

# SINGAPORE TRADE POLICY FORUM

Event Report

21–22 October 2019

**RSiS**

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

S. RAJARATNAM  
SCHOOL OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES



**NANYANG  
TECHNOLOGICAL  
UNIVERSITY**  
**SINGAPORE**

**Event Report**

# **SINGAPORE TRADE POLICY FORUM**

**21–22 October 2019  
Sheraton Towers Singapore**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Session 1: Counting the Cost of Economic Nationalism</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Session 2: Stress Testing our Systems</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Session 3: WTO Reform — What Does it Mean?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Session 4: Rules for the Digital Economy — A Stimulus to New Negotiations?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Session 5: Trade and Climate Change — A Clash Waiting to Happen?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Session 6: Globalisation — Endangered or Just Evolving?</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Programme</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>List of Participants</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>About the Centre For Multilateralism Studies</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>About the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies</b>	<b>39</b>

Report of a Trade Policy Forum organised by the Centre for Multilateralism Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Editors: Amalina Anuar and Evan Rogerson

This report summarises the proceedings of the event as interpreted by the assigned rapporteur(s) and editor(s) appointed by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this report. This workshop adheres to Chatham House Rules. Accordingly, no attributions have been included in this report.

## Introduction

---

The second Singapore Trade Policy Forum, held on 21–22 October 2019, confronted a world where trade wars are no longer a possibility but a damaging reality and where the assault on multilateralism has moved to a new level. As was the case in 2018, the forum brought together around 35 leading trade policy experts from government, academia, and the private sector to analyse the implications of the crisis, and explore solutions. Its tripartite composition encourages the holistic thinking that 21<sup>st</sup> century policymaking urgently requires.

This year, in addition to considering the immediate threats to the trading system, the forum looked further ahead to issues where progress is critical not only to trade but also to the future of international policy cooperation. These include rulemaking in the digital economy, reform of the WTO, the future of globalisation, and the intersection between trade policy and climate change.

This summary report of a rich discussion underlines the urgency and complexity of the problems. While participants approached these from a range of positions, they all converged on the imperative need to maintain and strengthen the multilateral trading system, and also the important role that regional and plurilateral initiatives can play in this scenario. Leadership from Asia-Pacific economies is more important than ever before. The forum also highlighted the need for policymakers to keep up with the rapid pace of technological development and to deepen the dialogue with business.

The organisers would like to thank all participants for their active and thoughtful contributions, and in particular those who agreed to chair sessions and lead discussions. The forum was conducted as per Chatham House rules and this report does not attribute views to any individual.

We also thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, and the Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry for their generous support which made the forum possible. The comments reported here do not represent their views or those of RSIS. Lastly, we all thank H.E. Ms Jo Tyndall, the High Commissioner of New Zealand in Singapore, for hosting an excellent dinner for participants at her residence.

Evan Rogerson  
Adjunct Senior Fellow,  
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

## Session 1: Counting the Cost of Economic Nationalism

---

Since this time last year, trade disruption threats have become reality. Unilateral actions and reactions are bearing a negative impact not only on trade growth but also on global economic outlook. From agriculture to high-tech, the uncertain trading climate is affecting investment and confidence.

Is there an end in sight? How deep is the damage so far, and how long-lasting will it be? What is the next layer of threats? Is this a matter of political cycles or a fundamental shift in the politics of trade? How is business reacting? Is anyone having a good crisis?



*Ms Lin Shiumei, Vice President, Public Affairs, Asia-Pacific Region, UPS, Singapore, expounded upon the ramifications of economic nationalism to the forum as Mr Christopher Langman, Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, looked on.*

The US-China trade war has benefited few, if any, economies. Trade diversion has brought short-term gains, but long-term benefits are not apparent amidst growing investment and trade uncertainty. Even among the relative winners who have capitalised on trade diversion, digitalised businesses accrue different gains compared to those that are yet to undergo digital transformation. Meanwhile, the multilateral trading system (MTS) continues to face an onslaught

of economic nationalism-based protectionism and underlying issues. Economic nationalism has resulted in “behind-the-border weaponisation,” unprecedented in scale and scope. Governments and the MTS lack the capacity to tackle cross-cutting issues that trade policies alone cannot address, and geopolitical strife is sowing the seeds for the bi/trifurcation of the rules-based MTS.

Asia, in particular, has been caught in the confluence of headwinds on account of the US-China trade conflict. The costs of economic nationalism are mounting — companies are seeing falling production volumes, which have tapered even during traditionally popular consumer holidays such as Black Friday. Though businesses have attempted to mitigate damage, supply chain reorientations and relocations have experienced lags. However, despite these global value chain (GVC) mobilisations, the optimal route to best service China’s domestic demand and the broader Asian market remains at the forefront of business concerns. Strategies in play include creating new supply chain models, such as China+1, to fragment existing distribution models, as well as assisting longer-lasting business models to be more agile. One speaker questioned whether adopting asset-light approaches, entering joint ventures with Chinese companies, or even a China-for-China distribution model in light of export controls and the like, could be one solution. US businesses, meanwhile, are concerned that the operating environment will remain hostile, considering the failure of congressional lobby efforts that envisaged the curtailing of presidential actions on trade.

The trading climate and the new era of mercantilism, as was suggested by several participants, may get worse before it gets better. Across several regions, the march of economic nationalism is not yet stalled. In Europe, for instance, the incoming Director General for Trade of the European Commission has been given a mandate to strengthen European trade, complete with permission to impose sanctions on countries that adopt illegal protectionist measures and block the World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute settlement mechanism (DSM). It is possible, suggested one speaker, that the United States and EU are on the brink of a trade war. Meanwhile, trust within the US-China relationship, painstakingly built over decades, is at a historic low.

Political cycles, however, may yet turn the tide. Demographic changes could cause seismic shifts in the US 2020 election and usher a Democratic Party candidate into the Oval Office. This, in turn, could influence sentiments towards multilateralism and trade. Specifically, one speaker noted there will be 6 million fewer older, white voters — the traditional support base of the Republican party — and an additional 16 million young voters. Younger generations appear less anti-globalist and anti-multilateral. Instead, they are pre-occupied with, *inter alia*, challenging the hold of corporate power and big

business over governance, climate action, and social issues such as healthcare and college debt.

There are also indications that support for Democrats is growing, in light of the flipped constituencies in the last mid-term elections, and that farmers in the Midwest are turning against the Trump administration due to grievances over the US-China trade war. Democrat voters are more likely to back a less pro-tariff and more pro-trade stance; regardless of the Democratic candidate, whether Elizabeth Warren or Joe Biden. Greater support for multilateralism is probable — such as with a return to the Paris Climate Change agreement (PCCA) and friendlier trans-Atlantic cooperation. This could have spill-over effects on how Washington views trade. Greater inclination towards multilateralism notwithstanding, a blue White House administration would not necessarily reverse a tough stance on China; the China issue and related technological policies may nonetheless be handled more thoughtfully.

