



# CENTRE FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT LAW

## SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



**INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY**

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

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Centre for Trade and Investment Law (CTIL) turned seven years old last month. It is a minor milestone, but provides a valuable moment for us to cherish and reflect on our achievements made over a short period of time. As a think tank and advisory centre, CTIL is one of the few institutions in India that work in the field of public international law, particularly international trade and investment law. These domains of international economic law have a growing relevance for India in a fast integrating world.

Our achievement lies in our timely responses and contributions to various initiatives of the Department of Commerce and proactively meeting targets which the Centre has identified for itself. CTIL's professional staff have played a key role in supporting India's engagement in a number of trade and investment negotiations, especially most of India's recent free trade agreements (FTAs). As a law centre, we have played a significant role in supporting India's engagement at the WTO, including the settlement of seven long-standing disputes that India had with the United States.

While we commemorate our seventh anniversary, we considered it appropriate to devote our Anniversary Magazine to India's G20 Presidency. India's G20 Presidency was a pivotal moment as it heralded India's leadership in finding coordinated solutions with other major economies to various global political and economic challenges. Importantly, this moment arrives at a time when we witness a major shift in global balance of powers, with the emerging countries currently forming the troika.

India's G20 Presidency was also significant since it saw the admission of the African Union, effectively expanding G20's representation to fifty-five countries and a massive geographical region.

The Anniversary Magazine includes specially curated articles and interviews with a wide cross-section of stakeholders on this special theme. These articles and interviews reflect diverse perspectives on the rising importance of G20. We are proud to include an interview with Shri Amitabh Kant, India's G20 Sherpa. In addition, the Anniversary Magazine includes interviews with and articles by several knowledge partners and domain experts.

While recounting our accomplishments, I would like to graciously thank Shri. Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry, Govt. of India and Shri. Sunil Barthwal, Commerce Secretary, Govt. of India, for their constant support, guidance, and belief in the Centre's capabilities. We would also like to extend our gratitude to IIFT Vice Chancellor Prof. Rakesh Mohan...

Joshi, Additional Secretaries Shri. Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Shri. Amardeep Singh Bhatia, Shri. L. Satya Srinivas, Shri. Rajesh Agrawal and Shri. Anant Swarup. We would also like to thank various officials and staff of the Department of Commerce and other affiliate agencies. During these years, we have been working very closely with the officials from various government departments, from whom we have immensely benefitted. I would also like to appreciate the support of our sister centre- Centre for WTO Studies and it's Head, Prof. Pritam Banerjee and the Centre for Research in International Trade (CRIT) (Admin) Head, Prof. Murali Kallumal. During the past few years, we have collaborated with several leading law schools and industry association in India and abroad. I would also like to place our special appreciation to the WTO Chairs Programme, whose research and technical outputs have strengthened our research, academic and outreach pillars.

Finally, I would like to offer my special thanks to Shri. Pranav Narang, Shri. Kailas Surendran, Shri. Sarthak Raj and Shri. Jamshed Siddiqui for their editorial assistance in planning, structuring, and curating this timely and beautiful Anniversary Magazine.



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**

## ABOUT CTIL

The Centre for Trade and Investment Law (CTIL) was established in 2016 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India to develop international trade and investment law capacity in the country, and provide sound and rigorous legal analysis of international trade and investment law issues to the Government of India. The

Since its inception, CTIL has provided over 2500 advisory opinions to the Government of India on various international trade issues, including inputs for India's Free Trade Agreement engagements. The Centre, with its dedicated pool of legal experts, functions as a repository of information on

Centre routinely advises the Department of Commerce and other governmental departments and agencies on emerging issues in international economic law, with a focus on WTO law and bilateral trade arrangements. It provides



international trade and investment law. The Centre has been recognized as a thought leader in various domains of international economic law and has books, articles and papers published with renowned national and international journals and publishers. As

legal inputs to assist the Government of India in developing India's trade policy and trade promotion schemes across various sectors. The Centre provides research inputs to the Department of Commerce to assist in its engagement at the WTO, including in the dispute settlement mechanism.

part of its mandate, CTIL conducts training and capacity-building programmes for government officers, and seminars, conferences, discussions and workshops for various stakeholders in the area of international trade and investment law.

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# HIGHLIGHTS

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## INTERVIEW WITH SHRI AMITABH KANT

India's G20 Sherpa

INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY

## INTERVIEW WITH SHRI ANANT SWARUP

Additional Secretary, DoC

LOGISTICS IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT WORKING GROUP



## INTERVIEW WITH SHRI YASHVIR SINGH

Economic Advisor, DoC

WTO REFORMS IN THE TRADE AND INVESTMENT WORKING GROUP

## **INTERVIEW WITH SHRI HARSHA VARDHANA SINGH**

Former DDG, WTO

**WTO REFORMS IN THE TRADE AND INVESTMENT WORKING GROUP**



## **INTERVIEW WITH DR. RUPA CHANDA**

Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, UNESCAP

**WTO IN THE TRADE AND INVESTMENT WORKING GROUP**

## **INTERVIEW WITH DR. PRAVAKAR SAHOO**

Senior Lead, NITI AAYOG

**FACILITATION OF MRAS BETWEEN NATIONS**



## **INTERVIEW WITH SMT. TANU M. GOYAL**

SRF, ICRIER

**TRADE FOR GROWTH & PROSPERITY IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT WORKING GROUP**



Photo Credits: G20 Website



## INDIAN PRESIDENCY

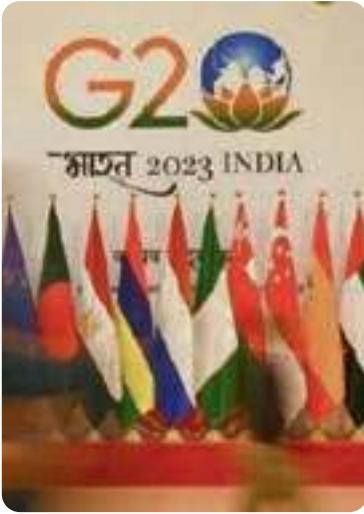
**“One Earth, One Family, One Future”**

Forged in the cauldron of the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, the G20 emerged in 1999 as a response to the need for a greater global economic dialogue and cooperation. This intergovernmental forum, encompassing both industrialized and developing nations, aimed to foster a collaborative approach to ensure global economic and financial stability.

Recognizing the need for a more inclusive and responsive approach, the G20 evolved to include

heads of state or government. This expansion broadened the forum’s scope, allowing it to tackle a wider range of global economic challenges beyond solely financial matters. The G20, emerged to foster a broader dialogue that incorporates the perspectives and needs of both developed and developing countries. This inclusive approach enables international collaboration on crucial issues impacting global financial stability and economic growth.

# STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF G20



## Structure & Functioning

The G20 operates through annual meetings of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, culminating in a yearly leaders' summit. Structured around two parallel tracks, the Finance Track and the Sherpa Track, these segments are instrumental in shaping ideas and priorities for the presidency and guiding intergovernmental negotiations. The Sherpas, acting as personal emissaries of leaders, focus on a range of socio-economic issues, while the Finance Track, led by Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, focus on fiscal and monetary policy matters. The Troika, comprising the previous, current, and incoming presidencies, supports the presidency, which directs the agenda for the year. Although its decisions are non-binding, the G20 collaborates closely with international organizations like the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO.



Photo Credits: G20 Website

## G20 Attendees

The G20 in 2023 consisted of 19 countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and member countries of EU. Collectively, these member nations represent roughly 85% of the world's GDP, 75% of total international trade, and two-thirds of the global population. Furthermore, the G20 extends yearly invitations to guest countries and international organizations, including but not limited to the United Nations, World Bank, IMF, OECD, and ASEAN, to partake in its deliberations.





Photo Credits: G20 Website



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# G20 SUMMIT NEW DELHI

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The year 2023 marked a watershed moment on the global stage as India took on the presidency of the G20. Under the inspiring banner “One Earth, One Family, One Future” India’s leadership was deeply imbued with its ancient ethos of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” — envisioning the world as a single, united family. This philosophy underscored the critical need for global unity and cooperation

to address the multifaceted challenges confronting humanity. India’s ascension to the G20 presidency was not merely a reflection of its growing global influence but an opportunity to sculpt a significant platform for international collaboration in an era rife with conflicts in various global scenarios.



Photo Credits: G20 Website



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## G20 SUMMIT OUTCOMES

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The G20 Indian Presidency emphasized on cooperation in trade, investment, and logistics during the Trade and Investment Ministers' Meeting (TIMM). Key deliverables included:

- The G20 Generic Mapping Framework focused on enhancing coordination in global value chains, emphasizing on resilience for Least Developed Countries.
- The Jaipur Call for Action aimed at improving MSME access to trade-related information and digital financial inclusion via an upgraded Global Trade Helpdesk.
- The High-Level Principles on Digitalization of Trade Documents promoted digitization to reduce costs and boost global trade while emphasizing on non-binding guidelines for digitizing trade documents. The development of a Presidency's Compendium of best practices on Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) for Professional enhanced standards and cooperation in professional services across member countries.
- The G20 Digital Economy Task Force (DETF) discussed ICT opportunities and problems in its 2023 Standards Dialogue proposal. India fostered inclusive growth through infrastructure development and hosted the Global South alongside the G20 to champion marginalized countries.



**G20 SNAPSHOTS**  
Credits: G20 India



1



Photo Credits: G20 Website

4th Infrastructure Working Group Meeting, Kajuraho

2



Photo Credits: G20 Website

4th Sustainable Finance Working Group Meeting, Varanasi

3



Photo Credits: G20 Website

4th Framework Group Meeting, Raipur

4

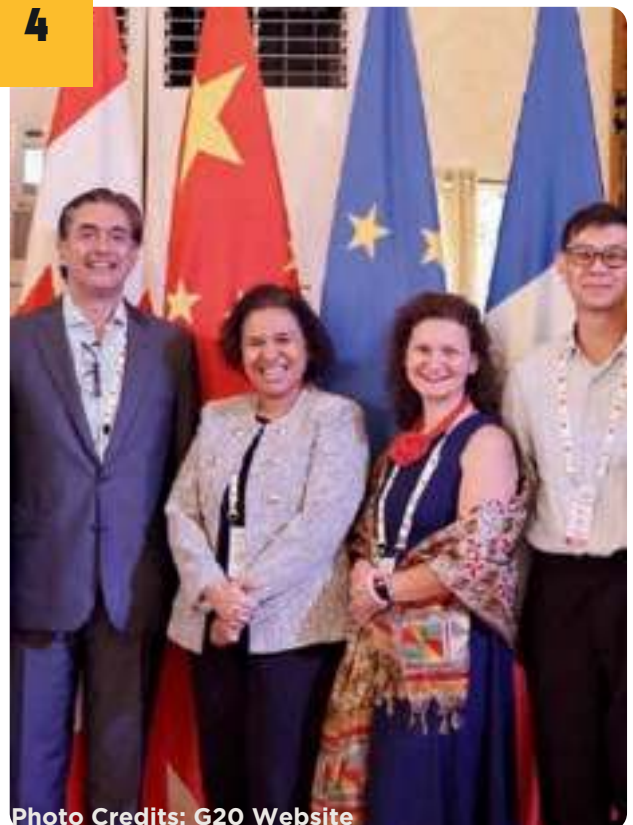


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4th Sherpa Meeting, New Delhi



G20 SNAPSHOTS  
Credits: G20 India





**James J. Nedumpara, Head, CTIL  
TIWG, Bengaluru**



**Ms. Sumana, (On the Left) Young Professional,  
CTIL  
TIMM, Jaipur**



**Mr. Pranav, Associate, CTIL  
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**Ms. Sunanda, Consultant, CTIL  
TIWG, Bengaluru**

ONE  
*Earth*

ONE  
*Family*

ONE  
*Future*

# G20 SHERPA: INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY

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**Amitabh Kant** is currently serving as the G20 Sherpa to the Government of India and heads the negotiation for Sherpa meetings and other working group meetings. Before being appointed as G20 Sherpa, he served as the Chief Executive Officer of NITI Aayog. He was an officer of the 1980 batch of the Indian Administrative Service, Kerala batch. In his capacity as Secretary (Industries) Govt. of India, Mr. Kant drove the Ease of Doing Business initiative and ranking of States on outcome parameters. He also served as the Chairman of the Committee of Officers to implement digital payment in Government-Citizen transactions in India.

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## PRE SUMMIT:

### 1. Considering the role and importance of G20 in the global economy, what were the biggest challenges in setting the agenda and priorities for the summit, especially considering the two new working groups- Disaster Risk Reduction and Startup-20 Engagement Group?

One of the biggest challenges is ensuring that the agenda reflects the diverse interests and priorities of all G20 Members, which include both developed and developing economies. Each G20 Member has its own set of economic concerns, political contexts, and policy priorities. The inclusion of two new working groups, Disaster Risk Reduction and the Startup-20 Engagement Group, reflects the evolving nature of global challenges and the need to address them

through international cooperation. Integrating new areas such as disaster risk reduction and startup engagement requires finding common ground among members with varying degrees of interest and expertise in these areas.

### 2. How did you navigate conflicting opinions and priorities among member states to reach a common ground for expanding the working groups during G20 India Presidency?

The process of navigating conflicting opinions and priorities among member states to reach a common ground for expanding the working groups during the G20 India Presidency involved a multifaceted approach, emphasizing diplomacy, inclusivity, and strategic negotiation. We initiated an extensive con-

sultation process that involved all member states, inviting them to share their views, concerns, and priorities regarding the expansion of the working groups. This process was designed to be transparent, inclusive, and respectful of each country's position and interests.

### **3. What were the expectations of different stake-holders (governments, NGOs and private sector) heading into the summit?**

Recognizing the role of thought leadership in shaping opinions, we engaged with global experts, think tanks, and international organizations to bring evidence-based insights into the discussions. This helped in grounding the conversations in reality and highlighting the urgency of expanding the working groups.

#### **DURING THE SUMMIT:**

### **4. What were the most critical moments of negotiation and compromise during the summit? Can you share any inside stories about the key decisions made?**

The section on climate and the Green Development Pact was the one which saw maximum negotiations, debate and discussions. The perspective of the developed nations is very different from the countries of the Global South on key aspects and bringing them all to the same table was challenging but also rewarding.

### **5. Can you share your unique perspectives on any unexpected issues or surprises that arose during the discussions? How did you adapt to those challenges?**

I was assisted by a phenomenal team of dynamic officers from the Ministry of External Affairs. In view of the support I received, it was not difficult to adapt to any challenge which came along the way. We also received support from the members of the troika – Indonesia, Brazil and South Africa during critical negotiations, especially around the geopolitical issues.



### **6. How did you utilize technology and data to improve decision-making and facilitate communication between delegates?**

Most of the key negotiations closer to the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi were held virtually through video conferencing. We ensured that all members and guest countries could participate in these meetings seamlessly, as getting the views of all members was imperative. Apart from that all the 60 plus meeting venues across the nation were tech-savvy with high speed internet connectivity and advanced communication channels for all delegates.

### **7. One of the important events during the G20 summit was the inclusion of the African Union (AU) into the G20. Was it easy to expand G20 beyond its original membership?**

The initiative to invite the African Union to join the G20 as a permanent member was completely spearheaded by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. India's pivotal role in securing the AU's permanent membership in the G20 is more than just a diplomatic achievement. It symbolizes a paradigm shift in international relations, underscoring the importance of collective decision-making that respects diversity and acknowledges

the aspirations of every continent. A region that houses nearly 18% of the world's population, Africa has long been underrepresented in global platforms. This historic inclusion rectifies past oversights, offering a platform for Africa to voice its unique concerns. The response from all other members of the G20 towards this end was overwhelmingly positive.

**8. Considering that in any plurilateral forum, different countries or groups might have their sensitivities and agendas, how did you navigate the challenges to address the sensitivities of different countries or groups during the discussion?**

India's G20 Presidency was based on the bedrock of inclusivity not just in the agenda-setting but also in the manner negotiations were carried out with different nations. We ensured that interventions by all G20 Members and guest countries were equally valued. We also organized and facilitated several bilateral meetings, allowing for a more open exchange of views and concerns. Finally, I believe that the agenda we set under the leadership of the Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi outlined broad developmental priorities that were of significance to both developed and developing nations, hence reducing conflicts and contentious views.

