

INCLUSIVE TRADE ACTION GROUP (ITAG) – WORK PROGRAMME 2022-2024

Background

Following the March 2018 endorsement of the Joint Declaration on Fostering Progressive and Inclusive Trade, the Inclusive Trade Action Group (ITAG) was officially launched in November 2018 in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea on the margins of the 2018 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders Meeting.

Since then many ITAG activities have been successfully carried out under that workplans established for 2019-20 and for 2020-2022.

PROPOSED POINTS OF ENGAGEMENT 2022-2024

Our objective for the upcoming years is to deepen the work in the important areas that have been already worked upon and to explore new ones. In this sense, we propose to deepen the work on objectives 2 and 3 of the 2020-2022 work plan (above), specifically:

1. **Sharing experiences and best practices to develop inclusive trade provisions on SMEs, labour and environment, trade and Indigenous Peoples and to promote their use in bilateral, regional, and multilateral negotiations:**
 - The first activity will be focused on **MSMEs** and will be a webinar for sharing experiences and best practices on **MSMEs** trade provisions with the aim that officials from ITAG countries to discuss policies and what works/what doesn't.
2. **Resume the meetings of ITAG caucus at the World Trade Organization (WTO)**
 - i. Commit to work together to hold an annual ITAG event at the WTO public forum.
 - ii. Holding activities on the margins of or through the Informal Working Groups on Trade and Gender or trade and MSMEs: a concrete action could be rotational presentations at both IWG.
3. **SMEs and Responsible Business Conduct: Challenges and Opportunities**
 - Webinar to share experiences and best practices on standards, guidelines and principles of Responsible Business Conduct that have been endorsed, supported, or observed by the ITAG members. SMEs face specific challenges and opportunities in implementing RBC standards and this activity could be an opportunity to identify their challenges and successes in implementing RBC standards or practices.
4. **Other points of engagement of 2020-2022 to continue in 2022-2024 WP**
 - ITAG expansion: Identify opportunities to engage with other potential ITAG members amongst the CPTPP and APEC membership, as well as how best to advance engagement with other potentially like-minded WTO Members outside CPTPP and APEC.
 - GTAGA promotion: Promote the Arrangement and increase the number of signatories.
 - Three Year Review: Examine the effectiveness of the CPTPP Agreement with respect to sustainable development, gender, indigenous peoples, domestic regional economic development, SMEs, labour rights, the environment and climate change in preparation for a review.

- WTO 12th Ministerial Conference, 2022: Opportunity for ITAG Joint Statement and to gain more Participants in the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement

The objectives of the 2020-2022 work plan were:

- working together to better understand and communicate the positive impact of trade and trade agreements on all segments of society;
- sharing experiences and best practices in order to develop inclusive trade provisions (e.g., on women's economic empowerment, gender equality, indigenous peoples, MSMEs, labour, and the environment) and to promote their use in bilateral, regional, and multilateral negotiations;
- building a community of like-minded nations and advancing the principles of inclusive trade together in multilateral fora and among Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) member countries, including to establish an ITAG caucus in APEC, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and at the World Trade Organization (WTO); and
- supporting our efforts for a sustainable and inclusive global trade and economic recovery post-COVID-19.

Proposed points of engagement 2020-2022

The work plan was updated to reflect circumstances of COVID-19 and the need for increased virtual engagements. Key ITAG priorities defined were:

- **ITAG expansion:** Identify opportunities to engage with other potential ITAG members amongst the CPTPP and APEC membership, as well as how best to advance engagement with other potentially like-minded WTO Members outside CPTPP and APEC
- **Global Trade and Gender Arrangement:** Promote the Arrangement and increase the number of signatories
- Timely and strategic implementation of co-operation activities under the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement
- **Trade and Indigenous Peoples and Trade and Climate Change:** Consideration of further work to be undertaken, including the possible negotiation of new instruments.
- **Three Year Review:** Examine the effectiveness of the CPTPP Agreement with respect to sustainable development, gender, indigenous peoples, domestic regional economic development, SMEs, labour rights, the environment and climate change in preparation for a review in 2021.
- **WTO 12th Ministerial Conference, Kazakhstan, June 2021 (TBC):** Opportunity for ITAG Joint Statement and to gain more Participants in the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement
- **APEC 2021:** Opportunity for further progress on inclusive trade matters, including gender and Indigenous peoples.

Completed work to date

- January 30, 2019: Inaugural ITAG WTO caucus meeting in Geneva.
- March 5, 2019: ITAG officials presented at the Canada-sponsored APEC "Capacity Building Workshop on Women and Trade"

- March 2019: Inaugural ITAG officials and APEC ITAG caucus meetings on the margins of the APEC SOM1 meetings in Santiago, Chile.
- March 18, 2019: ITAG officials presented at the Canada-sponsored Workshop on Labour in Trade Agreements at the WTO in Geneva
- March 28, 2019: Second WTO ITAG caucus in Geneva.
- May 16, 2019: Ministerial meeting of ITAG in the margins of the APEC Meeting of Ministers' Responsible for Trade in Valparaiso, Chile
- June 27, 2019: ITAG seminar at the WTO on the linkages between agricultural trade and the sustainable development goals, sponsored by New Zealand
- October 8–10, 2019: World Indigenous Business Forum (WIBF), Vancouver, Canada; Meeting of ITAG officials and discussion on inclusive trade and Indigenous peoples.
- October 7–9, 2019: Second CPTPP Commission meeting in Auckland, New Zealand; Meeting of ITAG officials and promotion of Trade and Gender Arrangement to CPTPP members.
- September 10-11, 2019: ITAG Workshop on Trade Policy Engagement in Santiago.
- September 2020, during the Geneva Trade Week, ITAG seminar "How can e-commerce trade policy contribute August 4, 2020 (GMT): Signing of the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement.
- December 10, 2020: Canada hosted the first activity under the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement. Canada, Chile and New Zealand provided presentations on their current domestic programming and policies that support women's economic empowerment and gender.
- June 9, 2021: OECD webinar with the objective of raising awareness of trade/gender nexus; promote GTAGA; expand membership of GTAGA by encouraging others to join; inform of OECD work on trade and gender.
- June 23, 2021: Chile hosted the second activity organized under the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement entitled "Unlocking opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Canada, Chile and New Zealand".
- September 21, 2021: webinar "Women and Trade: Empowerment through inclusion" to promote the GTAGA in Germany in the context of the Sustainability week.
- October 6, 2021: welcoming ceremony for Mexico's participation in ITAG and GTAGA.
- May 22, 2022: Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, to discuss the work done and agreed to move forward on specific actions according to the Work Plan.
- June 13, 2022: Welcoming ceremony for the participation of Colombia and Peru in GTAGA and Ministerial Declaration addressing inclusive trade.
- September 13, 2022: Ambassadors from GTAGA countries met in Geneva to discuss how to jointly promote inclusive trade.
- September, 2022: Session "Supporting underrepresented exporters in global recovery: from theory to practice" at the WTO Public Forum in Geneva.
- November 9, 2022: Webinar "Women in STEM: Fixing the 'leaky pipeline'"; where pioneering women and GTAGA representatives shared their visions, experiences, and challenges.
- May 15, 2023: Welcoming ceremony for the participation of Costa Rica and Ecuador in ITAG and GTAGA