Despite such long-term optimism, other participants queried whether short-term fixes such as a US-China trade deal focused on correcting trade deficits would also alleviate stress on the MTS. Indeed, another speaker noted that overall, “Trump fought the trade war so badly that it is hard to focus on what the real challenges are”. There was, in this sense, a general acknowledgement that structural issues such as inequality and technology-related job losses bedeviling the US’ socioeconomic landscape are yet to be improved under the Trump administration. There is a need for greater coordination — perhaps through cooperation on platforms such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) rather than negotiation-based frameworks — to tackle these cross-cutting socioeconomic issues that go beyond the remit of the MTS and cut short this “era of seeking escape from realities that is played out in trade policy measures”. Without addressing the root causes of economic discontent, forging a sustainable new trade consensus seems elusive.

Perhaps more importantly, participants agreed that reconciling any differences on trade will be an uphill task should policies continue to be increasingly devised based on narratives of insecurity rather than facts. Exacerbating this trend is the commingling of economic and security policymaking, which leads to continued cycles of economic nationalism that run counter to business interests. Insecurity-based economic nationalism is felt more acutely in digital economy rule-making and other areas where there is “less fact-based progress,” said one participant. In the e-commerce space, issues of tax, compliance, and national security have become seemingly amalgamated, and inextricable in ways that the MTS lacks capacity to address. Yet neither decoupling nor a trifurcation of trade rules in the digital space will benefit American or Chinese businesses. Data localisation within China, for instance, and restricting flows of cross-border data will hamper the

development of artificial intelligence (AI) by Chinese technology giants, since data is pivotal to improving the responsiveness and complexity of algorithms. As the bi/trifurcation of rules systems continues apace, platforms for discussion should be developed to thrash out interoperability between systems to arrive at harmonised baselines for standards. More broadly, governments should distinguish what the real national security issues are and avoid conflating them with economics, wherever possible. “If we allow security to drive outcomes,” shared one participant, “trade will be sub-optimal.”

In light of such trends, correcting narratives through greater understanding and empathy may be necessary. Washington and others accuse China of failing to conform to rules on competition and investment, for instance. Yet one participant underscored that these rules are not followed because they do not exist at the multilateral level, though free trade agreements (FTAs) and regional trade agreements (RTAs) are trying to fill those gaps. Likewise, it is critical to understand the scenario in China, where its bifurcated customs system has been repealed after Beijing implemented best practices and disciplines in line with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). Beijing has, in this sense, implemented the rules, but struggles to ensure domestic compliance, though not for lack of trying. Yet US businesses view China as dedicated to exploiting legal and regulatory loopholes for profit-making. Better comprehension of Chinese society, shared one speaker, would thus be useful to ameliorate tensions and nurture cooperation. Understanding the demands of younger generations and how demographic shifts could affect the modus operandi of trade in the future is also food for thought. Considering the growing spotlight on ethics and environmental and social governance, more sustainable forms of consumption — including those delivered through trade — should be operationalised as a priority.



## Session 2: Stress Testing our Systems

---

The multilateral trading system was an early and easy target of the economic nationalists. The negotiating function was already impaired. Major players — whether initiating actions or responding to those of others — are applying WTO-inconsistent actions that are unlikely to be managed effectively by the DSM. Hopes and efforts have been invested in regional, plurilateral and bilateral alternatives, and in looking for new leadership. There have been positive developments, notably the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), but other structures of trade co-operation from APEC to the G20 have also run into similar problems.

Are existing regional and plurilateral arrangements optimal in filling the gap? How do they handle the trade-off between depth and breadth, and how can they contribute to rebuilding a more stable trade environment? Will RCEP help? Are sectoral initiatives the way forward, and can they be brought back into a broader context? How does one deal with the risk of intensifying the rich country/poor country divide?



*Tan Sri Datuk Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, Executive Director, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat, set the stage for the dialogue on the trading system's resilience.*

Economic nationalism is seeing an uptick as administrations grapple with the fallout of both great expectations and great disappointments. The assumptions made during the golden era of free trade have not materialised as envisioned. Faith in the continuing expansion of the WTO's original set of rules for a broader range of issues is being sorely tested. Though older forms of protectionism have generally declined, at least until recently, eliminating non-tariff barriers is a Herculean task, as behind-the-border weaponisation, for instance, continues to evolve. Likewise, social stability — a critical element for the popular support of free trade — has not been sustained. Chile's current situation drives home this point. As a poster child of free trade, the country is being rocked by inequality-driven protests that are inflected by anti-globalisation sentiments.

Against a backdrop of fractured faith in the benefits of free trade, a pressing issue is the unwillingness, inability, and the lack of readiness of major powers to lead. Loss of US leadership in particular, concurred participants, is troubling. Some questioned whether the sustainability of an open MTS depends on the return of US leadership. If so, what can be done to incentivise Washington to take the reins once more? Others further queried what the future MTS with greater US leadership might look like, (i) will it be a return to familiar modes of US leadership; or (ii) will the MTS require a new leadership formula with the US backed by a coalition?

In light of aforementioned developments, other economies have increasingly turned towards several strategies. First, according to one speaker, countries are attempting to strengthen the rules-based MTS without either US or Chinese participation. The concept of “concerted open plurilateralism” in and of itself is not novel, but what is new is small and medium-sized economies undertaking such efforts without major power participation. Presumably, being side-lined from advancing international trade agreements could incentivise major powers to come back to the negotiating table rather than undertaking measures outside of established rules. Second, certain countries have applied retaliatory measures against economic nationalism. Yet, the overarching question is whether these tactics will be effective in defending against, and countering populist campaigns that both display and exploit a poor understanding of the interdependencies of international trade, and its positive-sum nature. Third, certain countries are creating new markets with less thought given to rule-making and the rules-based order, such as with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

One speaker underscored the need to expand efforts in reinforcing the MTS, with or without major power involvement. Simultaneously, defensive plays against economic nationalism should not devolve into a tit-for-tat that wreaks further havoc on the rules-based MTS. This could be done by devising restrictions on retaliatory measures, as well as ensuring that FTAs are consistent with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Article 24.