**POST SUMMIT:**

**9. Can you share your perspectives on the most significant outcomes of the summit? How that outcome is important or critical for India?**

The New Delhi Declaration stands as a significant achievement for India, especially considering the challenging circumstances under which it was realized, including the aftermath of the pandemic, a divided geopolitical landscape, escalating food and

energy crises, and increasing debt issues. India's role as a neutral mediator was pivotal in uniting member nations on key issues such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), climate change mitigation, and digital advancements towards achieving robust, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth.

**10. Considering the divergent views on some contentious issues, India succeeded in making the final breakthrough to clinch the New Delhi Declaration. Can you share your experience as Sherpa as to how India was able to bring all members on board to form a consensus on the ambitious New Delhi declaration?**

Achieving 'consensus' in a forum as varied as the G20, on topics of paramount importance to every member, underscores India's commitment to the priorities of the agenda set by us. It not only demonstrates our collective capability to devise solutions that benefit all nations but also highlights the declaration's consideration for the developing world's interests and concerns, aligning with India's presidency goal to elevate the Global South's perspective.

***“The New Delhi Declaration stands as a significant achievement for India, especially considering the challenging circumstances under which it was realized, including the aftermath of the pandemic, a divided geopolitical landscape, escalating food and energy crises, and increasing debt issues.”***

**11. There was considerable impetus for digital transformation and digital public infrastructure during India's G20 Presidency. What progress in this area can be visualized post-summit?**

India's advancements in Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) have captured global attention, culminating in widespread acclaim at the G20 Summit in New Delhi. Here, world leaders endorsed India's initiative to create and manage a Global Digital Public Infrastructure. This marks a significant milestone as it is the first instance where the concept of DPI received worldwide recognition, a testament to India's leadership during its presidency. This digital DPI platform is envisioned as a collaborative space, with G20 member countries contributing on a voluntary basis. India's remarkable success in digital transactions, which surpasses figures seen in Western countries, has played a pivotal role in integrating a vast number of Indians into the formal economy and simplifying business operations. India's pioneering efforts in digital financial inclusion set a precedent for the Western world, with countries like France adopting India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Additionally, nations including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Singapore, Maldives, Bhutan, and Oman have embraced various Indian digital payment systems, further showcasing India's influence in the digital finance domain.

**12. Considering the significant role of G20 in enhancing trade and attracting investment, the Trade and Investment Minister Meeting (TIMM) has come up with the outcome document containing five action-oriented deliverables including the Generic Mapping Framework for Global Value Chains (GVCs). How do you look at the importance of the adoption of the TIMM Outcome Document and its role in enhancing GVCs governance?**

Unlocking trade for growth was a key sub-pillar in the New Delhi Leaders Declaration (NDLD). At the same time, the NDLD emphasizes the critical role of private investment and capital, in both unlocking growth and also in development and climate finance. Specifically, on boosting trade for growth, G20 Members have reiterated their commitment to reforming the WTO, a strong signal in the run up to the WTO's Thirteenth Ministerial Conference (MC13). We have addressed integration of MSMEs in global trade through the Jaipur Call for Action, which enhances access to information and market intelligence.

The need for resilient GVCs has been reiterated over the past few years. The G20 Generic Framework for Mapping GVCs to help members identify risks and build resilience. We have seen the benefits of digitization on efficiency, and lowering the cost of logistics. With this in mind, the High-



level Principles on Digitalization of Trade Documents have the potential to lower the costs of trading.

### **13. What are the biggest challenges in translating summit commitments into real-world actions? How can we ensure accountability and follow through?**

The success of translating commitments into action heavily depends on the political will and leadership within each country. Changes in political leadership or shifts in policy focus can derail the implementation of commitments.

Even when there is alignment, the mobilization of the necessary resources (financial, human, technological) to execute these commitments can be challenging. The disparity in resource availability across different countries can lead to uneven implementation and progress. Many summit commitments aim to address complex global challenges that require coordinated action by multiple stakeholders. The complexity and interconnectedness of these issues can make it difficult to achieve meaningful progress.

### **14. What are your key priorities for upcoming G20 Presidencies? How can the G20 adapt to address emerging global challenges in terms of geopolitical tension and geoeconomics fragmentation?**

I. Pushing for further reforms in global governance institutions, including International Financial Institutions and Multilateral Development Banks, to make them more representative, equitable, and responsive to current global challenges.

II. Prioritizing policies that promote sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth, taking into account the environmental and social dimensions.

III. Focusing on reducing the digital divide and

enhancing access to financial services, particularly for under-served populations through implementation and adoption of DPI.

IV. Accelerating action on climate change and committing to environmental sustainability through fair transfer of innovative technologies and financing to the Global South.

V. Working towards reducing inequalities within and among countries, including gender inequality by expanding on India's Women-Led Development approach in the NDLD.

VI. Building resilient health systems and enhancing global preparedness for future health emergencies.

### **15. How can the G20 play a role in shaping international economic architecture? And how would it have an economic impact on India?**

During its presidency, India steered the G20, which represents the world's major economies including the newly added African Union, towards adopting a Green Development Pact aimed at securing a sustainable future. This pact encompasses bold commitments on climate finance, equitable transitions globally, and the promotion of Lifestyles for Environmental Sustainability (LiFE), alongside a 7-year Action Plan designed to expedite progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These initiatives offer a transformative and integrated approach to addressing the complex and interconnected crises of today. The New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, a testament to India's dedication to prioritizing the concerns of the Global South within the G20 agenda, calls for a significant increase in investments from billions to trillions of



dollars to achieve our collective SDGs and climate objectives. It highlights the crucial role of private capital and the necessity for reforms in Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), guided by recommendations from an Independent Expert Group on MDB reforms. This strategic focus not only promises substantial impacts within India, such as fostering green growth and enhancing inclusive development to improve the lives of millions, but also anticipates positive global implications.

**16. What are the important issues that you think remain unresolved during India's G20 Presidency and would likely be resolved during Brazil's Presidency?**

India prioritized making swift advancements towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and achieved a remarkable success. In a decade that shifted from being focused on action to one emphasizing recovery in achieving the SDGs, the commitment by lead-

ers to put into action the G20 2023 Action Plan for SDGs, including its High-Level Principles, is a significant triumph. The Declaration highlights our leaders' dedication to enhancing food security universally, aligning with the G20 Deccan High-Level Principles on Food Security and Nutrition.

Furthermore, in the wake of the pandemic, the Declaration's support for establishing an Interim Medical Countermeasures Coordination Mechanism is crucial for ensuring responsible and prompt access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable medical solutions, such as vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics. The Declaration also acknowledges the potential contribution of evidence-based traditional and complementary medicine to health, a notable recognition considering India's rich heritage in traditional medicine.

# LOGISTICS FOR TRADE IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT WORKING GROUP

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**Anant Swarup** is currently serving as Director General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) and Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce, Government of India. He is an officer of the 1992 batch of the Indian Railway Personnel Services. He has extensive experience in negotiating free trade agreements. At present, he is responsible for trade remedies, logistics and parliament and legal division, among other portfolios.

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## 1. How did the Working Group encourage collaboration between the trade and investment policymakers to streamline regulations for reducing trade barriers and increasing flow of foreign direct investment?

The states have taken tremendous efforts towards advancements in logistic sector, but those efforts have been restricted to country/region. Specifically, the logistics sector has been underutilized due to limited efforts in establishing the global connectivity. In the logistics sector, digitalization of logistic services has been limited to the geographies of countries, whereas the digital documents are recognized within the legal system of the concerned country. Particularly, the digitali-

zation initiatives have not spread to the global level and the developed countries have not prioritized the issue considering the spillover benefits of digitalization in the logistics sector. In a nutshell, the key document involved in any trade transaction is Bill of Lading, which performs two functions, namely, evidence of title and proof of delivery for the trade transaction. The Bill of Lading changes multiple hands during the journey of traded goods across the globe. As such transfer of documents are undertaken by physical delivery of the Bill of Lading, it leads to increase in turnaround time for the trade transactions. The increased turnaround time results in delay in issuance of letter

of credit that creates trade barrier, particularly for Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises. Thus, the digitalization of Bill of Lading is crucial for enhancing efficiency in the logistics sector and reducing the trade costs. Moreover, the limited digitalization of logistics sector without covering the crucial document, i.e. Bill of Lading, has resulted in wide gap across the value chain, whereas the current digital initiatives have failed to cover the critical trade documents. During the Trade and Investment Working group meeting under G20 India Presidency, the digitalization of trade documents had received substantial attention by the G20 Members that account for more than 75 % of global trade.

**2. With respect to High-Level Principle for digitalization of trade documents, how do you foresee adoption of these principles in near future, especially in the developing world? How do you think these principles will address the digital divide between Global North and Global South?**

The main principle of digitalization of trade documents is interoperability of digital systems, which was also included in the outcome document “High Level Principles for Digitalization of Trade Documents”.

Basically, if the digital systems are working in silos, whereas each country has developed their digital systems to process the digitalized documents, then these digital documents will not be able to exchange the digitalized documents in an efficient manner. One of the positive outcomes of the TIWG meetings is that G20 members had identified HLPs to ensure interpretability of digital systems, whereas the digital systems developed in different countries can communicate if they conform with the broad HLPs to facilitate the transfer of trade documents seamlessly.

These HLPs can be worked upon in multiple forums including United Nations Economic

and Social Commission for the Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) and the WTO.

In WTO, Trade Facilitation Committee can be leveraged for operationalization of the HLPs. These forums need to facilitate adoption of HLPs through leadership efforts by taking different stakeholders on board for implementation of the HLPs. Such efforts need to be streamlined at various forums for ensuring feasible implementation of HLPs. Specifically, WTO can take charge of said implementation by including it in one of the agenda items or forming a working group to take forward the initiative of implementing HLPs on digitalization of trade documents.

Although there are some bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed for recognizing cross border digitalization of trade documents, e.g. India and Singapore signed an MoU on digitalization of trade documents on the eve of G20 summit, however, we need to understand that such bilateral engagement will not have substantial impact on improving efficiency in the logistic sector.

**“These HLPs can be worked upon in multiple forums including United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) and WTO.”**

It is crucial to expand such partnerships to the broader set of countries, which will ensure that the benefits of digitalization will be delivered to wider digital ecosystem in the logistics sector. For such global expansion of digitalization in logistics sector, there is a need for developing a roadmap. So bilateral treaties give you confidence to test it out, but it would require an anchor agency to roll it out.

### **3. In the context of global economic uncertainties, how did the Trade and Investment Working Group balance its priority issues and outcomes for catering to these uncertainties and internalizing sensitivities of G20 Members with diverse views and concerns?**

With respect to global economic uncertainties, G20 Trade and Investment Working Group had delivered an outcome document incorporating the High-Level Principles in the outcome document “Generic Framework for GVC Resilience” which was also adopted by the New Delhi Declaration. Such developments are pathbreaking achievements during the G20 India Presidency, particularly G20 Members agreed



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that there is a need for a directory of companies and countries that are dominating the supply chains in critical sectors. In this light, the HLPs on GVC resilience identified the principles including (list of principles).

Thus, the said outcome provide conceptual framework for guidance regarding the alternative supply options during sudden disruption in the supply chain caused by the geopolitical events or adverse climate change events. However, resilience should not be looked from one dimension of supply chain of goods and services, but it also need to consider resilience of infrastructure for trade routes. e.g. Recent conflict in red sea and the ship blockage of Suez Canal has exposed the vulnerability of the existing supply chain routes. In this context, the recent initiatives of India, Middle East, Europe Corridor is an encouraging sign, as operationalization of broad principles would contribute to resilience of supply chain. Thus, there is a long felt need to enhance the resilience of logistic infrastructure that improve connectivity and resilience of global supply chain routes, which is a positive outcome that was culminated during the G20 India Presidency.

During the TIWG meetings, we were deliberating on the outcomes pertaining to dialogue amongst the regulators and industry leaders during the trade disruption causing events, e.g. COVID-19 pandemic, however the other members opposed said outcome. The platform was proposed to develop possible solutions to such disruption which leads to a cascading effect on fair trade and affect export-based businesses, specifically MSMEs. Accordingly, the digitalization of trade doc-

uments took precedence over said outcome on regulatory dialogue, as the digitalization initiative was given priority during the TIWG deliberations.

**4. What do you feel were the most notable achievements of the Trade and Investment Working Group in promoting sustainable and resilient logistics infrastructure for economic development in times of crisis? Can simply improving logistics lead to significant trade benefits?**

As discussed earlier, there were number of initiatives under the TIWG that have potential to promote sustainable and resilient logistics infrastructure for economic development during the crisis. TIMM outcome document and chair summary recognized the need to digitalize the documents for reducing the logistics cost to enhance efficiency. It'll also cater to situations of disruption (like a pandemic, when services like courier, post offices weren't working), whereas he digitalization of the logistics sector would offset the effects of contingencies and emergencies on economic development.

In the same document, the G20 Members also recognized the need to ensure resilience of supply chain. The earlier approach towards handling crisis situation was bent towards "just in time", but the policymakers have realized that this approach has its pitfall and they are also considering to internalize the supply chains issues for effective management of crisis, hence moving towards "just-in-case" approach. Such deliberation during the G20 TIWG meetings and other forums has also resulted in development of repository of information of available alternative sources of supply chain for raw materials, intermediary products, etc.

**5. What role does digital public play in the modernization of logistics and trade, and how did the Trade and Investment Working Group discussions ensured that India's home-grown technologies get recognition for enhancing efficiency in logistic operations?**

The recent pathbreaking reform of India in the logistics sector is the PM Gati-shakti initiative. During the TIWG meetings, India got the opportunity to showcase this initiative to the rest of the world including policymakers and experts from the International Organizations. In India, the PM Gati-Shakti initiative has brought multiple data layers on a common digital platform that facilitated better coordination of the infrastructure planning across ministries, which provides insight on the proposed infrastructure, e.g. if it passes through a forest, river or bridge. Such projects have the potential to address challenges in infrastructure planning.

There are multiple examples of how the project execution has been fast-tracked because PM Gati Shakti has resulted in improved planning of the infrastructure development which is evident from increased pace of infrastructure development in India. Thus, such initiatives can be a model for the countries to replicate its features in their infrastructure planning approaches while dealing with not only domestic infrastructure, but also the transnational infrastructure projects (trans-Asian, European, multiple projects that have been talked about in the years), and leverage such initiatives in creating global public good.

**6. With the inclusion of the African Union as G20 member, how can it impact further progress on the priority of logistics infrastructure in developing countries?**

The inclusion of African Union as a G20 Member is a significant development that has been taken under India's Presidency. Africa as a continent has huge potential, specifically in terms of logistics infrastructure. It has also resulted in the diversification of G20 membership and reflected in future Presidencies' deliberations on the topics affecting the developing countries, particularly least developed countries. Moreover, this will also create positive environment for the logistics infrastructure in the African Continent, as there are multiple initiative that have been taken under G20 India Presidency. Considering the inclusion of African Union, the exchange of ideas, best practices, and technology during future G20 Presidencies will eventually lead to a enhanced integration of African region with rest of the world. Ultimately, it will lead to global prosperity.

