the reconvened meeting on the morning of 5 December, the JWPTE will have a first opportunity to exchange ideas on the agenda. After this, the Secretariat will work in collaboration with the Bureau to further the planning of the Forum. Updates will be provided via the Green Trade Forum.
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<th>Global Forum:</th>
<th>The OECD Global Forum on Trade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Approved by:</td>
<td>The Trade Committee, 6 May 2008 [TAD/TC/M(2008)3]</td>
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**Mission Statement:**

- The Global Forum on Trade plays an important role in forwarding the Trade Committee’s strategic objective to “improve understanding of the benefits and the costs of further trade liberalisation, so as to increase support for an open, rules-based multilateral trading system.” The Global Forum on Trade is the only regular venue sponsored by the Trade Committee to engage non-Member economies in support of this strategic objective. It is also an important venue for disseminating analytical work in support of free trade to policy makers in non-Member economies.

- Where relevant, the Trade Committee will use the Global Forum on Trade as an opportunity to partner with other OECD Committees to promote trade-related policy dialogue across policy disciplines at the highest levels of government.

- The Global Forum on Trade discusses issues that are critical to both Members and non-Members. The topics chosen for each Global Forum on Trade are precisely those global trade-related issues that cannot be solved by OECD Members alone. These topics are closely linked to the Trade Committee’s PWB, and the discussions that take place directly enhance the analytical work of the Trade Committee.

- The Global Forum on Trade provides an important venue for forging ties with trade policy makers and other stakeholders in non-Member economies. The systematic nature of these high-level interactions allows the OECD to build consensus around core trade issues. This meets an important need, as trade-related meetings held under the auspices of other organisations, such as the WTO, often focus on negotiations, implementation of multilateral agreements and dispute settlement.

- The Global Forum on Trade also affords the Secretariat the opportunity to listen and learn, and thus helps the Trade Committee to identify important “next generation” trade issues that may require new analytical work. This allows the Trade Committee to stay “upstream” of emerging trade policy issues.

**Designated Participants:**

| Designated Participants: | Regular observers to the Trade Committee (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Hong Kong, China) and overlapping groups of non-observer Accession (Estonia, Israel, Russia and Slovenia) and Enhanced Engagement (China, India, Indonesia and South Africa) countries. Other key countries in the multilateral trading system, in particular those from South-East Asia: Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam. |

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2 See the Trade Committee’s Medium-term Strategy (TAD/TC(2007)2).