A rules-based system should be developed to incentivise China to closely adhere to this system, in addition to the further incorporation of that system into the BRI project. Despite the geopolitical backlash against the BRI and its operationalisation, it is filling the vacuum for infrastructure financing needs and even rolling out greater digitalisation of trade through the Electronic World Trading Platform (e-WTP). Nonetheless, it is plugging this gap in regions that are traditionally dependent on trade in goods and hence have less motivation to enact regulatory frameworks on, *inter alia*, the digital economy, investment, and competition. A coalition of the willing must step up, noted one participant, to ensure that rule-making and standard-setting within BRI-recipient areas are not monopolised by China and that local institutional infrastructure grows to become more multilateralism-friendly. Singapore's cooperation with China on judicial matters and infrastructure financing that aligns with the WTO rules-based system may offer pointers.

Looking further ahead, a more structured strategy may be necessary. Investing in and sustaining global public goods is a shared responsibility that should not be shirked. Meanwhile, in East Asia, which was hit hard by the WTO's trust and confidence deficit, boosting the membership of the CPTPP, as well as boosting the credibility of the RCEP, could also be beneficial. Without more depth and breadth in subsector rules, RCEP may not signal enough credibility to pull in other major powers' engagement. More broadly, there are overarching concerns over the value of RCEP, with several participants predicting that while tariff removals and some degree of liberalisation can be expected, the RCEP will fall short of the CPTPP and have, especially for behind-the-border issues, WTO+ provisions in breadth but not in depth.

Yet the virtues of RCEP, argued others, may not be in the realm of market access. Rather, as noted by one speaker, it follows in the footsteps of previous ASEAN agreements and regional institutions such as APEC. RCEP's utility is in broadening linkages between regional economic players; socialising India to adopt greater openness to supply chains, should it re-join the pact; reducing uncertainty, and information sharing. The perennial subject of market access, highlighted another participant, can be outsourced to other FTAs. The RCEP, however, may not match the CPTPP in this space and it does hold many provisions that mirror the CPTPP and thus should not be belittled. Still, there is space to upgrade RCEP standards going forward, such as in data and e-commerce, to heighten the quality of this RTA.

On an overarching level, regionalism and plurilateralism have, in this sense, thus far emerged as favoured solutions to the current international trade governance conundrum. Plurilateralism's popularity is understandable. It offers an exit option to those frustrated by the slow pace of multilateral deal-making, allowing governments to mobilise coalitions in existing forums.

Yet, there is an undeniable trade-off between membership and ambition, and participants agreed that plurilateral processes should, if and wherever possible, still lay the foundations for multilateral outcomes. Precedents do exist. The Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) that found its footing at APEC eventually made its way to a WTO-level adoption. Yet other provisions on fish subsidies in the CPTPP, for instance, have not made their way to multilateral talks on the same topic.

In this sense, plurilateralism should not take away from intensified efforts to defend the WTO. In the end, RTAs and plurilateral trading agreements (PTAs) can help fill some of the gaps as complements, not substitutes. The WTO remains the cardinal institution for rule consolidation, especially with regards to issues such as rules-of-origin (ROOs). The proliferation of FTAs and RTAs has translated into a noodle bowl, with most businesses continuing to use most favoured nation (MFN) rates due to the complexity of compliance within various frameworks. It is perhaps this unique and core function of rule-writing, suggested one participant, rather than negotiating market access, that the WTO should focus on. This could potentially mitigate the risk of consensus decision-making blocking entire negotiations under the single undertaking rule, since contentious issues — such as Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) that are not rules but timeframes — could be set aside for other talks. Likewise, participants questioned the need to negotiate, rather than cooperate, or to insist on obtaining consensus where unnecessary. Cooperation frameworks could be increasingly mobilised, since not everything should be negotiated. On this front, one participant wondered whether the ASEAN way of collaboration and cooperation could offer useful lessons. Others recalled the Information Technology Agreement, for instance, was not launched on a consensus basis. “The system seems to have,” noted one speaker, “unlearned those flexible variable geometries that produced MFN outcomes that benefited everyone.”

## Session 3: WTO Reform — What Does it Mean?

WTO reform is being talked up in generalities at summits, but what is behind the catchphrase? With its origins in the US-China clash, how can it make the multilateral system more effective and credible? The agenda so far is largely a response to US positions; is this a basis for broad agreement or another source of division? Are the right questions being asked, and is the process fit for purpose? Paradoxically, much of the debate on multilateral reform is taking place either outside the WTO or plurilaterally. How can more structured discussions be extended to include the whole WTO membership?

Dispute Settlement is the most urgent challenge, with the Appellate Body (AB) on the brink of collapse. Special and differential treatment (SDT) is increasingly divisive. Besides these acute problems, we need to think about decision-making in the WTO and the future of multilateral negotiation. Is the WTO reform code for a two (or more) tier system? Or competing systems grouped around competing powers?



*Mr Ho Meng Kit, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Business Federation, spoke on the private sector perspective while Mr Merle A Hinrich, Founder and Chairman, Hinrich Foundation, listened on.*

The WTO's chronic ills have persisted for years. It is, however, US-China tensions — and perceptions of the WTO being out of sync with geopolitics and geo-economics — that have brought issues of SDT, the AB crisis, and decision-making to the fore. Reform agendas are broad and require alterations both at the membership and systemic levels, yet all items have a degree of politicisation that could hobble the speed and scope of institutional change.

SDT is, for instance, self-declared for various reasons. Countries adopting the SDT label can be grouped into three categories. The first group constitutes countries that have found themselves unable to engage effectively in international trade. The removal of flexibilities and shoehorning of a one-size-fits-all model could draw immense backlash, considering these countries generally view WTO membership as unhelpful and as a policy space constraint. Meanwhile, the second set of countries applying SDT comprise those that have emerged as major economic players or price-makers. Though the principle of SDT is important to them and it will not be easily yielded, this group does not insist on retaining SDT to the same extent as the first group. Finally, the third group comprises smaller economies actively participating in international trade but as price-takers.

Distinguishing who is deserving of SDT is a political exercise that will always be contested and hence, mire discussions in potential deadlock. One speaker suggested it is what countries actually do rather than what they declare themselves to be, which is actually of significance. More attention should thus be given to trade measures that weaken the MTS, regardless of the author's level of economic development. Abstaining from use of SDT will likely be made on a voluntary, case-by-case basis and should rely on pragmatism, with ongoing talks necessary to ensure a more sustainable SDT design. A more constructive conversation would be on policies to mitigate evasion of the WTO commitments through SDT — and more broadly on noncompliance and transparency, since there is a lack of self-reporting on what trade policies are in play across the membership.

In the short term, however, the most pressing reform issue remains the potential AB collapse in December 2019. Many participants concurred that the deadlock in the DSM boils down to a double bind faced by the AB. On the one hand, it is accused of overstepping its intended boundaries with its activism, at times overshadowing the WTO membership's rule-making role. Indeed, the initial expectation when the DSM was established was that a significant number of cases would not be advanced to the AB. Yet, on the other hand, the membership has largely failed to negotiate new or revised rules, leaving the field to the AB, despite views by some that the AB exacerbates rather than alleviates tensions stemming from trade disputes.