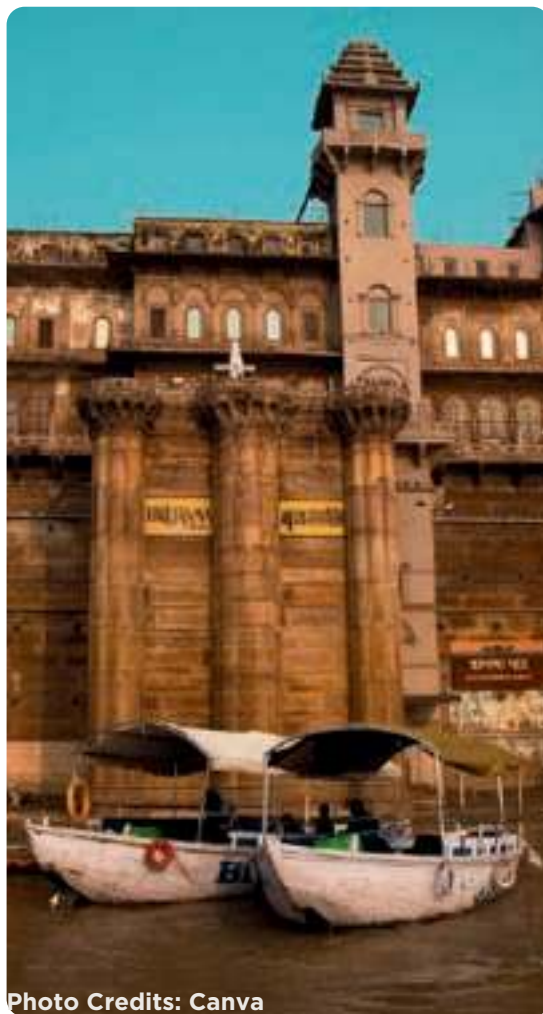


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# MASHRU WEAVINGS



*Let Us Heal Our ONE EARTH,  
Harmonize Our ONE FAMILY  
And Give Hope To Our ONE FUTURE*

# WTO REFORMS IN THE TRADE AND INVESTMENT WORKING GROUP

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**Yashvir Singh** is currently appointed as an Economic Advisor at the Department of Commerce, Government of India. He is an officer of the 1995 batch of the Indian Economic Services. He is handling Trade Negotiation Multilateral division III and also looks after Foreign Trade Policy. He is also appointed to Agriculture Subject Matter division.

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**1. How do you look at the ongoing discussions at the WTO, especially the Ministerial Conference (MC13) in Abu Dhabi, in terms of crucial issues like public stockholding? How India can play a vital role in escalating the cause of developing and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) on the same issues?**

As we all know the Ministerial Conference is held every two years and the issues are discussed much before the Conference in order to decide whether or not to place a particular issue before the Conference. Specifically, the Committee on Agriculture (CoA) special session is holding regular meetings to discuss the issues to bring them to a level to be placed before the MC.

When it comes to the issue of public stockholding India is spearheading the demand on behalf of developing countries that the mandated issue of a permanent solution of public stockholding should be addressed on a priority basis when it comes to agriculture negotiations. Initially, it was almost something we felt that the agriculture negotiations may not proceed because of the diverse and strong positions members are taking. However, toward the end of January, the Chair of the Committee on Agriculture Special Session (CoASS) requested the members to provide inputs so that he can work on a draft. On the inputs, they came up with the Chair's text and that text is being negotiated in the

meetings.

The G-33- of which India is also a part of and supported by the African Group and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)- group submitted its position under JOB/AG/229. We have made submission pitching high for getting a permanent solution for public stock holding. This has been discussed as part of the annexure of the draft Chair's text. On these points, developing countries have their own strong positions. On the other hand, there are some countries led by Australia, Canada, Brazil, and New Zealand that have their level of demand and oppose permanent solutions on public stockholding. Moreover, there are certain countries that are big producers of agricultural products like the European Union (EU) and the United States (US). These countries have their own priorities.

**2. Considering the importance of the Bali Peace Clause in India's food security and public stockholding programme, why do you think that developing countries like India need enhanced provisions than the Bali Peace Clause to address the crucial issue of food security? Were these issues considered in the G20 deliberation?**

The Bali Peace Clause was an interim solution and mandated Members to strive for permanent solutions by MC 11. The target was to achieve a permanent solution by MC11 which did not materialize. Therefore, the demand for a permanent solution still remains an unfulfilled agenda of the WTO. The developing countries are pressurizing other Members to go beyond the peace clause and seek flexibility to achieve a permanent solution for public stockholding to address their concerns for food security under the Agreement of Agriculture (AoA).

We are saying that the calculation of support that had been adopted by the WTO under the AoA, which goes to issues on food security should be kept out of the overall domestic support that is being provided to our agricultural sector.

***“The negotiations on food security are very vexed in the WTO. The strong position of members on food security did not lead much to negotiation at the WTO and we do not want to repeat the same at the G-20 platform.”***

As far as the Trade and Investment Working Group (TIWG) is concerned, several Members have strong positions on food security in the WTO. Thus, we do not want to bring such discussions to the G20 platform to unnecessarily burden it because it can otherwise be dealt at WTO platform. The negotiations on food security are very vexed in WTO. The strong position of members on food security did not lead much to negotiations at the WTO, and we do not want to repeat the same at the G-20 platform. In G-20, the membership consists of both developing and developed countries and both have its strong positions on public stockholding, therefore, we thought that there was no need to bring these issues under G-20 since all the negotiations and outcomes have to come from the WTO. We avoided unnecessarily overburdening the G20 since it's already dealt with at other fora.

**3. There are reports suggesting that some countries are supporting the Bali peace clause with the condition of export performance and the total eligible value of agriculture productions. How do you look at their proposal and how it is likely to impact the position of developing countries like India?**

This is the submission by Brazil and it came on the same day when we presented our submission under JOB/AG/229. Later on, another proposal came from Brazil where they submitted that the export performance of the countries should be analyzed whether or not they are high food producers and high exporters and whether their production of food grains is mostly used for domestic food security or for export. It focuses on analyzing overall production as to how much countries are using their agriculture production for domestic consumption through public stockholding and how much that is exportation. If that country is a net exporter of the food grain then it should not be asking for more flexibility for public stockholding. Actually, such proposals are made to divert the attention from permanent solutions for public stockholding through these peripheral issues to bring them to the forefront. We look at it as diversionary practice and we are opposing it in the negotiation.

**4. Can you elaborate on the importance of G20 deliberations in the Trade and Investment Working Group (TIWG) Meetings? Can these deliberations make a significant impact on the ongoing discussions at the WTO and other forums?**

It depends upon the issues to issues. I would not like to say that whatever discussions on G-20 have certainly an impact on WTO but I will say that it helps us in building opinions coalitions and bringing countries together on their approaches. If you look at the G-20 Members, they are also members of the WTO

so, if they agree on something at the G20 Platform and carry the same spirit at the WTO, it does help things get sorted out at WTO.

**5. Will the G20 Indian Presidency statement give teeth to dispute settlement reforms at WTO? Was there any enhancement in position from previous Presidencies? How will other informal discussions on dispute settlement body reform help in forming a consensus at the WTO?**

The whole issue of WTO reform is very much under discussion at the WTO platform and members are taking a very strong interest in placing their positions. The US is almost alone in not letting the Appellate Body restore. More than five years now it is not functional. G-20 Outcome Documents have mentioned the dispute settlement reform and members have agreed to discuss the issues further. I think definitely the content of the G20 outcome document will strengthen the argument over there because the members who have agreed to the whole thing at G20 will follow the same position when they discuss the issue at the WTO.



**6. There is also discussion on the working and functioning of the WTO and India has also submitted a proposal on these issues called “30 for 30”. Can you elaborate on the same?**

India has insisted on certain incremental steps to improve the functioning of the WTO to bring more efficiency and transparency in the working of the WTO. We made almost thirty suggestions called “30 for 30” in light of the completion of thirty years of the WTO existence on 1 January 2024. By the time, we expect that if not all but some of our suggestions will be adopted and incorporated by the Members. Some of the suggestions have been accepted by the General Council

and we have started to work on that. Our focus is on the improvement of IT tools and the development of applications for better dissemination of information to members who are not physically present in some of these meeting. The second area of focus is the emphasis on the working of the various committees in the WTO to ensure more opportunities for developing countries and LDCs to raise their issues so that they will not be deprived of their opportunities to raise their concerns. Another issue is related to transparency aspects that the Secretariat should be working on in a transparent and inclusive manner.



# WTO REFORMS IN THE TRADE AND INVESTMENT WORKING GROUP

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**Harsha Vardhana Singh** is a renowned trade policy expert. Mr. Singh worked for 12 years in the GATT/WTO Secretariat, in various parts of the organization, including the Office of the WTO Director General, the Trade and Environment and Technical Barriers to Trade Division, Rules Division, Trade Policy Review Division, and the Economic Research and Analysis Unit. He served the WTO as Deputy Director General. Mr. Singh also served as Secretary cum Principal Advisor to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

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**1. How do you envisage the necessary WTO reform improving the organization's functioning and strengthening trust in the multilateral trading system? Are there specific areas of reform that should be prioritized?**

The WTO reform aims to improve the functioning of the WTO system, including a two-tier dispute settlement process, transparency, and deliberations within committees and councils. The membership wants a two-tier process, with an appeal process for non-acceptable panel reports. The David Walker process, led by Ambassador David Walker, sought to strengthen operati-

ons and improve the dispute settlement process. Progress in the DSU reforms will depend on improving information availability, capacity augmentation, transparency, and a program with adequate time for countries to prepare for issues of interest. These factors will impact how countries engage with the WTO and ensure meaningful participation. Some of these reforms have already started being implemented.

The focus of WTO reform is to improve areas of concern, but if it overlooks the concerns of some Members, it may not be successful. Countries are trying to find a

landing zone for improvement without creating additional concerns. The dispute settlement process is considered the most important, but other priority areas are also important. Some areas may not be covered in the WTO reform context due to differences of opinion. The focus should be on relevant areas where there is convergence to build consensus, rather than focusing on areas where there is limited scope for improvement. The focus should be on areas where differences in opinion can be normalized by subtle adjustments in the agenda.

**2. Do you think that the G20 deliberations in the Trade and Investment Working Group TIWG Meetings impacted the ongoing discussions at the WTO and other forums?**

The G20 meeting provided a platform for direct dialogue and improved understanding of the limitations and potential solutions. It also highlighted the importance of clarity on the red lines of G20 Members and the potential areas for positive movement. The successful text preparation and discussion at the meeting highlighted areas for potential positive movements. The G20 meeting also prepared the ground for continued interaction from a perspective of engagement.

**3. Will the G20 Indian Presidency statement give teeth to dispute settlement reforms at the WTO? Was there any enhancement in position from previous Presidencies? How will other informal discussion on dispute settlement body reform help in forming a consensus at the WTO?**

The Trade and Investment Meeting (TIWG) text raises questions about the progress

of addressing an issue and the direction of the process towards a solution. The discussion at the G20 clarified the problem and the positions taken by the key delegations; however, the solution for dispute settlement will be cracked in the immediate future. The system may move towards a solution, but the specifics of the solution are still being discussed. The WTO Members are not close to a solution in this areas.

“*The Trade Investment Ministerial Meeting (TIMM) text raises questions about the progress of addressing an issue and the direction of the process towards a solution. The discussion at the G20 Discussion clarified the problem and the positions taken by key delegations.*”

**4. What is the relevance of discussing something like the WTO reform at a forum like G20? Has the Indian Presidency's discussion on WTO reform and discussions at other forums helped shape opinion in the light of the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference?**

The discussion revolves around the status of dispute settlement in the WTO and whether informal discussions are helping inform consensus at the WTO. G20 India Presidency's discussions on WTO reform have not significantly shaped opinions in light of upcoming events. The D20 process involved consideration of various aspects of the issues and discussions with different countries, which could help move the issue towards a conclusion at the WTO.



The TIMM document highlights the value of the process in getting an agreed text, developing understanding among members, and providing a sense of comfort for open discussions. The engagement provided comfort for discussing solutions together, even when there was a red line.

**5. How can the G20 platform discourage protectionism and market-distorting practices to foster a favorable trade and investment environment? Were there any discussions in TIWG meetings to encourage a level playing field for all members?**

The WTO system is based on key concepts of promoting open markets and discouraging protectionism. In 2008-2009, during economic and financial crises, countries often implemented trade-restrictive measures. However, the then Director General Pascal Lamy introduced a new mechanism for monitoring and reporting on these measures, particularly by G20 Members. This transparency and shared discussions led to few trade restrictions being imposed by countries. When countries gather to discuss concerns at platforms like G20, principles are emphasized, resulting in greater stability of the system. Transparency helps to prevent

countries from being seen as trade-restrictive, which can lead to a more stable global economy. Overall, the WTO system aims to promote transparency and promote open markets.



**6. In what ways is the WTO's rule-making arm being strengthened to update the global trade rulebook, and what are the critical areas of focus in the ongoing negotiations?**

The most critical issue for the WTO rule-making arm is a functional and credible dispute settlement process being imposed by countries. When countries gather to discuss concerns at platforms like G20, principles are emphasized, resulting in greater stability of the system. Transparency helps to prevent countries from being seen as trade-restrictive, which can lead to a more stable global economy. Overall, the WTO system aims to promote transparency and promote open markets. 7. In what ways is the WTO's rule-making arm being strengthened to update the global trade rulebook, and what are the critical areas of focus in the ongoing negotiations?

The most critical issue for the WTO rule-making arm is a functional and credible dispute settlement process that involves all members and treats the results as binding on the member. This is the most critical issue, as a major proportion of the WTO membership is developing economies. Developed economies are losing weight due to large-scale violations of certain provisions. To address this, policy space and discipline should be combined to move towards a more operational and functional system that maintains stability and predictability. The second aspect, not yet discussed in the WTO, is the potential weakening of the system if large-scale violations are not addressed. The system's strength will depend on the outcome of these issues by the end of the year.



# TIWG BENGALURU





## SHIKARA BOATING

Shikara boating in Kashmir is an enchanting experience that offers a unique perspective of the region's stunning natural beauty. The shikara, a traditional wooden boat, glides gracefully over the pristine waters of Dal Lake and Nigeen Lake in Srinagar, providing a serene and picturesque journey.

Decorated with colorful canopies and cushioned seats, these boats are often operated by skilled boatmen who paddle using heart-shaped oars. The calm waters reflect the surrounding snow-capped mountains, lush gardens, and charming houseboats, creating a mesmerizing panorama.

# TRADE FOR GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

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**Rupa Chanda** is a Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division at UNESCAP. Prior to this, she was an economist at the International Monetary Fund in Washington, DC. She briefly served as the Head, UNESCAP Sub-regional Office for South and South-West Asia in New Delhi, while on leave from IIMB. Her research interests include the WTO, international trade in services, regional integration and migration.

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**1. Did G20 discussions make progress to address the issue of transparency in Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) measures? How can technical assistance and capacity building support developing countries in complying with these requirements?**

The trade for growth and prosperity issue was a lost opportunity, as the background paper did cover the relevant issues. Still, the deliverables were unsuitable for any traction in the G20 Trade and Investment Working Group. Although there was a focus on issues like non-tariff measures, sanitary and phytosa-

nitary standards, lack of transparency, non-discrimination, and problems faced by developing countries in this priority issue, that issues were out of the outcome document in view of the lack of interest from the G20 Members. Moreover, there was not much-focused discussion on capacity building support or financial assistance, for instance, labs and testing facilities, industrial training and workshops, MSME compliance, regulatory setup, dissemination of standards, skilling of certification authorities, etc. Therefore, the overall result in trade for growth and prosperity was very superficial.

**Follow up: What could have been done or what could have been an ideal to be implemented for the G20 Members in this priority issue?**

There was a lack of willingness to engage on this priority issue. Specifically, the G20 Members pushed anything related to technical assistance and capacity building to the finance track. Due to the limited scope of the TIWG group and the clashing of issues of capacity building for non-tariff measures compliance with the finance track, the discussion used to there as much of the discussion in TIWG meetings revolved around WTO dispute settlement and Global Value Chains. Thus, the discussion under this priority issue got restricted due to the institutional and financial limitations. Most of the issues and priority outcomes taken were suitable for bilateral or other plurilateral platforms with G20 partner countries, whereas G20 as a forum cannot be considered fit for tangible progress on such issues.

**2. How does the “Aid-For-Trade Initiative” enhance the participation of developing countries in global trade, and what efforts can be made to mobilize necessary resources for its success? What are the critical issues under this initiative that the Trade and Investment Working Group can address in future Presidencies?**

For making the “Aid for Trade initiative” useful for developing countries, investment must play a central role. Although there were hints of discussion on investment in the first TIWG meeting, the TIWG was essentially a trade working group. In contrast, the investment did not get wider attention and was merely tangentially discussed due to resistance from some of the G20 Members. While discussing the aid for trade, capacity-building support, and structural transformation, it is imperative

to discuss Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in trade-related infrastructure in logistics, digital connectivity for e-commerce, and investment for export purposes. Thus, there was a structuring problem due to the missing link with investment, whereas aid-for-trade can benefit countries if you integrate trade with financial flows. In the past presidencies, there were some references about quality infrastructure, development of logistics, and multimodal connectivity that require financial resources. In addition, aid for trade has to focus on certain target groups and sectors, e.g. MSMEs and critical sectors of the economy.

“Due to the limited scope of the TIWG working group and the clashing of issues of capacity building for non-tariff measures compliance with the finance track, the discussion just stops there as much of the discussion in TIWG meetings revolved around WTO dispute settlement, etc.”

**3. What measures can be taken from the perspective of developing countries to ensure a level playing field and fair competition in international trade, especially when addressing inequality and discrimination? What should be the approach of the developing countries in pushing the agenda of preserving their right to special and differential treatment under the WTO agreements, specifically under the Agreement on Agriculture?**

To create a level playing field, first, the developed countries should be pushed to deliver on reducing the distorted subsidies, especially in agriculture. The cu-

rent discussions focus on adjustments in the flexibility of agriculture subsidies for developing countries based on their level of development and addressing their concerns, for instance, price increases and food security. At the same time, developed countries have to be pushed for compliance on reducing subsidies and other types of support being given in some sectors, especially agriculture. So, differential treatment needs to be given both in terms of supporting developing countries and enforcing compliance on the developed countries, which would make the trade a lot fairer.

The second important factor is transparency regarding some of the rules and standards that are applied as non-tariff measures (NTMs). In this context, there is a need to ensure that such measures are easier to understand, and are non-arbitrary and non-discriminatory. Further there should be some related capacity building to help developing countries to comply with those standards. It is only then that you can talk of a level playing field. So, I think, unfortunately, there isn't an appetite for such an issue at G20, as it requires moving beyond the best endeavor sort of clauses and making more firm commitments and enforceable commitments, which are missing currently.

#### **4. Given the global disparities in resources and capabilities, how can international cooperation and collaboration be enhanced to ensure that trade serves as a catalyst for development and prosperity in all regions of the world?**

Considering the complexity of the global political economy with different kinds of alliances based on diverse issues, there is a need to find common concerns across different alliances. For instance, developing countries are looking to push for certain agendas, including flexibility in trade rules, broader policy space, recognition of the stage of development, for eg. The developing countries must leverage different alliances to push for agendas to allow these flexibilities for developing countries, considering there are enough north-south partnerships based on different issues (geopolitical concerns, GVC resilience, supply chain diversity). Apart from G20, other forums like Indo-Pacific Economic Forum (IPEF) need to be used to take some agreed solutions to these forums. It is vital to keep different rent tracks in these forums connected for reaching common ground across the issues for e.g., agreed common principles in different working groups of



G20 can be taken to other alliances and forums for reducing disparities in developments.

**6. Can you give your perspectives on the role of regulatory frameworks in facilitating trade in professional services and MRAs? What are other approaches for reducing the gap in trade in professional services? Considering most countries have independent bodies to regulate professional services, what are the major hurdles for the regulatory bodies in the developing countries to initiate and develop MRAs with their counterparts in the developed countries?**

The bilateral dialogue is imperative for the growth of trade in professional services. Regulatory frameworks are essential for setting benchmarks and standards. They provide the gap analysis of standards by highlighting the possibility of equivalence, bridging the gap, additional certification requirements, and flexibilities. However, these policy solutions and frameworks can be streamlined through years of discussions among the regulatory bodies. In contrast, these regulatory bodies can be independent from the governments depending upon the structure of government. Thus, it is also important to bring industry chambers into the discussion because they are the ultimate stockholders; for instance, if you take something like accountancy services or legal services, delivering MRAs will require pitching the benefits using industry advocacy instead of merely leaving it between professional bodies.

Further, the gains from smooth mobility, closer standards, and flexibility must also be argued by demonstrating economic efficiency. On the other hand, the cost of such arrangements on domestic professionals due to the influx of professionals and a possible drop in service fees also needs to be address-

sed. Thus, it is crucial to weigh the benefits and costs of the facilitation of professional service providers using some economic analysis for negotiating the MRAs. During my 20 years plus experience working on professional services and MRAs, I have hardly seen any progress in any part of the world except very few close developed countries, and that too only in limited professions. Thus, it is too naïve to expect consensus on such a contentious issue of MRAs amongst a diverse range of countries ranging from North-South.

### **Global Value Chains (GVC)**

**1. What are the major vulnerabilities and challenges faced by developing countries to ensure the resilience of GVCs? How can GVC mapping, as outlined in the “G20 Generic Framework for Mapping GVCs”, be used to identify and address these vulnerabilities?**

I think vulnerabilities and challenges are on both sides. On the developing countries' side, there are problems in terms of capacity, skills, etc. However, the most prevalent issue is the predictability of policies affecting the supply chains, particularly changes in trade policies and related barriers, apart from the factors like political risk, environmental concern-related challenges, and disruptions due to war and conflict.

Thus, the policies for integrating developing countries' participation into GVCs are required to ensure predictability in a business environment. The policy gap results in challenges like lack of capacity, skill, financial constraints, logistics gap, etc., which creates vulnerabilities in the supply chain. In this regard, Duke University's Center for Globalization, Governance, and Competitiveness (CGGC)

has been mapping GVCs of different sectors and industries. Further, the World Bank also had a detailed mapping on GVCs, which analyses how the shocks are transmitted across GVCs. As a result, there are risks associated with belonging to GVCs as well as disadvantages that arise from not belonging to GVCs, all of which must be taken into consideration when formulating a policy.

**2. Do you think that G20 discussions can result in enhancing regulatory cooperation, capacity building, and information accessibility to streamline administrative procedures and support GVC growth? What specific actions can be proposed by future G20 Presidencies to address regulatory barriers and trade-related bottlenecks that hinder GVC growth?**

There is a long-standing need for integrating the GVC discussions with some of the other parts of the TIWG, which could be an investment in value chains, trade facilitation, and the logistics infrastructure, and the integration of MSMEs because of cross-linkage of these issues. Thus, if we integrate GVC into the broader framework, TIWG is an excellent forum to discuss multiple constraints to integration into GVCs, for e.g. climate change sustainability, resilience, etc, which was also discussed in TIWG of India's G20 Presidency as part of the priority outcome dealing with Generic Mapping Framework for GVCs. Therefore, TIWG can facilitate regulatory cooperation by internalizing all these dimensions in the discussion because GVCs cannot be discussed in isolation and should be linked with other aspects. Particularly, GVC work necessitates concentrating on a small number of crucial areas for developing nations and emerging environmental issues.



Subsequently, a detailed study can be conducted on some of the hubs and spokes within these specialized areas for each country. Such an empirical examination will guide countries on policy formulation in different dimensions of GVCs.

### **Logistics for Trade**

**1. In the TIWG meetings, were there any discussions on contingency plans to address potential disruptions in the supply chain of the logistic sector? What were the key hurdles encountered during TIWG negotiations in attaining Fair and equitable access to logistics for developing nations?**

During TIWG, it was discussed that the collusion and the disruptions in the shipping sector during COVID-19 had raised freight prices. These facts were presented during the first TIWG meeting in Mumbai. In subsequent meetings, the issues dealing with the resilience of the logistics sector were discussed, but resilience-related measures/solutions could not be addressed due to a lack of interest from the broader group of G20 Members. Specifically, these concerns were countered with claims that the European Commission's investigations had revealed no evidence of anti-competitive practices by in the maritime sector.

Considering the involvement of large private sector operators, the governments of G20 Members are unwilling to discuss the idea of creating price disclosure requirements on the shipping lines unless they use competition laws/ policies to curb unfair trade practices. Moreover, the freight rates spiked during 2020-21 and were later normalized, suggesting the issue of increased freight rates diminished, which led to the dilution of this issue during TIWG. In addition, the freight price issue requires the involvement of the private sector, shipping ministry, regulatory bodies, and other ministries and stakeholders, which was not covered under the scope of the TIWG. Hence there was little traction for this issue.

## **2. What role does digital public infrastructure play in the modernization of logistics for trade, and how did the Trade and Investment Working Group discussions ensure that India's home-grown technologies get recognition for enhancing efficiency in logistic operations?**

Digitalization of logistics, supply chain management, tracking, monitoring, and use of geospatial mapping facilitated by PM Gati Shakti platform is extremely vital and beneficial in infrastructure planning. Moreover, digital public infrastructure can really provide a backbone for modernizing logistics. G20 meetings provided a great platform to demonstrate such initiatives, but we could have included some simulation/demonstration of how such solutions would bring down costs and the time involved.

## **3. Concerning the High-Level Principles on digitalization of trade documents,**

## **how do you foresee adoption of these principles in near future, especially in the developing world? How do these principles address the digital divide between the Global North and the Global South?**

The national adoption of these principles makes complete sense. Many countries as part of their Trade facilitation committees are already adopting many of these principles in digitalization nationally. However, these principles still need to be implemented to generate seamless flow of trade documents in a cross-border transaction environment. While one can endorse principles of interoperability of systems, the major hurdles like trust issues and data security concern remain. Moving forward, countries need to improve their national trade facilitation regimes and launch pilot projects for certain trade documents, e.g., starting with e-bills of lading. Once it is demonstrated that the issues of trust, security breaches, transaction costs, and anonymization of data can be addressed, and the benefits in terms of reduced transaction costs are visible, then it will pave the way for the digitalization of other documents. Initially, G20 may adopt it, or subgroups can work together to pilot and streamline the digitalization initiatives; subsequently, it can be taken forward with non-G20 countries. But, there are still some technical challenges on this front.



**4. How do you think the clean transport issue can be internalized into the G20 agenda and help the mainstream decarbonization of the sector? Were there any outcomes or initiatives in TIWG or other related working groups in achieving their clean transport goals?**

The digitalization of trade and efficient logistics can help progress on the environmental front due to its contribution towards reducing carbon footprint, as suggested by recent studies. In the Logistics for trade priority issue in TIWG, there was limited discussion on aggressively recognizing this relationship; rather, the focus shifted towards the efficiency side. Specifically, there were restraints from some groups to discuss environmental measures and trade. One area I think we could be focusing, as I said, should be on the quality of infrastructure for logistics, which also then helps in terms of reducing the environmental impact of trade. So, there is scope, I think, to take this forward in the future and relate technology transfer, investment and

things to the environmental side of trade very nicely.

**5. How do you think the G20 forum provided a platform for international economic cooperation, specifically with respect to establishing transport corridors through global partnerships?**

TIWG was an appropriate platform for discussion on the logistics infrastructure issues, considering the participation of a wider range of countries. There was consensus on this issue considering its value for the G20 members and invitee countries. Thus, the recognition of common concerns in this area helped build alliances. Specifically, the adoption of high-level principles for digitalizing trade documents signals value for other countries as well, considering that G20 always seems like a voice of the world in a way. For example, the Middle East corridor idea came out of the G20. As a result, it was a very effective venue for generating alarm on the need for effective trade and logistics. Specifically, the priority issue of “Logistics for Trade” was one of the significant achievements of the TIWG working group.





## INDIAN FOLK ARTS

Gond, Bhil, and Pithora were among some of the folk art forms exhibited during the G20 Summit. These art forms originated from other rich states like Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and so on.



# INTEGRATING MSMEs WITH GLOBAL TRADE

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**Tanu M. Goyal** is a Senior Fellow at ICRIER. She has more than 15 years of experience in policy-oriented research. Over the last few years, she has worked extensively on a diverse set of issues relevant to India's domestic and international policy discourse, including Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), G20 and architectural elements of free trade agreements. She has co-authored a book on India's special economic zones, published by Springer and co-edited a book on India-European Union free trade agreement, published by Sage Publications.

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**1. Can you share your perspectives as a Knowledge Partner during the G20 India Presidency and as TIWG? What was your broader strategy and road map during the Summit as a Knowledge Partner?**

The Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) is a non-profit think tank, established in 1981. ICRIER was established at a time when India was still a closed economy and was facing a severe balance of payment crisis. Since then, ICRIER has been engaged in undertaking research on international economic issues and furthering India's international relations, while ensuring growth and stability in the country.

In that sense, ICRIER is a pioneer think tank in producing high quality, evidence-based research in areas concerning international economic relations, including the G20. In fact, when the G20 was elevated to the leaders' level, ICRIER started its Annual International G20 Conference, which enabled the exchange of ideas on substantive matters related to G20. Thus, when India took over the G20 Presidency, ICRIER was well-positioned to provide credible, knowledge-based advice to the Government of India on a variety of issues covered in the G20. This was well reflected in our actual engagement. Specifically, ICRIER was appointed as a G20 Knowledge Partner by several ministries and depart-

ments including the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Finance, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, the Ministry of Power, and the Department of Telecommunications. Our researchers also worked with the G-20 Sherpa's office and the Ministry of External Affairs on several ideas. Importantly, ICRIER served as the Secretariat and Policy Advisor to the Co-convenors of the Independent Expert Group established by the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors.

For us, it was a matter of great pride, as well as responsibility. Frankly, there was no strategy, but to do our best and use our experience and expertise to the fullest. Importantly, we wanted to make this a collaborative and consultative exercise and therefore, we made sure that we engage with the right stakeholders and have regular consultations. The point is that while one institute is designated to do the work, but knowledge is widespread. We used our network to gather as many relevant inputs as we could in the timeframe.

## 2. What process was followed to sharpen the agenda of the TIWG? Was this a consultative process?

This is a pertinent question. In this context, at the outset, I would like to give credit to the inclusive and consultative manner in which the Indian G20 Presidency functioned, particularly the Trade and Investment Working Group. Once the broad priorities were identified, the knowledge partners were given a free hand to shape them, in consultation with our international partners, national bodies such as industry associations and the past G20 presidency.

While shaping the priorities that ultimately result in tangible outcomes, one has to be mindful of two conflicting objectives – continuity and novelty – while ensuring that

the idea is relevant. A lot of themes have been in discussion in the G20 and thus, they become important issues to be picked up by Presidencies, yet, it is equally important to add value. For that, it is important to follow a consultative approach to bring out the nuances.

Taking specifically the case of the priority area we were supporting – integrating micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with global trade – we also followed a consultative approach, focusing on three important stakeholders.

***“The role of technology-based outcomes such as using artificial intelligence (AI)- based tools was recommended to establish a meta information that would enable MSMEs to access information easily, in user-friendly manner. Access to authentic and verified data is a fundamental requirement of such interface. Both access and verification of information are not possible without willingness and cooperation from G20 countries.”***

First, we examined the work that has been done by the past presidencies on this issue and held consultations with some experts to define the contours of our priority. Two, we worked closely with our international knowledge partner, that was, International Trade Centre (ITC) and three, we held several consultations with national bodies, including state-level industry associations and federations for a better understanding of the core challenges faced by the industry.

Following this, we were able to add value, which resulted in an important outcome – the Jaipur Call for Action – for the Indian Presidency.

**3. The TIWG Outcome Document reached a ground-breaking consensus on five concrete and action-oriented deliverables including the Jaipur Call for Action for enhancing access to information to MSMEs. The Action Plan calls for member countries to provide data and information to the helpdesk. What are your thoughts on the feasibility and potential challenges of implementing this aspect of the plan?**

The Jaipur Call for Action was centered on the premise that MSMEs across the world face challenges in accessing market-related and other trade-related information. These issues are more flagrant for MSMEs in the global south. While there are ongoing and established initiatives, such as the Global Trade Help desk, our consultations revealed that often times, smaller enterprises, particularly micro enterprises find it difficult to use these platforms. Even when information exists, it is not available in a user-friendly manner. Thus, there is a gap between availability, accessibility and use. The need to upgrade the current system was recognized. A lot of data is already available, however not accessible – thus the G20 Members need to support scaling up of the existing databases.