Furthermore, tensions between WTO members that should be resolved through negotiation are often directed towards the AB, which is not equipped to handle trade tensions that are also geopolitical in character because the WTO executive is weak. In some senses, the AB reform is essentially an issue between the Anglo-Saxon legal tradition and others. This is due not only to systemic differences, i.e., between Common Law and Roman Law approaches, but also because of the distinction between countries that implement rule of law versus rule by law at both the international and domestic level. The former implies abiding by both the spirit and the letter of the rules-based order, whereas the latter does not. It is this disparity that fuels grievances concerning free-riding and unfair competition.

For some participants, one solution to the AB deadlock would be to reduce the adjudicatory influence within the WTO since the interpretive space provided within negotiated rules — a defining feature that allows for flexibilities — is being eroded by judicial interpretations. Meanwhile, others highlighted that it is abuse of the system, rather than the system itself that is the problem. Previously, the DSM has been used to strategically push certain provisions during negotiations. As noted by one participant, adjudication is a useful mechanism for building trust within the MTS. Compliance, however, can be obtained through means other than the DSM and there may be a need for a system wherein checks on the WTO DSM exist. Presently, there is no recourse for members in respect of AB adjudications because of the lack of a feedback mechanism between legislation and litigation. However, none of these points offer an immediate solution to the AB's looming paralysis. One participant questioned whether adopting the joint EU and Canadian proposal to have a shadow AB — one that mirrors the existing system — would be viable, considering Washington's reservations. Others pointed out that while these proposals could be useful, plurilateral reform efforts require wider multilateral buy-in and consolidation considering this is a *multilateral* trading system.

Over the longer term, decision-making remains an unresolved reform agenda. An expanded membership, the increasing complexity of trade issues, and the consensus and single undertaking principles, translate into long drawn-out negotiations. While some benefits can be derived from these processes, such as enabling trade-offs and protection for both small and large economies, some participants again questioned the need to obtain consensus where it may not be necessary, e.g., to launch plurilaterals. At the multilateral level, however, options are more limited. For instance, consensus would be required to use voting in lieu of consensus, which reduces the viability of that or other alternative modes of decision-making and also the chances of the WTO updating the multilateral rules as the need arises. Reform efforts at the multilateral level may not receive traction in the immediate future. "Timing," pointed out one participant, "is everything." This does not mean that nothing

is possible. The gap between the establishment of the GATT and the Uruguay Round agreement was 47 years, during which incremental progress occurred without consensus and governments became increasingly interested in market-oriented economic systems in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse. The current environment, however, is not the most conducive for coordinated change to recover, repurpose, and reorient the organisation. It is this reality, noted one participant, which has rung the alarm bells for some in the private sector, who see the WTO as a "bankrupt" organisation that is increasingly irrelevant.





*Professor Ralf Emmers, Dean, RSIS, and President's Chair in International Relations, Nanyang Technological University, delivered the welcome remarks at the second Singapore Trade Policy Forum.*



*(L-R) Associate Professor Alan Chong, Acting Head, and Evan Rogerson, Adjunct Senior Fellow, both from the Centre for Multilateralism Studies, had a friendly chat with Ambassador Barry Desker, Distinguished Fellow, RSIS, on the sidelines of the forum.*



*Forum participants engaged in lively discussions during a coffee break.*



*Mr Luke Goh, Deputy Secretary (Trade), Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore, addressed participants during the luncheon talk.*



*His Excellency Bruce Gosper, High Commissioner of Australia to Singapore, spoke on economic nationalism.*



*Mr Vangelis Vitalis, Deputy Secretary (Trade and Economic), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand, addressed the forum on the state of trade in the region.*





*Forum participants kicked off a series of intense discussions on the future of the multilateral trading system on the first day.*



*Singapore Trade Policy Forum participants posed for a group photo before launching into two days of fruitful dialogue.*

## Session 4: Rules for the Digital Economy — A Stimulus to New Negotiations?

---

Digital transformation is rapidly changing the economic landscape across Asia-Pacific. Can the trading system be revitalised to adapt to the pace of technological progress in a digital world economy? Trade agreements have so far only scratched the surface of the issues that governments and businesses are facing — from data and the use of artificial intelligence (AI), to tax policy, content regulation, and cyber security.

Reluctance in some quarters to engage multilaterally on digital issues in the WTO has led to plurilateral approaches. Efforts to fashion rules for the digital economy have been made in the CPTPP, USMCA, and most recently, the US-Japan bilateral agreement. What do these agreements mean for existing trade regimes and a future agenda for cooperation between governments and the private sector? In the 1990s, the WTO Agreement on Basic Telecommunications required substantial work between trade ministries and other government entities on issues like access and competition. Are new models for cooperation required for access to broadband and connectivity, along with trade rules?



*Mr Antony Cook, Asia Regional Vice-President and Chief Legal Counsel for Corporate, External, and Legal Affairs, Microsoft, elaborating upon the prospects of digital trade rules.*

Updating the multilateral rulebook for the digital age faces two main challenges, namely, (i) the traditional issue of contending visions of governance; and (ii) the governance challenge of the impact of new technologies.

Not all dimensions of digital trade governance see contestations. General consensus exists on certain provisions, such as e-signatures and spam-combating measures. It is also expected that the WTO e-commerce moratorium on customs duties will be renewed in December 2019. However, these are inadequate in providing a robust regulatory regime for a broad number of beneficiaries including the global manufacturing and services industry, small and medium enterprises, and e-commerce and digital platforms.

There are several aspects to the e-commerce debate, namely, (i) should it be approached from a services or intellectual property perspective; or (ii) an entirely different strategy altogether? Still, contestations are perhaps more salient in the data-heavy digital trade rules space. The discussion brought forth many questions, including on whether data actually crosses borders, given its intangibility. Similarly, how can the likeness of products be determined given intangible content, and hence arguments for violations of MFN or national treatment be made? Other queries were also made on distinguishing tariffs versus domestic taxes on digital products and services, given the spotlight on digital taxes recently. Competition rules may also require updating in tandem, due to the seeming oligopolisation of data by a handful of big tech companies.