Through our consultations with the industry, interesting possibilities emerged. The role of technology-based outcomes such as using artificial intelligence (AI)-based tools was recommended to establish a meta information that would enable MSMEs to access information easily, in user-friendly manner. Access to authentic and verified data is a fundamental requirement of such interface. Both access and verification of information are not possible without willingness and cooperation from G20 countries.

**4. How do you look at the role of international organizations like the WTO, ITC, the UNCTAD and other interest groups to contribute on a voluntary basis to support the effective implementation of the Jaipur Call for Action?**

As mentioned in the previous response, a lot of information exists already, but there is a need for scaling up and upgrading the current infrastructure to improve accessibility. This requires cooperation and collaboration between the various information providers – including member



(G20) / non-member countries and international organizations, which already have relevant trade information such as the WTO, UNCTAD and ITC, among others. The role of ITC, of course, is more broad-based as it is recommended to provide an implementation plan.

**5. The outcome states that “innovative information technology solutions can help in reducing the costs and barriers for the financing of MSMEs”. What kind of IT solutions could ensure rapid digital enablement of MSMEs for lowering the costs and entry barriers on digital platforms?**

To improve access to information, it is important that information is available in a user-friendly format. There is a need to move away from a menu-driven approach, which is followed by most contemporary databases, to a search or query based approach. Former requires a certain level of familiarity and skill set.



Smaller enterprises, often home-grown ventures, may not have the requisite skills and knowledge and thus, they have to hire or pay specialized staff to extract information for them. A voice-enabled query-based interface, which is conversational in nature and supports multiple languages, will be able to improve the accessibility of information, lowering the cost and entry barriers.

**6. In your opinion what could be the checks and balances for this?**

Data access and authenticity are important. The current open AI interfaces pull data from all types of sources – verified, and non-verified. There is a lot of information on the World Wide Web and it is important to ensure that only verified, authenticated information reaches the MSME. For that, the portal has to be trained and an information repository has to be created, which must be verified by the member countries.

**7. As G20 is an intergovernmental organization, there might be a point that MSMEs are not a priority for every member currently. How do you look at the role of G20 in furthering the integration of MSMEs into global trade? What could be potential challenges that G20 Members are likely to face?**

I would not worry about MSMEs as a priority per se, as small businesses and vulnerable sectors have been a part of the G20 discourse since past many years. They continue to be important from an inclusiveness perspective, especially with the inclusion of the African Union in the group. Moreover, a clear mandate has been made for the ITC to take forward the recommendation on Global Trade Helpdesk so there is, in some way an implementing authority in place. However, when you look more broadly, then obviously often times one year is not enough to make substantial progress or bring out tangible out-

comes on certain issues. An uptake from the upcoming presidency becomes important. Each G20 presidency has its own set of priorities, which may or may not be directly linked to the past presidency. Therefore, to ensure fruition on some of the crucial issues, it is important to establish a monitoring mechanism. The point is that G20 is a discussion forum. It is not an implementational body. For implementation, there are existing institutions, however, the mandate has to come from its members. For instance, for trade-related matters, there is the WTO, for climate, and sustainable development, there are organizations and forums with the UN bodies and OECD and for corruption related matters there is UNODC, among others. But, the G20 forum can be instrumental in building consensus among the members.



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PHOTO CREDITS: G20 INDIA WEBSITE

**Parliament20 Summit, New Delhi  
October 12-14 2023**

# FACILITATION OF MRAS BETWEEN NATIONS

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**Pravakar Sahoo** is a distinguished Senior Lead at NITI Aayog and a professor with a robust academic and professional background. His achievements are widely recognized, with inclusion in the International Biographical Center's Top 100 Professionals a. Dr. Sahoo has served on the Advisory Board of the South Asia Democratic Forum and has coordinated the Annual India-Korea Policy Dialogue.

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## **1. What were the difficulties faced in framing the questionnaire for the MRA compendium on professional services and the scope of proposal for MRAs under the Ministerial Statement of Trade and Investment Working Group?**

The Trade and Investment Working Group faced resistance from the G20 Members on disclosure of relevant data pertaining to professional services, which was justified given the limited time available to collect such and relevant stakeholders did not consent to disclosure of information requested in initial drafts of the questionnaire. Thus, the questionnaires for the compendium for MRAs in professional services were restricted to structured questions with predefined response options. With limited availability of information on skills or competency gaps in professional service sectors and skill shortage data, there

was little scope for developing consensus on principles for the consultation process or negotiation of MRAs.

The Compendium was successful as it brings out the requirements for a successful MRA, like matching national skills recognizing bodies and how we can harmonize and standardize the national requirement among countries for better negotiations of MRAs and successful implementation of MRAs. The information received by the TIWG was limited, but ultimately the G20 Members were able to put out a statement in the chair summary i.e. "Commit to consider the development of an international reference classification of occupations by skill and qualification requirements to facilitate cross-country comparability and mutual recognition of skills and qualifications".

**2. Can you explain the role of domestic regulatory bodies in facilitating trade in professional services and MRAs? Building on the same, was there any consensus within the G20 Members regarding the role of regulatory bodies in MRAs?**

It is important to understand the diversity of the domestic regulatory framework pertaining to professional services among G20 Members. The regulatory bodies for professional services can be independent from the government itself or are authorized under specific legislations and other legal instruments. Although there are a number of MRAs negotiated between G20 Members and non-G20 Members, there was a series of consultations in the TIWG between the G20 Members on how to facilitate trade in professional services and MRAs.

Considering the resource-intensive nature of negotiating MRAs, it is advised that regulatory bodies conduct a cost-benefit analysis before initiating the discussions with the counterpart from the prospective trade partners.

One of the major concerns with respect to the involvement of regulatory bodies in the negotiation of MRAs is that the government cannot give any guarantees that the autonomous bodies will agree to the points discussed in the MRA negotiations. Even though the concern was prevalent among G20 Members, the group reached a consensus that the MRA compendium should facilitate or help developing countries by giving them more scope to successfully complete and implement MRAs. Some of the most important points that were discussed and recognized as important requirements;

for successful MRAs are facilitating mobility of skilled workers and addressing skills gaps; enhance global competitiveness and economic integration; and Harmonizing regulatory practices among others.

**3. Considering most nations have independent bodies to regulate professional services, what are the obstacles faced by regulatory bodies in developing nations to conclude MRAs with their counterparts in developed nations, and was there any consensus among the Members on how to overcome these obstacles?**

Domestic Regulations and legal frameworks that govern the independent bodies can present themselves as obstacles to the negotiation and implementation of MRAs, particularly, in this era when each country has its own national skill framework that outlines the qualifications, competence, and standards required for professional services. This is where harmonizing national legislation with MRA requirements and ensuring compatibility between the national skill framework plays a crucial part.

Additionally, developing countries have resource and capacity constraints which might hinder them in MRA negotiations with developed countries. Moreover, developing countries will have to change government priorities, making adhering to timelines difficult, on top of the lengthy bureaucratic procedures. Transparency also becomes an issue as media publications often ignore intricate details of the agreement. There was no consensus on specific ways to overcome obstacles but only general agreement among the G20 Members in helping developing countries.

## Kumarakom, Kerala

Kumarakom is a picturesque village located on the banks of Vembanad Lake in the state of Kerala, India. Known for its serene backwaters, lush landscapes, and rich biodiversity which includes numerous species of migratory birds. The village also boasts luxurious resorts, traditional Kerala cuisine, and opportunities for activities such as fishing and boating, making it a perfect getaway for nature lovers and those seeking a peaceful retreat.

# DECODING INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY: A GLOBAL BOOST FOR MSMEs' TRADE INTEGRATION AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION



**Rishabha Meena** [Associate, CTIL]  
**Vatsal Raj** [Young Professional]

## I. Introduction

The vital role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in global economic development, including employment creation and innovation, cannot be overstated. MSMEs are engines of inclusive growth and development. MSMEs account for 50% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 60-70% of employment in India.<sup>[1]</sup> Indian MSMEs contribute significantly to India's economic growth by accounting for 43% of India's global exports (2022-23).<sup>[2]</sup> However, lack of access to finance obstructs their growth. Specifically, in the case of exports, MSME's export competitiveness is hindered due to three primary reasons, viz. tariff barriers combined with the limited information of the foreign market, non-tariff barriers including product standards and certification procedures, lack of familiarity with the customs procedures and limited access to finance.<sup>[3]</sup> All these factors combined, increase MSMEs' costs to participate in the global market (or global

value chains). For instance, Indian MSMEs' exports declined from 49.4% in 2020-21 to 43.6% in 2022-23.<sup>[4]</sup> Recently, recognizing this pivotal role of MSMEs, G20 Members emphasized the significance of trade and investment as crucial channels to enhance the growth, development, and integration of MSMEs into global markets. The G20 Ministers' Jaipur Call for Action (JCA)<sup>[5]</sup> rightly recognizes their importance while addressing the challenges faced by MSMEs and emphasizes two key issues – (i) financial inclusion and (ii) trade participation. The JCA further underscores the significance of technology and digitalization of trade as crucial channels to enhance the growth, development, and integration of MSMEs into global markets.<sup>[6]</sup>

In this background, the authors delineate these two primary issues with a specific focus on the developments during India's G-20 Presidency.

Photo Credits: Canva



## II. Trade Participation

The G20 Trade and Investment Ministers Meeting Outcome Document, 2023, highlighted the gaps in the participation of MSMEs in developing and developed countries in the Global Value Chains (GVCs).[7] Participation in GVCs depend on MSMEs' manufacturing capacity and access to market information.[8] However, MSMEs lack the requisite resources to collect and analyze all the relevant information of their target markets, often due to low internet penetration and technical capacity.

Diversified and sustainable GVCs must be encouraged while fostering the integration of MSMEs into global trade. The G20 supports leveraging technology to facilitate cross-border trade. The Trade and Investment Working Group (TIWG) under India's G20 presidency witnessed proposals for enhancing MSMEs' access to information by upgrading the International Trade Centre's (ITC) Global Trade Helpdesk to facilitate access to trade-related information and foster the integration of MSMEs into global trade by urging G20 Members to aggregate relevant trade-related information for MSMEs on a unified, publicly accessible portal.[9] These recommendations also allow ITC to incorporate the principles of technological neutrality, data privacy, data security, and reliability during the upgrade of the Global Trade Helpdesk.

Moreover, past G20 Policy Guidelines on Boosting MSMEs' International Competitiveness, led by the Saudi Arabian Presidency,[10] and the G20 non-binding MSMEs Policy Toolkit,[11] led by the Italian Presidency, have recognized the pivotal role of digital technology and technology-based tools in remedying the informational imbalance by utilizing innovative information technology solutions as a means to reduce

costs and barriers for financing MSMEs. When accompanied by appropriate policy and institutional measures proposed during G20 2023, these tools can exponentially enhance MSMEs' access to information, finance, and markets.

The inclusion of Information-Sharing provisions in trade agreements has emerged as a key strategy for bridging the information asymmetry. Further, the Cooperation provision in the SMEs chapter in the FTAs involves establishing networking opportunities, facilitating the sharing of best practices, and enhancing entrepreneurial and managerial skills, contributing to the growth and development of MSMEs. For example – the India-ASEAN FTA, identifies MSMEs as an area of cooperation[12] and states that cooperation can be sought 'where appropriate' for human resource development and, training in Information Technology and Information and Communication Technology. Similarly, the India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) also identifies SMEs as a field of cooperation.[13]

Another innovative solution that emerged during India's G20 Presidency is the widespread adoption of paperless trade to boost productivity and foster economic growth by reducing labour costs and lowering barriers to entry for MSMEs.[14] G20 Members identified inadequate digital infrastructure, restricted digital connectivity, elevated costs linked to the adoption of digital tools, and a notable digital skills gap among MSMEs, as significant impediments to a transition to paperless trade. The G20 Members recommended a set of High-Level Principles for the Digitalization of Trade

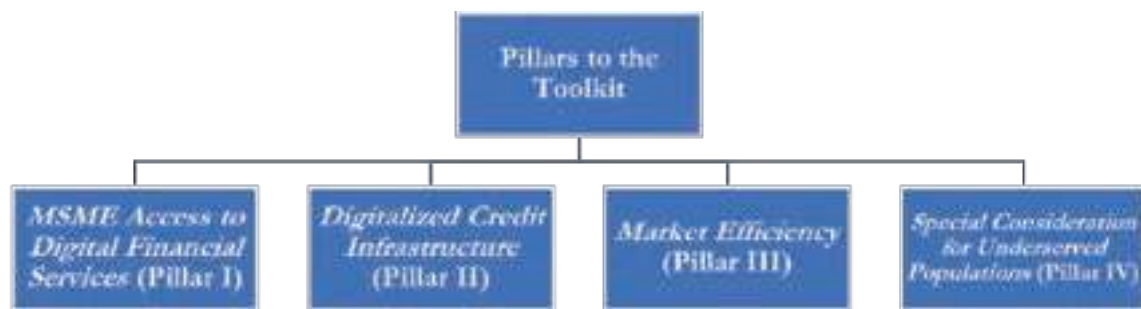


Figure 1: Pathways identified by the Trade and Investment Working Group to Enhance MSMEs' Trade Participation in Global Trade

Documents.<sup>[15]</sup> These principles function as a roadmap for a successful shift towards a more efficient and accessible global trade ecosystem driven by digital technology. G20 countries highlighted the importance of recognizing electronic trade documents as equivalent to their paper counterparts. This will facilitate significant productivity and efficiency gains for MSMEs and reduce challenges to global trade for MSMEs, which could increase GDP growth and improve GVCs' resilience.

Furthermore, the growth of MSMEs is often constrained by a lack of access to financial and technical expertise, emphasizing the need to foster linkages between foreign and domestic enterprises.<sup>[16]</sup> The G20 Members have encouraged the development of fair, balanced, and mutually beneficial linkages between MSMEs and Multinational Corporations to augment G20 Members' access to sustainable finance. It aims to enhance the participation of MSMEs in GVCs and regional supply chains while exploring strategies to improve the resilience and reliability of these supply chains. This would also strengthen the relevant business support organizations hosting information portals on the competitiveness of local MSMEs and providing matchmaking services.<sup>[17]</sup> Lastly, G20 countries and mem-

bers underscored that MSMEs are especially susceptible to disruptions and cost fluctuations in logistics services.<sup>[18]</sup> Particularly, it focused on operational and market conditions that often contribute to service disruptions, and shortages of containers and suggested that there exists a need to emphasize enhanced domestic monitoring. It is also crucial to note that the investment and business environment could be simplified for small businesses across various sectors by lowering entry barriers for MSMEs on digital platforms and ensuring their rapid digital enablement.

### III. Financial Inclusion

With globalization and technological development, digital infrastructure has become an indispensable part of targeted fiscal measures for MSMEs. Consequentially, it has led to the revolutionization of financial transactions. However, despite the robust digital infrastructure and changes in the fiscal measures to support, MSMEs' growth is often constrained by a lack of access to finance. About half of formal MSMEs do not have access to formal credit and instead rely on internal funds or from informal sources to start their business, as they are less likely to be able to obtain bank loans than large firms.

Approximately 41% of formal MSMEs in emerging markets have unmet financing needs. MSMEs lack access to formal financial services, which constrains the growth of individual MSMEs and, by extension, the overall economy's growth potential.