Less interoperability may be achieved in particular dimensions, such as in data regulation, considering data's importance to technological progress and hence geopolitical influence. This positions it under the overlapping jurisdictions of both economic and national security interests, exposing this dimension of the digital economy to greater likelihood of protectionism and fragmented regulatory frameworks. One speaker underscored that data localisation measures, a popular non-tariff barrier (NTB), was misguided and far from economically beneficial. Only a narrow band of data is considered personal, for instance, which negates the need for extensively onerous and far-reaching privacy-related regulatory infrastructure. Meanwhile, cutting-edge technologies pivotal to technological supremacy such as AI and data analytics rely on access to high-quality and diverse datasets that necessitate the propagation, aggregation, and combination of data over multiple jurisdictions. As the e-commerce equivalent to tariffs and quotas, data localisation undercuts progress in these fields, in addition to raising issues of market access and level playing fields.

Such ambiguities and politicisation have not yet halted attempts to distinguish valid public policy goals and devise trade rules that can better serve businesses in the digital era. E-commerce and digital trade have specific chapters in RTAs

such as the CPTPP. These have been replicated and updated elsewhere in an iterative process, such as in the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), and the US-Japan Digital Agreement. APEC has also done significant work and may provide an opportunity to further develop ideas. Most recently, the emergence of negotiations on the Digital Economic Partnership Agreement (DEPA), between Singapore, New Zealand and Chile may further develop ideas among like-minded countries that have interests in building and fortifying vibrant economies dependent upon the digital technology. It is clear there is a great deal of work underway in regional settings, away from the debates and challenges evident in the multilateral setting, where trade-offs between old and new issues, and a desire to thwart progress has made it difficult for the WTO to proceed in a meaningful way.

These developments may, suggested participants, contain both negative and positive implications. Concerns are rife that regulatory coherence and interoperability may not be forthcoming, despite the fact that these are critical for digital growth. Some suggested that the challenges posed bigger issues for smaller firms than large companies already competing globally. While unsaid, it did not appear likely that a major multilateral agreement on the digital economy is likely in the short term, although prospects for something coming out of the plurilateral discussions in Geneva may be evident by the next WTO ministerial conference. Various reasons can be attributed to this - ranging from debates on sovereignty and trust, to the underlying issues of how data flows should be treated. It was also pointed out that some see a variety of possible models that could be utilised, including building on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) as well as regulatory provisions from the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreements.

It was also pointed out that e-commerce flourished both in spite of and possibly on account of absent rules. Despite the fervour for creating digital economy regulations, recent history raises doubts over the need to invest resources to create multilateral rules, particularly when the latter might not actually provide businesses with greater certainty (e.g., policies for the mandatory disclosure of source code, and other carveouts on public policy grounds). Several participants thus queried if rulemaking should be delayed until there is agreement on what should and should not be protected, i.e., receive carveouts. It is also unclear whether a new overarching set of regulations is required for the digital economy. Regulatory needs could instead be served by separate mechanisms addressing specific issues. Activities involving AI, for instance, might be regulated through separate mechanisms for intellectual property, data, and cyber security among others.

Nonetheless, several participants agreed on the potential positive contributions of these new digital plurilaterals, especially if their provisions

gain wider currency. It was suggested, for instance, that DEPA could become a building block for multilateral rules. A small and agile partnership that enables regulatory catch-up, DEPA also consulted various stakeholders such as privacy commissions and central banks to tackle the cross-cutting issues involved in digital economy governance. Other suggestions to create greater regulatory coherence could ostensibly involve enabling more interoperability, such as via mirroring or mutual adequacy recognition. This, along with the fleshing out of broader and deeper rules, could be undertaken in RTAs.



## Session 5: Trade and Climate Change — A Clash Waiting to Happen?

---

Issues surrounding the relationship between trade and the environment were widely debated a few years ago, but that discussion appears to have become dormant in the recent past. Yet public awareness and concern are on the rise. The consequences of global warming are starting to impact lives already. This trend will intensify, requiring governments to take more stringent action to curb carbon and carbon-equivalent emissions.

Regardless of whether such action will be sufficient or timely enough to avoid a climate-induced catastrophe, intensified efforts will surely raise tensions between trade policy and climate change policy. Governments will become increasingly concerned about “carbon leakage”. In the absence of an international agreement regarding the attribution of responsibilities for action among nations, or the establishment of an appropriate “border adjustment” arrangement, both trade policy and climate change policy will suffer. Indeed, some might even argue that the absence of effective policy relating to carbon leakage has resulted in governments taking less action to cut back on emissions than they otherwise might have done. Is a regime clash inevitable or can governments act to prevent it?



*Ms Mary Elizabeth Chelliah, Principal Trade Specialist, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore, spoke to the forum on the trade-environment nexus.*

A clash between trade and environmental policy is not inevitable, although participants acknowledged that politicisation and misunderstanding over how the two issues could be reconciled could frame the discussion as an impending conflict. At this stage, the tension between trade and climate change lies not in policy but in their implications. First, climate change is disrupting trade transport; ship loading at the Panama Canal had to be modified, for example, due to low water levels. Second, climate change impacts infrastructure that has yet to be modernised to reduce emissions or adapt to climate impacts. Third, climate change alters the viability of production in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.

While the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement resulted in the adoption of nationally determined contributions to keep the global temperature increase under 2 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and to strive for an increase of no more than 1.5 degree Celsius, recent studies have concluded that current policies collectively fall short of these temperature goals. More action is necessary. Concerted open plurilateralism could more clearly align the trade and climate action regimes — particularly to reinforce current initiatives to put a price on carbon and reduce fossil fuel subsidies. The EU has recently imposed import measures on high-risk commodities such as palm oil. Certain questions nonetheless remain vis-à-vis the specific mechanisms to realise more sustainable development. Perhaps the most salient questions relate to the following, (i) how should carbon leakage be best dealt with; (ii) how should a level playing field be created for renewable energy; and (iii) how could coalitions be built in the current trading environment?

Low-carbon production methods and trade regulations are coming to the forefront as calls for more ambitious climate action grow. Some participants noted that a universal carbon price would be an optimal solution, though this is unlikely to be realised in the foreseeable future. A nearer-term approach could be to look at sector-based arrangements (e.g., steel, aluminium, cement) to provide tax-based incentives for producers to switch to low-carbon production processes. Yet, some participants noted that the Paris Agreement was outcome-based and “bottom-up” rather than “top-down” in nature. Countries pledged to take action consistent with their national circumstances, with top-down rules focused mainly on transparency and accountability. Could universal mechanisms, queried some, possibly violate the trust fostered through the Paris Agreement and undercut the probability of multilateral cooperation by forcing top-down standardised rules?

Subsidies to renewable energy sectors would be a second-best option vis-à-vis a universal carbon tax, according to one speaker, and would be preferable to a border tax adjustment (BTA). This was due to the contentions arising from implementing a BTA since there would have to be complete confidence in the

pricing system, as well as in the technological efficiency of production and the state of technology in countries to whom the BTA was being applied — all of which are contentious issues. It is also unclear whether BTAs are consistent with least trade-restrictiveness clauses, specifically in relation to process and production methods (PPMs). Overall, however, the BTA discussion still questions how to create a level playing field and whether — and to what extent — protectionism is acceptable in the service of the environment.

Jurisprudence would have to play a critical role in this respect. However, what would this entail and how would it be enacted? Would it be beneficial, for instance, to have a peace or permissiveness clause for environmental measures? Could such a proposal even gain traction at the WTO when the environmental goods agreement itself could not get off the ground? Other options might include using Article 20 in the subsidies and countervailing measures (SCM) agreement, as a mechanism to encourage green technology. As with the SPS and TBT, there is potential to create safe harbours within international and regional standards with an eye towards reducing carbon leakage, suggested one speaker, since “these measures allow regional standards to affect production choices without too much potential interest capture”.

Overall, however, the complexity of trade-based climate action indicates the need for domestic policy alignment and multi-level governance. At the national level, economic, environmental, and energy ministries need to coordinate better. Simultaneously, regional and multilateral agendas should reinforce climate action. Regional and other plurilateral initiatives could be the laboratory for new trade rules or standards in service of climate action, with the door left open for their subsequent adoption by other governments.

Rulemaking is important, but must be preceded by careful socialisation. At this point, the WTO’s Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) is viewed as “remarkably passive and disengaged”; its negotiating arm is moribund. The CTE meets functionally and insufficiently, according to some, without producing substantive content on climate change compared to other Bretton Woods institutions. One participant noted, for instance, that the WTO did not truly promote the use of renewable energy — previous conversations revolved around anti-dumping and abuse of subsidies, rather than enabling a global shift towards renewables. Without the CTE setting the agenda and gaining first-mover advantage, rulemaking could well be deferred and outsourced to the DSM — a move that would politicise the trade-environment nexus further, given all the grievances against the far-reaching and misplaced hand of adjudication in trade matters. Greater dialogue between the WTO and other international organisations, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, would not be amiss either. Yet in engaging with others — whether

at the national, regional, or multilateral level — policymakers should aim for socialisation of these issues as the first step. Waivers and peace clauses could be useful, for instance, but making discussions on trade-based climate action unnecessarily complex may have the opposite effect, creating fear-based ignorance and undercutting support for progress on the trade-environment nexus.

## Session 6: Globalisation — Endangered or Just Evolving?

What do our previous discussions tell us about globalisation, now and in the future? Apart from the trade war, have we seen a popular loss of faith in globalisation in some countries? To what extent has rising inequality and a sense of exclusion been blamed on intensified international economic engagement, and how robust is the link? Nationalist pull-back tendencies would suggest less reliance on global markets in the future and more reliance on national and perhaps regional ones. But how easy is disengagement, given the intertwined nature of the production and consumption relationships that have been built up over the last decades? Does the trade war presage delinkage between China and the United States, bifurcating the global economy and obliging many other countries to make economically costly choices?



*Visiting Associate Professor Razeen Sally from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, posed thoughtful questions on globalisation to the participants.*

A number of factors, both standalone and in confluence, are changing globalisation as we know it. The direction in which protectionism, the state of WTO reform, plurilateralism and regionalism, and the bi/trifurcation of the MTS progresses will undeniably influence the evolution of the *global* nature of the economy, productivity, and production. This is to say nothing, moreover, of the non-trade issues that interact and intertwine with trade, leading to the need for policymaking to tackle increasingly complex interfaces.

In today's economic climate, inclusive growth, technology, and national security are perhaps the political issues that require immediate attention vis-à-vis trade. The collision and reconciliation of trade and inclusive growth is paramount. Socioeconomic insecurity is rife, buttressing the proclivity towards economic populism, pro-protectionism movements and anti-globalisation sentiments. Significant structural shifts are also likely to become exacerbated with time, given the progressive march of technological innovation. Societies are confronting fears of automation-related job losses. While new jobs will enter the fray due to this same wave of technological disruption, it is unclear whether those displaced by technology will be the ones filling these vacancies without up-skilling and re-skilling efforts. It therefore remains to be seen whether further hollowing out of the middle classes can be prevented.

In the face of economic inequality and insecurity, it is more important than ever to maintain both openness and social safety nets. Participants agreed that the availability and accessibility of social safety nets, along with the tackling of structural economic issues, need improvement. Adjustment policies must expand beyond the ambit of trade to cover issues such as inflation, housing, education, and healthcare. Yet implementing such policies will be neither simple nor easy in both the immediate and more distant future. Structural reforms require fiscal and monetary space. Many governments are struggling, however, to achieve that flexibility in an environment marked by both economic hostility and uncertainty, as well as major demographic and technological shifts. Greater international coordination is also needed to tackle structural reforms to complement domestic policies. Attaining “just transition” towards a more sustainable socioeconomic future, however, remains an underdeveloped agenda on the multilateral stage.

In tandem with technological progress, the tensions emanating from an unstable economic-security nexus has heralded and continues to herald significant implications for globalisation. The changing face of GVCs in the economic landscape is testament to it. Grappling with the obstacles of technology, protectionism, and the splintering of trade regulatory regimes, business strategies have resulted in the fragmentation, localisation, and centralising/shortening of GVCs. US-China economic decoupling is weighing on production location choices, shifting supply chains.

Nonetheless, the future will not see a dramatic partitioning of the global economy due to an economic Iron Curtain. Rather, “death by a thousand cuts” is more likely through the layering of protectionist measures under the aegis of economic nationalism and neo-mercantilism. NTBs, for instance, will continue to proliferate — whether in the form of export controls, restricted entities’ lists, or otherwise. Considering the systemic root of conflict, with both Washington and Beijing playing power politics, the transition to a non-Trump administration will neither mark an end to such tensions nor halt the ongoing competition to write the rules for the global economy. While the world has moved to multipolarity, one participant observed, neither the United States nor China know how to conduct themselves in such circumstances.

Some regions will have more difficulties than others amidst this geopolitical tussle, but those same localities may also be conferred greater advantages. East Asia was hit hard by the US-China trade war due to its significant interdependence with both major economies. However, had the fragmentation of rules occurred in small African markets, highlighted one participant, businesses would not adjust. East Asia sits in a better position, since companies are cognisant that this region will be a focal point of growth. Small and middle powers should hence realise that they are, collectively, important enough to change the rules and take the initiative to do so within these future hubs of prosperity. Non-state actors too, especially in emerging markets, could further contribute to improved global economic governance. In particular, one speaker questioned whether cities could become more important players in furthering economic globalisation and sustainability, since GVCs are increasingly viewed as urban nodes.