Digital Financial Services can enhance the efficiency of the financial market and expand access to financial services. Modern finance mechanisms like crowdfunding, peer-to-peer lending, and initial coin offerings may benefit MSMEs. However, MSMEs are still at the nascent stage in the adoption of digital financial services. Consequentially, G-20 countries have proposed the enhancement of the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPII).[19] GPII was launched during the G-20 summit in Seoul, South Korea in 2010. It is after a decade that the discussions under GPII during the India summit led to the Financial Inclusion Action Plan (FIAP)[20] to further the financial inclusion of the SMEs. Additionally, the G-20 members also agreed on a toolkit, Regulatory Toolkit for Enhanced Digital Financial Inclusion of MSMEs[21] (Toolkit) in Alliance for Financial Inclusion's (AFI) SME Finance Working Group (SMEFWG) to reduce the cost of remittances. The Toolkit aims to assist the financial regulators from G-20 members as well as non-G-20 countries. Primarily, the Toolkit provides practical policy tools that the regulators can introduce at different stages while implementing policies at enhancing the regulatory environment of the MSMEs to strengthen their access to digital financial services. The Toolkit provides that when introducing any policy for MSMEs' access to digital finance, the regulators should focus on three aims: [22]

System Stability and Integrity	The credit to MSMEs is generally considered riskier due to a lack of collateral and limited credit information. Therefore, any policy for MSMEs' financial access should not increase overall systemic risk.
Economic Growth and Innovation	The financial inclusion policy should also focus on MSMEs' innovation, growth, and expansion. It should further ensure a level playing field between the MSMEs and their large businesses.
Consumer trust and protection	Such policies should ensure that consumer trust, including information collected, should be protected and maintained.

The Toolkit has four Pillars which deal with the following:

MSME Access to Digital Financial Services (Pillar I)	Pillar I is based on the fact that digital channels have the potential to enhance the efficiency and security of the payment system, and eventually allow the MSMEs to expand their business operations. Information asymmetry and lack of collateral impede MSMEs' access to finance.
Digitalized Credit Infrastructure (Pillar II)	Pillar II seeks to leverage data for credit scoring and establish registries for collateral to address these issues
Market Efficiency (Pillar III)	Pillar III encapsulates end-to-end digital facilitation for the development of the MSMEs. For instance, it involves online business registration, digital financial literacy, and financial education for MSMEs, etc.
Special Consideration for Underserved Populations (Pillar IV)	Pillar IV seeks to address the difficulties faced by the MSMEs owned by women, youth, the elderly, rural population, etc. during access to finance and then barriers faced by them during the transition to digital finance.

## Conclusion

India's G20 Presidency underscores a focused approach to enhance the global participation of MSMEs. The emphasis on leveraging technology for trade facilitation and the commitment to financial inclusion through the GPFI and the Toolkit signifies a concerted effort to address the challenges faced by MSMEs. If effectively implemented, these measures can significantly elevate MSMEs' access to information, finance, and markets, fostering their growth and integration into the global economy.

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# GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS RECONCILIATION: THE G20'S AND OTHER GLOBAL FORUMS' IMPERATIVE

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**Sagar K. Chourasia**  
Founding Member, NITISARA  
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The G20 India Summit in September 2023 with its New Delhi Declaration (NDLD) has taken an inclusive approach, involving a spectrum of issues and stakeholders beyond G20 Members, and receiving feedback from members on the forum's decisions and negotiations in a first-ever follow-up virtual meeting in November 2023. The members' consensus in building risk-averse global value chains has been included in Article 17 of the New Delhi Declaration[1], emphasizing that the private sector plays a vital role in propelling sustainable economic reforms and prosperity. Considering this, the G20 decided to collaborate with the commercial sector in establishing global value chains that are resilient, inclusive, and sustainable by assisting developing nations in moving up the value chain.

The G20 has contributed to GVCs under four major themes, including: Firstly, 'Unlocking Trade for Growth', the G20's approval of the Generic Framework for Mapping Global Value Chains (GVC)[2], which will assist members in risk identification and resilience building. Secondly, in Article 20 of NDLD, under the theme 'Getting Ready for the Work of the Future', the G20 Members are promising to boost efforts to eradicate child labor and forced labor along global value chains. Thirdly, for 'Eliminating Hunger and Malnutrition', the G20 will work to create sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture and food systems, as the members must accelerate innovations and investments aimed at boosting agricultural output, decreasing waste and loss of food, and enhancing marketing and storage. Lastly,



under ‘Securing Women’s Food Security, Nutrition, and Well-Being’, G20 Members seek to promote investments in robust, sustainable, and inclusive food systems and agriculture. Further to this end, under Article 26 and Article 67 (i) of NDD, the G20 Members encourage healthy diets and readily available, reasonably priced, safe, and nourishing food in school lunch programs, and encourage women farmers to innovate inclusive agri-value chains and systems.

The G20 Trade and Investment Working Group (TIWG) has added significant value in harmonizing global supply chains. The TIWG Ministerial outcome document and chair summary also emphasized the importance of WTO: “reaffirms that a rules-based, non-discriminatory, fair, open, inclusive, equitable, sustainable and transparent multilateral trading system, with WTO at its core, is indispensable.” In addition, TIWG also concluded on streamlining trade documentation, where the High-Level Principles for Digitalization of Trade Documents were adopted. This push for paperless trade will expedite customs clearance, reduce costs, and facilitate smoother cross-border trade. Another result from TIWG was on Critical Minerals, recognizing the strategic importance of minerals for clean energy technologies. The G20 adopted High-Level Principles for Collaboration on Critical Minerals for Energy Transitions. This collaboration aims to secure reliable and sustainable supply chains for these vital resources.

### **Global forums contributing to resilient GVCs**

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) supply chain pillar resonates with G20 GVCs recommendations. With an extensive discourse over the Indo-

Pacific strategies and the narrative arguing in favor of an open, secure, prosperous, inclusive, and free Indo-Pacific, the IPEF, is a one of its kind economic framework to form a binding resolution. The initial construct of the Indo-Pacific was considered a geo-political balancing act in the region, and later, other countries got involved with their white papers, including EU countries.[3] However, this geo-political construct changed to a geo-economic framework with the IPEF.

“***While IPEF is not a traditional trade agreement with binding tariffs, it outlines shared expectations and potential actions expected from member countries to achieve this goal.***”

The four major pillars of the IPEF include resilient supply chains, resilient trade, climate economy and fair economy. For the United States of America, it was a fundamental way to re-pivot itself in the Asia-Pacific region, specifically with the Pacific Rim countries. The IPEF aims to strengthen economies in the Indo-Pacific region by improving the resilience and efficiency of GVCs. While IPEF is not a traditional trade agreement with binding tariffs, it outlines shared expectations and potential actions expected from member countries to achieve this goal. Some potential actions that are under the pipeline for IPEF in GVCs include:

- **Minimizing Trade Barriers** by harmonizing technical regulations and standardizing customs procedures to reduce paperwork, expedite clearance times, and resolve unfair competition and intellectual property concerns.
- **Strengthening Supply Chain Resilience** by mapping and monitoring critical sectors to identify vulnerabilities, diversifying suppliers and markets, improving connectivity, and facilitating crisis response mechanisms and coordinated action during disruptions.
- **Enhancing the role of workers** by investing in workforce development and skills training to ensure adequate skilled labor for critical sectors. This would also promote labor rights and fair working conditions and support MSMEs to integrate into GVCs.
- **Integrate sustainability considerations** into GVCs by promoting sustainable and environment-friendly practices.

The IPEF negotiations on the supply chain pillar concluded in May 2023, with the member countries agreeing to these shared expectations and potential actions. While not legally binding, the statement paves the way for future cooperation and voluntary initiatives to improve GVCs in the region. Under Pillar 2 of IPEF, 14 nations showed resistance to signing the supply chain resilience agreement[4] that lists the establishment of 3 new IPEF supply chain bodies to facilitate cooperation among the partners. The IPEF Labor Rights Advisory Board, the Supply Chain Council, and the Supply Chain Crisis Response Network are these organizations. The advisory board would support the efforts of IPEF partners to promote labor rights in their supply chains, promote sustainable trade and investment, and facilitate investment opportunities in companies that

“respect labor rights.” The advisory board would be composed of government, workers, and employer representatives, as well as a subcommittee of government representatives.

Government representatives stated that the labor-related provisions are intended to be a cooperative mechanism and would not be subject to dispute settlement.[5]

### UNFCCC – COP on aligning with the global agenda of GVCs

Major actions that have been taken in the recently concluded COP28 in UAE for GVCs:

- **Shaping International Trade:** The UAE Presidency launched the “Shaping International Trade and Global Value Chains for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises’ Climate Action” session. This initiative aims to harmonize market access policies and facilitate MSMEs’ engagement with sustainable supply chains.

- **Green Skills Development:** The “Empowering Green Skill Development for Sustainable Supply Chains” event addresses the need for workforce training in green technologies and sustainable practices to support the transition to a low-carbon economy.

- **Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge:** This initiative focuses on accelerating the clean energy transition in global supply chains by encouraging businesses to commit to renewable energy use and energy efficiency measures.

- **Sustainable Agriculture Declaration:** Recognizing the importance of food security and climate resilience, COP28 adopted the “UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action.” This declaration promotes sustainable farming practices and supports vulnerable communities in adapting to climate change.

In addition to this, COP28's role in building supply chain resilience for critical minerals [6], supply chain decarbonization[7], and EU push with partner countries for a deforestation-free supply chain[8] will ensure the following:

- **Transparency and Traceability:** Enhance transparency throughout global value chains to track emissions, identify climate risks, and promote responsible sourcing. This could involve mandatory disclosures for corporations, standardized carbon accounting methodologies, and digitalization of supply chains.
- **Incentivize Sustainable Practices:** Encourage businesses to integrate sustainability into their operations by promoting eco-design, low-carbon materials, and energy efficiency measures. Policy instruments like carbon taxes, green public procurement, and subsidy reforms can play a role.
- **Support for MSMEs:** Provide technical and financial assistance to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to integrate into sustainable global value chains. This could involve capacity-building programs, access to green technologies, and preferential trade agreements for sustainable products.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Foster multi-stakeholder collaboration between governments, businesses, NGOs, and research institutions to develop and implement best practices for sustainable global value chains.

## Conclusion

While challenges remain, India's G20 Presidency laid important groundwork for building more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable GVCs. The G20 Generic Framework, Jaipur Call for Action, and other initiatives have the potential to empower developing countries

foster innovation, and create a more stable global trading environment. It's worth noting that some key areas, like WTO reform, needed to be conclusively addressed due to geopolitical disagreements. Nevertheless, India's leadership in championing resilient and inclusive GVCs marks a significant step in shaping a more equitable and prosperous global trade landscape.

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# THE INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE CORRIDOR (IMEEC) AT THE SIDELINES OF G-20: PATHWAY FOR GREEN HYDROGEN



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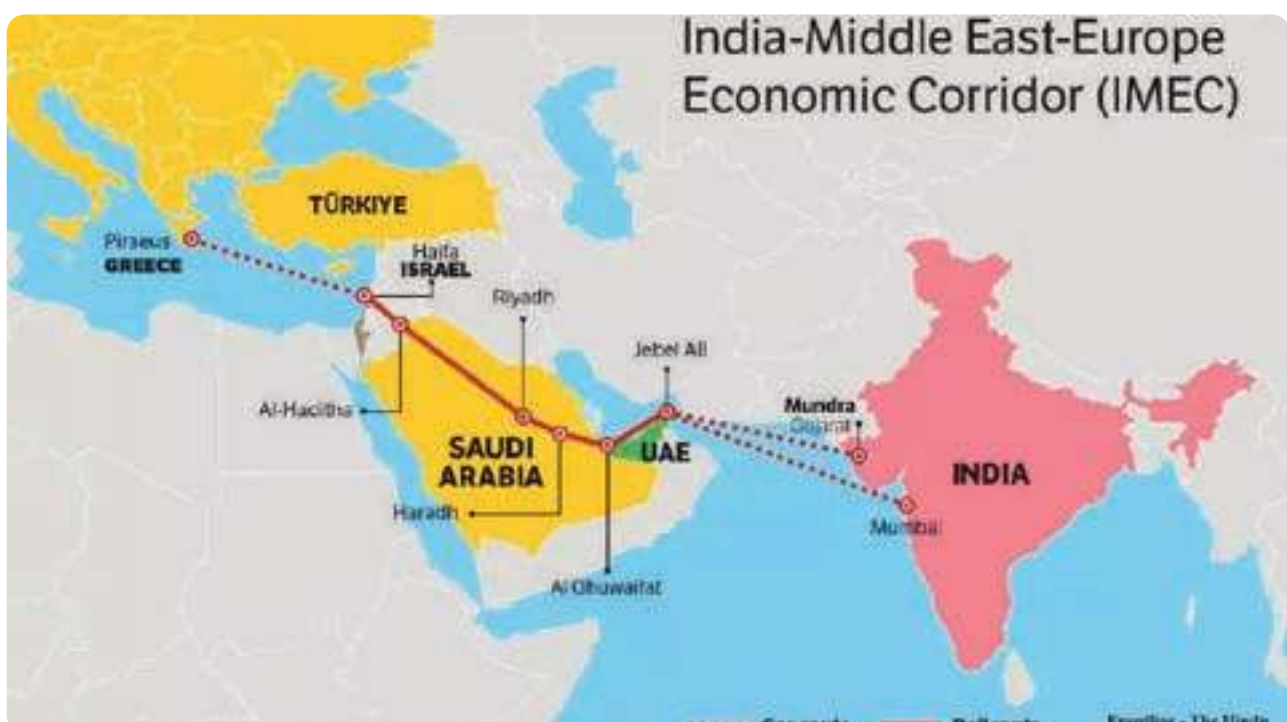
**“Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, and Sabka Prayas” - Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India [1]**

The opening lines of the Indian Prime Minister at the G-20 summit in 2023 had set the tone for countries to collaborate for their mutual benefit and leverage their friendship towards progressing together. The India-Middle East Europe Corridor (IMEEC) initiative was achieved on the sidelines of the G-20. The IMEEC is an ambitious project envisaged as an alternative to the Belt and Road Initiative to connect and establish trade routes along India, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe.[2] The main objective of the IMEEC is to expand the transport network, including roads, railway lines, and sea cables/ pipes.[3] The

improved connectivity among these countries is aimed at increasing and enhancing trade. The countries involved in the IMEEC can be seen as ‘friends’ or ‘allies’ of each other, and the launch of the IMEEC gives impetus to ‘friend-shoring’, i.e., trading with reliable partners and scope for shifting or expanding the existing supply chains.

## Roadway for the Export of Hydrogen

Reducing emissions from highly polluting industries like steel and chemicals is a problem that businesses and governments everywhere have been attempting to solve for a long time. However, a consortium of gas companies in Austria, Germany, and Italy think they have a solution now: a 3,300-kilometer hydrogen pipeline.[4] A similar



solution is also being presented at the IMEEC as well. One of the projects under the IMEEC is the establishment of pipelines for the export of hydrogen.[5] In the context of India, the government had recognized the growing demand for hydrogen, which is why the National Green Hydrogen Mission was launched in 2023[6] during India's Presidency of the G-20.

The National Green Hydrogen Mission's primary goal is to establish India as the world's center for producing, using, and exporting green hydrogen and its byproducts. In order to meet these goals, the Mission will develop the capacity to manufacture five million metric tonnes (MMT) of green hydrogen annually by 2030, and with the expansion of export markets, that amount might rise to ten MMT annually.[7] A total of Rs 19,744 crore would be spent initially on the Mission, with Rs 17,490 crore going towards the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) programme, Rs 1,466 crore going towards pilot projects, Rs 400 crore going towards research and development, and Rs 388 crore going towards other Mission components.[8]

India's goal can be accomplished if the green hydrogen produced can be transported and exported to other countries. One of the ways of transporting hydrogen is through pipelines. Usually, there are three kinds of pipelines that are employed to transport hydrogen. The first type of pipeline is called dedicated hydrogen pipeline, and it is constructed with materials specifically meant to distribute hydrogen (hydrogen can make ordinary pipeline materials brittle, even steel). The second kind of pipeline is used to export natural gas and hydrogen, where the existing pipelines must be slightly modified. The third kind of transportation that is now in place combines tiny amounts of green hydrogen

between five and ten percent—with natural gas. In India, currently, there is no dedicated statewide interconnected hydrogen pipeline network because the country's green hydrogen industry is still at a nascent stage. To build such a network, a significant upfront financial commitment will be required. The IMEEC, in this regard, would be beneficial for the development of infrastructure. India can follow a cue from Europe, which established a dedicated hydrogen transport network by building on its pre-existing gas network (the European Hydrogen Backbone project).[9] The IMEEC project would be beneficial not only for India but for other developed countries as well.