Updating the MTS to better handle unfolding developments, whether in plurilateral or multilateral forums, is understandably a tall order, considering the sheer complexity of interlocking trade/non-trade issues. Participants hence noted that policymakers would be better served by breaking down these agendas into smaller clusters of related issues and tackling them consistently. In a similar vein, the WTO should return to its core functions and streamline its agenda to enact its mandate in global trade more coherently. Stakeholders are demanding actions from the WTO and now have the perception that the organisation cannot deliver. The WTO, suggested participants, should thus improve cooperation and coordination with other international organisations. This would ultimately free resources for the WTO to focus on its key agendas — adding value to the global economy through rule-making and adapting existing principles to new situations. This is to specifically enforce non-discrimination and national treatment, rather than delivering trade liberalisation which could progress faster in other institutional arrangements.



## Programme

---

Monday, 21 October 2019

TIME	PROGRAMME
08:00–08:30	REGISTRATION
08:30–09:00	<b>WELCOME REMARKS</b> <b>Professor Ralf Emmers</b> Dean, RSIS, and President's Chair in International Relations, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
	<b>INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS</b> <b>Mr Evan Rogerson</b> Adjunct Senior Fellow, RSIS, Singapore
09:00–10:45	<b>SESSION 1: COUNTING THE COST OF ECONOMIC NATIONALISM</b> <u>Chair</u> <b>His Excellency Bruce Gosper</b> High Commissioner of Australia to Singapore <u>Leads</u> <b>Ambassador Rufus Yerxa</b> President, National Foreign Trade Council, United States of America <b>Mr Stuart Harbinson</b> Senior Consultant, Hume Brophy, Belgium <b>Ms Lin Shiumei</b> Vice President, Public Affairs, Asia-Pacific Region, UPS, Singapore
10:45–11:00	COFFEE/TEA BREAK



11:00–12:45	<p><b>SESSION 2: STRESS TESTING OUR SYSTEMS</b></p> <p><u>Chair</u>  <b>Tan Sri Datuk Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria</b>  Executive Director, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat, Singapore</p> <p><u>Leads</u>  <b>Dr Shiro Armstrong</b>  Director, Australia-Japan Research Centre, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, Australia</p> <p><b>Ambassador Yoichi Suzuki</b>  Special Assistant to the Foreign Minister, Japan</p> <p><b>Mr Vangelis Vitalis</b>  Deputy Secretary (Trade and Economic), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand</p>
12:45–14:00	<p><b>LUNCHEON TALK</b></p> <p><u>Chair</u>  <b>Ambassador Barry Desker</b>  Distinguished Fellow, RSIS, Singapore</p> <p><u>Speaker</u>  <b>Mr Luke Goh</b>  Deputy Secretary (Trade), Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore</p>
14:00–15:45	<p><b>SESSION 3: WTO REFORM — WHAT DOES IT MEAN?</b></p> <p><u>Chair</u>  <b>Dr Patrick Low</b>  Fellow, Asia Global Institute, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong</p> <p><u>Leads</u>  <b>Ms Tan Yee Woan</b>  Dean, Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore</p> <p><b>Ambassador Shotaro Oshima</b>  Chairman, Institute for International Economic Studies, Japan</p> <p><b>Dato' Muhamad Noor Yacob</b>  Board Member, Malaysia Productivity Corporation, National Wages Consultative Council, Malaysia and former Executive Director, APEC</p>
15:45–16:00	<b>COFFEE/ TEA BREAK</b>

<b>16:00–17:45</b>	<p><b>SESSION 4: RULES FOR THE DIGITAL ECONOMY — A STIMULUS TO NEW NEGOTIATIONS?</b></p> <p><u>Chair</u>  <b>Ms Dorothy Dwoskin</b>  Principal, d2Strategies LLC, United States of America</p> <p><u>Leads</u>  <b>Mr Antony Cook</b>  Asia Regional Vice-President and Chief Legal Counsel for Corporate, External, and Legal Affairs, Microsoft, Singapore</p> <p><b>Mr Simon Lacey</b>  Vice President, Global Government Affairs, Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd, Singapore</p> <p><b>Mr Hamid Mamdouh</b>  Senior Counsel, King and Spalding, Switzerland</p>
<b>17:45</b>	<b>END OF DAY SESSIONS</b>
<b>18:30</b>	<b>BUS LEAVES FOR DINNER</b>
<b>19:00</b>	<p><b>DINNER</b></p> <p><i>Hosted by H.E. Jo Tyndall, High Commissioner of New Zealand to Singapore, at her residence</i></p>

Tuesday, 22 October 2019

TIME	PROGRAMME
09:00–10:45	<p><b>SESSION 5: TRADE AND CLIMATE CHANGE — A CLASH WAITING TO HAPPEN?</b></p> <p><u>Chair</u>  <b>Her Excellency Jo Tyndall</b>  New Zealand High Commissioner to Singapore, and former Climate Change Ambassador</p> <p><u>Leads</u>  <b>Mr Scott Vaughan</b>  International Chief Advisor, China Council for International Co-operation on Environment and Development, Canada and former President of International Institute for Sustainable Development</p> <p><b>Associate Professor Michael Ewing-Chow</b>  Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore, Singapore</p>
10:45–11:00	<b>COFFEE/TEA BREAK</b>
11:00–12:45	<p><b>SESSION 6: GLOBALISATION — ENDANGERED OR JUST EVOLVING?</b></p> <p><u>Chair</u>  <b>Visiting Associate Professor Razeen Sally</b>  Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, Singapore</p> <p><u>Leads</u>  <b>Mr Alex Capri</b>  Senior Fellow, NUS Business School, Singapore</p> <p><b>Mr Eduardo Pedrosa</b>  Secretary General, Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), Singapore</p>
12:45–14:30	<b>LUNCH</b>
14:30	<b>FORUM CONCLUDES</b>

## List of Participants

---

1. **Dr Shiro ARMSTRONG**, Director, Australia-Japan Research Centre, and Director, East Asian Bureau of Economic Research, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, Australia
2. **Mr Alex CAPRI**, Senior Fellow, NUS Business School, Singapore
3. **Ms Mary Elizabeth CHELLIAH**, Principal Trade Specialist, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore
4. **Ms CHIN Siew Fei**, Deputy Director-General, International Economics Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore
5. **Associate Professor Alan CHONG**, Acting Head, Centre for Multilateralism Studies, RSIS, Singapore
6. **Mr Antony COOK**, Asia Regional Vice-President and Chief Legal Counsel for Corporate, External, and Legal Affairs, Microsoft, Singapore
7. **Ambassador Barry DESKER**, Distinguished Fellow, RSIS, Singapore
8. **Mr Victor DO PRADO**, Director, Council and Trade Negotiations Committee Division, World Trade Organization, Switzerland
9. **Ms Dorothy DWOSKIN**, Principal, d2Strategies LLC, United States of America
10. **Professor Ralf EMMERS**, Dean, RSIS, and President's Chair in International Relations, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
11. **Associate Professor Michael EWING-CHOW**, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore, Singapore
12. **Associate Professor Henry GAO**, Associate Professor of Law, Singapore Management University, Singapore
13. **Mr Luke GOH**, Deputy Secretary (Trade), Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore (alternate: **Mr Peter GOVINDASAMY**, Dean, Trade Academy, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore; and Director (UNFCCC negotiations))
14. **His Excellency Bruce GOSPER**, High Commissioner of Australia to Singapore
15. **Mr Stuart HARBINSON**, Senior Consultant, Hume Brophy, Belgium
16. **Mr Merle A. HINRICH**, Founder and Chairman, Hinrich Foundation, Hong Kong
17. **Mr HO Meng Kit**, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Business Federation, Singapore

18. **Professor Locknie HSU**, Professor of Law, Singapore Management University, Singapore
19. **Mr Simon LACEY**, Vice President, Global Government Affairs, Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd, Singapore
20. **Mr Christopher LANGMAN**, Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia
21. **Ms LIN Shiumei**, Vice President, Public Affairs, Asia Pacific Region, UPS, Singapore
22. **Dr Patrick LOW**, Fellow, Asia Global Institute, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
23. **Mr Hamid MAMDOUH**, Senior Counsel, King and Spalding, Switzerland
24. **Ambassador Shotaro OSHIMA**, Chairman, Institute for International Economic Studies, Japan
25. **Dr Eduardo PEDROSA**, Secretary General, Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), Singapore
26. **Assistant Professor Kaewkamol PITAKDUMRONGKIT (Karen)**, Deputy Head, Centre for Multilateralism Studies, RSIS, Singapore
27. **Mr Evan ROGERSON**, Adjunct Senior Fellow, Centre for Multilateralism Studies, RSIS, Singapore
28. **Visiting Associate Professor Razeen SALLY**, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, Singapore
29. **Tan Sri Datuk Rebecca Fatima STA MARIA**, Executive Director, APEC Secretariat, Singapore
30. **Ambassador Yoichi SUZUKI**, Special Assistant to the Foreign Minister, Japan
31. **Ms TAN Yee Woan**, Dean, Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore
32. **Her Excellency Jo TYNDALL**, New Zealand High Commissioner to Singapore and former Climate Change Ambassador
33. **Mr Scott VAUGHAN**, International Chief Advisor, China Council for International Co-operation on Environment and Development, Canada; former President of International Institute for Sustainable Development
34. **Mr Vangelis VITALIS**, Deputy Secretary (Trade and Economic), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand
35. **Dato' Muhamad Noor YACOB**, Board Member, Malaysia Productivity Corporation, National Wages Consultative Council, Malaysia and former Executive Director, APEC

36. **Ambassador Rufus YERXA**, President, National Foreign Trade Council, United States of America, former Deputy Director-General, WTO

### **Centre for Multilateralism Studies**

1. **Ms Amalina ANUAR**, Research Analyst, Centre for Multilateralism Studies, RSIS, Singapore
2. **Ms Nazia HUSSAIN**, Senior Analyst, Centre for Multilateralism Studies, RSIS, Singapore
3. **Dr Tomoo KIKUCHI**, Adjunct Senior Fellow, Centre for Multilateralism Studies, RSIS, Singapore
4. **Assistant Professor Jikon LAI**, Centre for Multilateralism Studies, RSIS, Singapore
5. **Assistant Professor Su-Hyun LEE**, Centre for Multilateralism Studies, RSIS, Singapore

### **Observers**

1. **Ms CHAU Chung-Linh**, Programme Director, Committee on Trade and Investment, APEC, Singapore
2. **Mr Kevin Mark LEE**, Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore
3. **Ms Tessa SINCLAIR**, Second Secretary, New Zealand High Commission, Singapore
4. **Ms Kate SULLIVAN-WALKER**, National University of Singapore, Singapore

## About the Centre For Multilateralism Studies

---

The Centre for Multilateralism Studies (CMS) is a research entity within the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. The CMS team conducts cutting-edge research, teaching/training, and networking on cooperative multilateralism in the Asia Pacific region. The Centre aims to contribute to international academic and public discourses on regional architecture and order in Asia Pacific. It aspires to be an international knowledge hub for multilateral and regional cooperation.

The Centre's research agenda includes international and global forms, as well as expressions of cooperative multilateralism:

- **Economic Multilateralism**

Research areas include trade, monetary, and financial integration in ASEAN, ASEAN+3, South Asia, and Central Asia; evolving linkages between various Asian sub-regions and with countries/sub-regions outside the region; and developments in the global economic architecture to ensure complementarity between global and regional initiatives.

- **Diplomatic and Security Multilateralism**

Research areas include inter-governmental and non-official arrangements such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Six-Party Talks, the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific, and the like. Initiatives in defence diplomacy include the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM Plus, the Shangri-La Dialogue, and alliances.

- **International Political Economy**

The programme examines the interactions between politics and economics of particular countries, regions and the world. Drawn from both the fields of economics and politics, an international political economy perspective enhances our understanding of issues in the regional and global economy.

- **Temasek Foundation Series on Trade & Negotiations**

With a generous donation from Temasek Foundation, CMS organises two capacity-building programmes a year; an annual three-day training course for regional members of parliament and In-Country training courses for government officials. These workshops are carefully designed to help develop the human capital necessary to take full advantage of the opportunities unleashed by globalisation and international trade.

For more information about CMS, please visit [www.rsis.edu.sg/research/cms](http://www.rsis.edu.sg/research/cms).

## About the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

---

The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) is a think tank and professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. An autonomous school, RSIS' mission is to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia Pacific. With the core functions of research, graduate education and networking, it produces cutting-edge research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-traditional Security, Cybersecurity, Maritime Security and Terrorism Studies.

For more details, please visit [www.rsis.edu.sg](http://www.rsis.edu.sg). Follow us at [www.facebook.com/RSIS.NTU](https://www.facebook.com/RSIS.NTU) or connect with us at [www.linkedin.com/school/rsis-ntu](https://www.linkedin.com/school/rsis-ntu).





S. RAJARATNAM  
SCHOOL OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

**Nanyang Technological University**

Block S4, Level B3, 50 Nanyang Avenue, Singapore 639798

Tel: +65 6790 6982 | Fax: +65 6794 0617 | [www.rsis.edu.sg](http://www.rsis.edu.sg)