The goal of IMEEC, which is to expedite the transportation of hydrogen energy, is also in line with the more significant strategic interest of the US and the EU in moving Europe away from Russian fossil fuels. [10] However, to successfully implement the IMEEC project, countries would have to decide on specific standards related to hydrogen pipelines. At present, there are no Indian standards for hydrogen pipelines.[11] Many countries have adopted the ASME B 31.12- 2019 standard, which outlines the requirements for pipeline transportation of gaseous hydrogen.[12] The ASME standard covers all pipeline material, welding, testing, and operation standards. It also includes specifications for transport pipeline upkeep.[13] The parameters for the safe construction, operation, and maintenance of pipelines used for the transmission and distribution of pure hydrogen and hydrogen-blended gases are also outlined in the CGA G-5.6 and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Standards Association (IEEEA) Doc 121/14

standards.[14] However, countries could have different standards for laying down hydrogen pipelines. Therefore, IMEEC countries would have to decide and negotiate on common standards to be applied for the laying down of pipelines to export hydrogen.

### One of the Wins of G-20: IMEEC

The launch of the IMEEC was done at an opportune time, during the G-20 summit in New Delhi.[15] The G-20 was a diplomatic success where several consensus declarations were produced. With more than 200 gatherings in 60 Indian cities throughout all 28 states and eight union territories, utilizing 40 distinct methods such as Finance Track Working Groups, Sherpa Working Groups, and Engagement Groups, the extent, magnitude, and breadth of India's G20 Presidency was unparalleled. On the sidelines of G-20, there were other achievements apart from IMEEC, such as the Global Biofuel Alliance, Partnership of Global Infrastructure and Investment, and India, Brazil, South Africa, and USA meetings. Therefore, it is evident that the launch of IMEEC at the G20 was not coincidental but intentional to leverage friend shoring and showcase a strong statement of diplomacy among the allies.

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# TIMG MUMBAI



# 'ATMANIRBHARTA' IN GLOBAL HEALTHCARE: NAVIGATING THE INTERSECTION OF HEALTH, TRADE, AND MIGRATION



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India's stewardship of the G20 during the critical phase of the global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic was marked by a profound vision encapsulated in the theme "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" — translating to "One Earth, One Family, One Future" — as articulated in the New Delhi Leaders Declaration.[1] The pandemic underscores the imperative for the world to embrace India's vision, emphasizing global interdependence in effectively combating such crises.

The healthcare challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted the importance of being "Atmanirbhar" – self-reliant, especially regarding the healthcare infrastructure of a country. Regardless, the interconnectedness of nations became strikingly evident during this period, highlighting the crucial role healthcare plays in both societal well-being and economic stability. The existing shortages in the healthcare sector were exacerbated during the pandemic, bringing global vulnerabilities to the forefront. A robust healthcare workforce is indispensable for achieving optimal health outcomes globally.[2] The chronic shortage of healthcare professionals poses a significant obstacle to delivering essential health services, thus hindering the realization of international health and development goals. This scarcity not only deprives populations of crucial healthcare services but also subjects healthcare workers to overwhelming workloads and stress, whi-

ch leads to dire consequences for both communities in need and dedicated healthcare professionals.[3]

In response to these challenges, the New Delhi Leaders Declaration outlined a strategic objective to fortify global health by concentrating efforts on enhancing primary



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healthcare, bolstering the healthcare workforce, and elevating essential health services and systems to surpass the pre-pandemic era.[4] The commitment to achieve the outlined objectives within the next 2-3 years reflects a shared understanding among G20 nations of healthcare's vital role in ensuring a safer and more prosperous future for our interconnected global family.

In the context of Trade in Services under the aegis of General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), healthcare services are traded through four modes of supply. These include:

- (a) cross-border supply, without any movement on the part of either the supplier or the consumer, such as in telemedicine or e-health services (Mode 1);
- b) consumption abroad, that is, the movement of consumers to another jurisdiction to consume health services, for example in the case of medical tourism (Mode 2);
- (c) commercial presence, such as the establishment of a foreign health institution, for example in the form of a branch, subsidiary, affiliate, or joint venture (Mode 3);
- (d) movement of natural persons, which refers to the temporary cross-border presence of service providers, but not jobseekers or permanent migration to the receiving economy. For example, certain doctors and nurses practising in other jurisdictions (Mode 4).[5]

Among these modes, Mode 4 holds particular relevance for the mobility of the healthcare workforce, encompassing their temporary cross-border presence as service providers. In 2020, high-income economies dominated the trade in health-related services, yet they experienced a decline in services traded through Mode 4 due to pandemic-related restrictions. Interestingly, the same period witnessed a surge in the recruitment of international health personnel in high-income countries, reflecting a substantial increase in

foreign-trained medical doctors and nurses compared to pre-COVID years.[6] The substantial migration of doctors and nurses from India to the OECD countries amid the pandemic indicates this pattern.

Indian doctors predominantly migrated to English-speaking countries like Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Concurrently, a significant influx of Indian nurses was observed in large numbers in countries such as Australia, Canada, Italy, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom during the pandemic. India emerged as the major supplier of healthcare workforce during this period, indicating a discernible trend of health workforce shortages in the high-income countries.[7]

This 'quick-fix' solution of importing healthcare workers to address domestic shortages in high-income countries is not sustainable. While seemingly remedial, this approach can have detrimental effects on exporting countries with fragile healthcare systems. The migration of healthcare professionals poses a risk of systemic collapse, potentially resulting in significant loss of lives. Beyond the immediate health impact, there are substantial financial implications. When a considerable number of doctors and nurses migrate, the countries that invest in their education and training experience a diminished return on investment, inadvertently becoming unwilling contributors to the wealthier nations attracting their healthcare personnel.[8]

The World Health Organization (WHO) Expert Advisory Group on the Relevance and Effectiveness of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel report advocates for a targeted approach to add-

ress health workforce needs for universal health coverage. The WHO's Health Workforce Support and Safeguards List for 2023 includes 55 countries that encounter significant challenges in this regard. These countries exhibit a lower density of doctors, nurses, and midwives compared to the global median (49 per 10,000 population) and a Universal Health Coverage service coverage index below a specified threshold. [9]

Aligned with the principles outlined in the WHO Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel, especially in Article 5 (Health workforce development and health systems sustainability) and Article 10 (Partnerships, technical collaboration, and financial support), the report recommends prioritizing these listed countries for health personnel development and health system support. It also calls for safeguards to discourage the active international recruitment of health personnel from these nations.

In this regard, the WHO advises that bilateral agreements related to healthcare worker mobility may be considered for the listed countries under specific circumstances with the application of the precautionary principle.[10] These agreements must undergo a health labour market analysis.[11] They must incorporate measures to guarantee adequate domestic supply and secure benefits for the source country by actively involving stakeholders from the health sector in trade negotiations. Addition-

ally, their healthcare workforce must be officially reported to the WHO Secretariat through National Health Workforce Accounts[12] and Code reporting processes.

Health and trade stakeholders must actively strengthen their cooperation to propel the health agenda. Countries exporting healthcare workforce should actively pursue bilateral agreements that address work force gaps, promote health cooperation, facilitate trade in services, support foreign health worker training, and establish mutual recognition of qualification for health professionals. Additionally, all bilateral agreements should contribute to workforce sustainability, universal health coverage, and health security while strengthening the healthcare systems of both the exporting and importing countries.

The concern lies not in ending migration but in ensuring its effective management and regulation. Freedom of movement is a fundamental right, as declared in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and migration has been a constant in human history.[13] The pace of globalization has notably expedited this trend. However, the severe implications of health workforce migration in developing nations emphasizes the need for responsible and well-regulated migration management. The critical goal is for all countries to strive towards self-sufficiency — fostering Atmanirbharta.

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# ARE MEMBER-DRIVEN, OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND INCLUSIVE WTO REFORMS ACHIEVABLE?



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In recent years, G20 Members have acknowledged the need for WTO reforms, particularly the need to rebalance, rectify asymmetries, and enhance the organization's relevance and efficiency. G20 Members committed to supporting 'necessary reform' of the WTO under the 'Riyadh Initiative on the Future of the WTO', with the outcome document containing members' views on fostering transparency, addressing members' notification-related constraints, the issue of WTO Joint Statement Initiatives, and fishery subsidies issues. [1] In 2021, members in Rome focused on strengthening WTO rule-making, facilitating negotiations, and dispute settlement reform.[2] The following year, G20 Members in Indonesia deliberated WTO reform post-MC12, discussing issues regarding levelling the playing field, fair

competition, realizing SDGs, and reforming the dispute settlement mechanism.[3] Thus, it was only expected that standing at the critical juncture between the MC12 and the WTO Ministerial Conference in 2024, the Indian Presidency would prioritize WTO reform under its 2023 Trade and Investment Working Group Agenda.

In this regard, revisiting some pertinent issues on WTO reform discussed during the several TIWG Meetings may give us a deeper insight into our presidency's vision regarding WTO reform.

## **WTO reform at MC12 and identifying areas of divergence at the 2023 TIWG**

At the MC12, ministers had committed to 'work towards necessary reform of the WTO', envisioning reforms to all its functions

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in a 'Member-driven, open, transparent, inclusive' manner to address 'the interests of all Members, including development issues.' Further, ministers also committed to 'conduct discussions with the view to having a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all Members by 2024', recognizing the urgency to solve the ongoing dispute settlement crisis.[4]

Post-MC12, WTO reform was intensely discussed in other multilateral forums, including BRICS, ASEAN, the Commonwealth and G20, revolving around the MC12 language. However, despite a common base language, these discussions were fraught with divergences, particularly on 3 points.

Firstly, language on dispute settlement was frozen at the MC12 text, and no language on dispute settlement that went beyond 'conducting discussions' was deemed acceptable due to persistent US objections. Moreover, the US also had reservations regarding discussing the multilateral issue of WTO reform at forums such as the G20, which did not involve the entire WTO membership. While initially harbouring ambitions to push for Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT), capacity-building and definitive text on the restoration of the Appellate Body as part of the TIWG Outcome, the Indian Presidency had to eventually lower its ambitions on dispute settlement reform.

Secondly, many members had been raising concerns regarding the nature of WTO negotiations, stating that divergent interests of members had stalled talks across the board. Consequently, as part of the reform agenda, these members are pushing JSIs and other plurilateral discussions in the WTO to set agendas and negotiate them separately from the multilateral track.[5] This approach to expediting discussions on parallel tracks away from multilateral discussions as part of

reforming the WTO's deliberative function was termed 'reform by doing' and hailed as a solution to the WTO's ongoing stalemate problem. However, many members like India and South Africa expressed their stringent criticism of the JSIs and the 'reform by doing' process, highlighting that negotiating in small groups parallelly can dilute every member's equal footing on the multilateral track, making smaller players vulnerable to arm-twisting from more prominent players and disrupt the member-driven consensus-based character of WTO decision-making.

Thirdly, the issue of S&DT continued to remain controversial. While the Ministers

***"Thus, post-MC12, the agenda of WTO reform at all other forums, including BRICS, ASEAN, the Commonwealth and G20 largely revolved around the language provided in the MC12 Outcome Document. In all these forums, deliberation on WTO reform saw divergences arise on three particular points."***

at MC12 had reaffirmed S&DT to remain 'an integral part' of the negotiations, the outcome document also mentioned that such treatment should be 'precise, effective and operational.' [6] The ambiguity in the language led to two sets of demands. 'Effective' and 'operational' S&DT could both mean enhanced S&DT or a dilution- especially when read with the qualifier of 'precise'. This led many developing members to question if 'pre-

issue' S&DT would be a deviation from the present rules of blanket special and differential treatment to create subcategories among developing members. In the initial meetings of the G20, objections regarding S&DT, were also voiced vociferously, including by China. Thus, addressing divergences on these key issues was the major challenge before the presidency regarding WTO reform.

### **Low ambitions and no divergence: India's approach**

The Indian Presidency had been aware of these from the very start and kept its ambitions on WTO reform concise. Restraint on contentious issues like dispute settlement was adopted early on, and reaffirming the principles of a member-driven, consensus-based, open, transparent, and inclusive reform process which 'must address the interests of all Members, including development issues' was prioritized.

In addition to the existing divergences, India, however, faced two additional issues that arose during the progress of the presidency. The first was the issue of involving non-members, such as civil societies, in WTO deliberation. This issue was already being discussed as part of debates on reforming the

deliberative function, with members like the European Union expressly including the participation of external stakeholders in its proposals on reform. Further, the WTO Director-General formally established the Business and Civil Society Advisory Groups in June 2023, inviting business and civil society groups to share their perspectives on relevant trade issues.[7] However, many members viewed this development as a renewed threat against the member-driven nature of WTO deliberations.

The other, more contentious issue that arose during the TIWG meetings was regarding a comprehensive WTO reform agenda, focusing on improving deliberative, executive and dispute settlement functions, intending to dub the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference a "reform ministerial".[8] Some members had been pushing the Indian Presidency to include the ambitious, comprehensive reform agenda as part of the TIWG priority issue. However, the approach was prone to contention due to members' reservations. Also, India had proposed a contradictory and less controversial approach to reform, suggesting incremen-



tal procedural changes to improve the general functioning of the WTO bodies instead of substantial changes. This proposal, colloquially called 30 for 30, containing 30+ reforms to be implemented by the 30th Year of the WTO, was gaining slow but steady traction at the WTO.[9] However, balancing out these two approaches of comprehensive versus less controversial reform became a vital component of the presidency's WTO reform discussions.

By the Ministerial Meeting, it was already clear that despite robust discussions on the contentions mentioned above, there was little chance that any of these issues could find their way into an eventual consensus-based outcome. Certain disagreements regarding the language on JSIs were intensely discussed under other priority issues, particularly regarding Trade for Growth and Prosperity, Global Value Chains, and Medium, Small, and Marginal Enterprises[10]. A stable language on JSIs was finally reached after hours of discussion in the final meeting of the TIWG, [11] marking a significant achievement for the presidency under the WTO reform priority.

While the presidency refrained from pushing its offensive agenda on S&DT, it successfully ensured that members agreed on open, fair, inclusive and accessible trade for all while recognising the need for including a development dimension in the WTO deliberations on trade, industry and investment matters.[12]

However, on dispute settlement, no language that extended the commitments taken in MC12 was pushed, as it was evident that the USA would withdraw its support from the text in such a case. [13]

## Conclusion

With a low but steady ambition, the Indian Presidency successfully forged a consensus-based outcome regarding the text on WTO reform. It is true the outcome text on WTO reform under the G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial Outcome Document and Chairs' Statement (2023), looks like a simple reaffirmation of the MC12 Outcome Document for the most part. Thus, it does not, at first sight, look like an achievement at all compared to the text on other priority issues is the text. Yet, given how the text was forged amidst significant divergence on various substantive issues, the low ambition in the WTO reform paragraphs reflects a wise restraint on part of the presidency from pushing its agenda. It is this restraint that played a significant role in balancing the conflicting interests of members in the G20 TIWG negotiations and helped the presidency achieve the much-desired consensus on WTO reform under G20 TIWG 2023.



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- [7] World Trade Organization, DG Okonjo-Iweala sets up civil society and business advisory groups (June 21, 2023) [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news23\\_e/bu\\_s\\_15jun23\\_e.html](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news23_e/bu_s_15jun23_e.html).
- [8] Australia led this demand to prioritize WTO reform at the upcoming WTO 13th Ministerial Conference, which was also reflected in its prop-

osal, Maximizing the Value of WTO Ministerial Conferences: Communication from Australia (2023), WTO Doc No. WT/GC/W/873.

[9] WTO reform: Incremental changes to improve the functioning of the various WTO bodies, Communication from India (2023), WTO Doc No. WT/GC/W/874.

[10] See para 24 and 28, G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial Meeting: Outcome Document and Chair's Summary (2023), at <https://tinyurl.com/mrx3frh3>.

[11] The WTO reform section, contained in Paras 11-15 of the G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial Meeting: Outcome Document and Chair's Summary (2023) does not contain any reference to JSIs.

[12] Para 13, G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial Meeting: Outcome Document and Chair's Summary (2023).

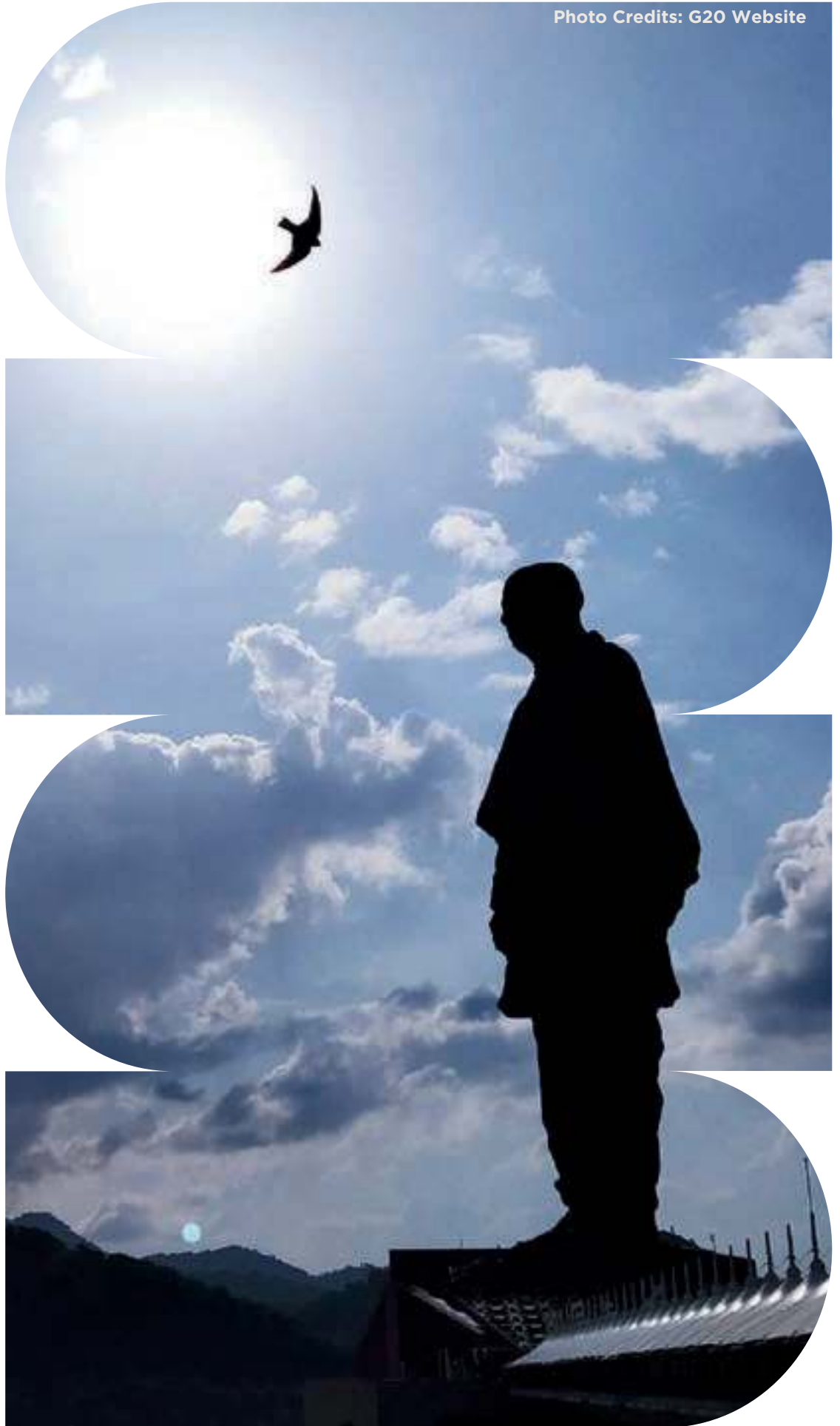
[13] In pursuance of para iv of the MC12 Outcome Document (note iv), para 12 of the G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial Meeting: Outcome Document and Chair's Summary limited the ambit of DSB reform discussions to 'remain[ing] committed to conducting discussions with a view to having a fully and well-functioning Dispute Settlement System, accessible to all members by 2024'.

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# TIWG KEVADIA - GUJARAT





**CTIL**  
**NEWS & EVENTS**



# CTIL EVENTS



**2nd May 2023:** CTIL organized a Capacity Building Session on 'Export Opportunities Arising from FTAs' with CII for Gujarat based industries. The program provided various insights for industry stakeholders on maximizing benefits on export opportunities arising from FTA provisions.

**4th August 2023:** CTIL celebrated its sixth anniversary since its establishment. The event was graced by Shri R. Venkataramani, learned Attorney General of India (Guest of Honour), as well as Shri Sunil Barthwal, Commerce Secretary, Dept. of Commerce, Government of India, Shri Peeyush Kumar, Additional Secretary, Dept. of Commerce, Government of India and Prof. Satinder Bhatia, Vice-Chancellor, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT).



**31 August 2023:** CTIL hosted a Panel Discussion and Book Talk on "Free Trade Agreements: India and the world" authored by Ambassador Dr. V. S. Seshadri (Retd. IFS) and published by the Oxford University Press. The distinguished panel consisted of Prof. James J. Nedumpara, Dr. V. S. Seshadri (Retd. IFS), Mr. Sumanta Chaudhuri, Ms. Anuradha RV, and Ms. Shiny Pradeep. The panel discussed various issues related to FTAs and their experiences and implications on India and contemporary world.

**12th October 2023:** Centre for Justice, Law and Society (CJLS), in collaboration with CTIL, organized a Book Talk on 'International Economic Law- Text, Cases and Materials' authored by Prof. James J. Nedumpara and Leïla Choukroune on 12 October 2023 in the Performing Arts Academy. The authors highlighted the contours and importance of the book in the context of the global south.



**30th November 2023:** CTIL hosted an international conference on 'Trade and Investment Law: Emerging Legal and Economic Perspectives' in collaboration with Bennet University School of Law, the University of Greenwich and the University of Bradford.



**11th December 2023:** CTIL hosted a Trade Talk on the issue of "Which Future for Trade Law: Back to Basics or Continuing the Silent Expansion?" with Prof. Markus Wagner as the distinguished speaker for the event. He is a Professor at the University of Wollongong and Executive Vice-President of the Society of International Economic Law and is a leading international expert on trade and investment law.

**12th December 2023:** CTIL in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India organized a Trade Talk on "Weaponized Trade: A New Concept for an Increasingly Complex World" as part of the WTO World Chairs Programme at Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi. Prof. Markus Wagner, the distinguished speaker for the event, highlighted the emerging trend to weaponize trade and its intricacies including its geo-political and geo-economic implications for countries.



**12th December 2023:** CTIL successfully hosted a Trade Talk on the issue of "Export Controls in the Global Supply Chains: Managing Risks and Ensuring Compliance Across Borders" with eminent speaker Mr. Joe Valentine, J.D., LL.M., M.B.A. He shared his experience on framing the sanctions and its impact on international trade.

**12th January 2024:** CTIL with the support of the Central Electricity Authority, Ministry of Power, Government of India, and in collaboration with the World Trade Organization Chairs Programme organized a Training and Capacity Building Programme on Negotiating FTAs for the officials of Central Electricity Authority. The programme intended to facilitate a greater understanding of trade and investment-related issues among the officials of the Central Electricity Authority.



**25th January 2024:** CTIL hosted a Trade Talk on the issue of “Role of Services Trade Restrictive Index (STRI) in Boosting Trade in Services”. Mr. Prakhar Bhardwaj, Consultant, The World Bank, Washington, D.C. was the distinguished speaker for the event. The talk elaborated on the workings of the World Bank WTO STRI.

**2-4th March 2024:** CTIL in collaboration with the National Law Institute University, Bhopal conducted the CTIL-NLIU Certification Course. The Certificate Course was aimed at fostering basic understanding of international trade law to better prepare students/participants about the subject’s intricacies in the classroom by pairing academic knowledge with practical rigor and experience.



**4-7th March 2024:** The West Bengal National University of Juridical Science in partnership with CTIL conducted the West and South Asia regional rounds of the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition. The case at hand addressed a critical matter concerning the implementation of carbon pricing by developed nations.





**8-10 March 2024:** CTIL in collaboration with the National Law University, Jodhpur conducted a Credit Course on 'International Trade Dynamics: Navigating a Post-Globalized World' under the aegis of the World Trade Organization Chairs Programme.

**21-22 March 2024:** CTIL in collaboration with the Centre for Justice, Law and Society at Jindal Global Law School, organized an International Symposium on 'Health Governance in a Political Landscape: Interplay of Health Law, Society and Political Economy'. Dr. V.K. Paul, Member, NITI Aayog delivered the inaugural address highlighting the importance of access to medicine and right to health.



**21-22nd March 2024:** A session in the International Symposium was chaired by Hon'ble Justice (Retd) S. Ravindra Bhat, former judge of the Supreme Court. The session focused on access to health and its intersection with the Intellectual Property Right laws in broader parlance and interlinkages between health, trade, and access to medicines which balance economic and public rights.

**21-22 March 2024:** Dr. Anup Wadhawan, Former Commerce Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, chaired a session in the International Symposium and delivered the special address followed by distinguished lecture on the topic by Professor (Dr.) Lorand Bartels, Prof. International Law, Cambridge Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge.





# CHINTAN SHIVIR

## 2024

Department of Commerce in collaboration with Centre for Trade and Investment Law, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi organized a Chintan Shivir on “Free Trade Agreement Strategy and Standard Operating Procedures for Trade Negotiations” on 16-17 May 2024 at Neemrana Fort-Palace.

The two-day Chintan Shivir facilitated discussions on various issues related to negotiations of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) by Govt. of India, its position and negotiating strategy for FTAs.

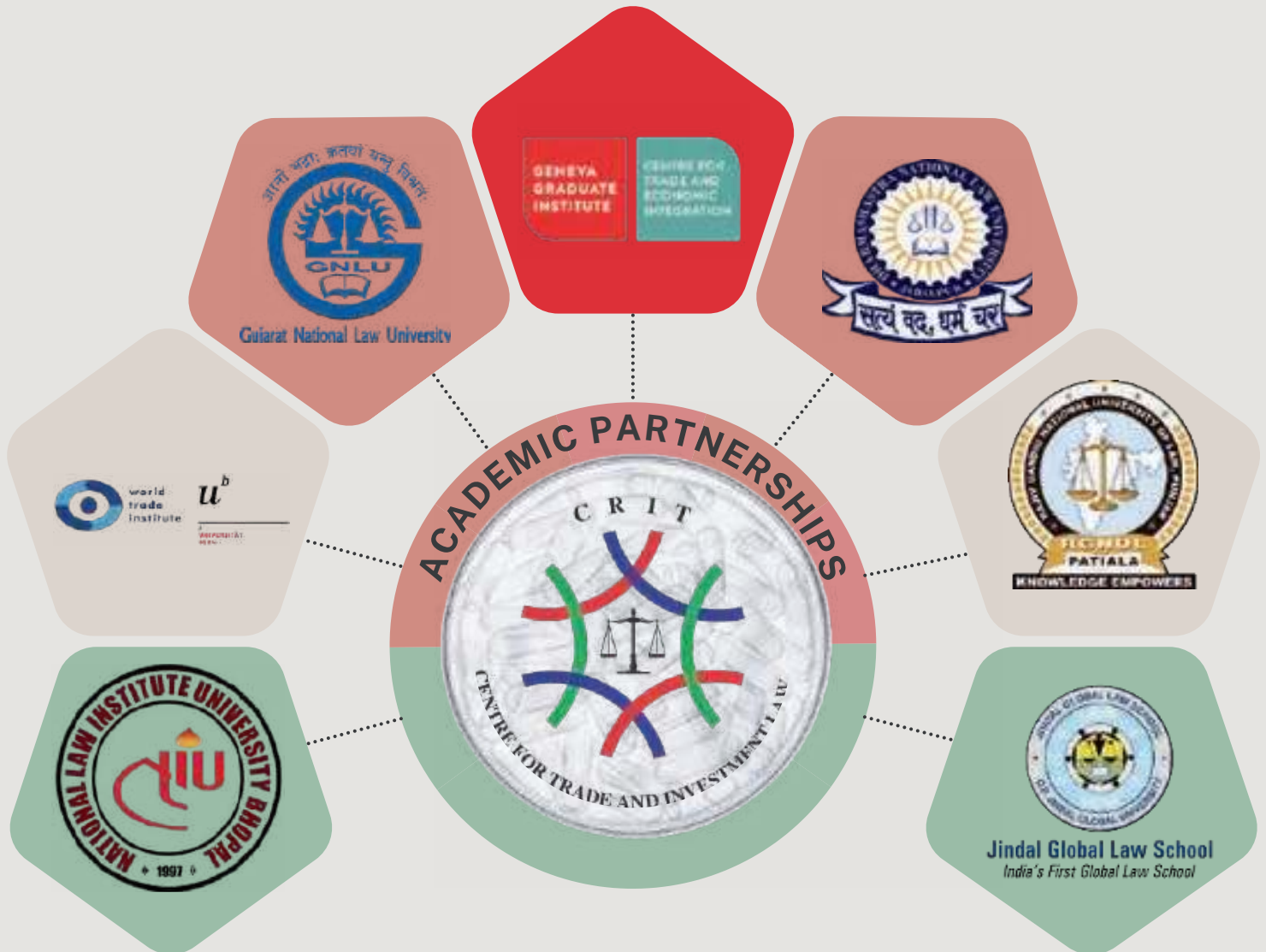
The attendees also deliberated on Govt. of India standard operating procedures (SOPs)

for FTA negotiations, capacitybuilding and resource management for trade negotiations.

**Shri Sunil Barthwal, Commerce Secretary**, Govt. of India chaired the Chintan Shivir. The discussions were aimed at charting a strategic course for India’s future engagement in FTA negotiations.

The program drew active participation of senior government officials involved in India’s FTA negotiations from various ministries, departments, and agencies of Government of India.

# ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS



CTIL maintains partnerships with leading law schools in India and globally, in order to cultivate knowledge of international trade and investment law among law students. The Centre co-organizes conferences, symposia, essay writing competitions and trade law moots with national law schools in India. Apart from this, the Centre regularly hosts interns from various law schools, including for the Department of Commerce flagship internship programme.

Research staff in the Centre mentor both undergraduate and postgraduate students through internships. CTIL staff also participates as judges and coaches for a variety of trade and investment law related moot court competitions.



The TradeLab, a Geneva-based initiative, provides the perfect platform for CTIL to engage with India's leading national law schools and other institutions to enhance the students' substantive practical knowledge of international economic law. The TradeLab operations are conducted in a hub-and-spoke model with CTIL acting as an anchor establishment between the universities and the beneficiaries in order to ensure seamless coordination and communication among all the parties.

Clinics are a win-win for all involved: beneficiaries receive expert research work for free and build capacity; students learn by doing, and supervisors and mentor share their knowledge on cutting edge issues and engage top students interested in the field.

Through pro-bono legal clinics, TradeLab connects students and experienced legal professionals with stakeholders like research organization,



SMEs and civil society to build lasting legal capacity.

### Goals of the Clinic:

First, to enhance students' substantive legal knowledge of international economic law. Students learn, not through traditional in-class teaching, but by working "hands-on" together in a team on a specific legal project, of real practical importance to their beneficiary.

Second, the clinic aims at improving students' professional skills to become successful lawyers, improve the ability to analyze complex legal problems, to apply the law to a set of facts, to work in groups with other lawyers across cultures and language barriers, to write legal memoranda or submissions.

Third, the clinic aims to stimulate personal skills and aspirations of students: to make them aware of professional opportunities, and to discover new challenges and opportunities. Through interactions with other students and a diverse range of beneficiaries (including from other countries), participants build inter-personal skills, learn about other cultures, and experience the challenges and needs of a wide variety of stakeholders affected by international economic law.



The TradeLab clinic conducted in GNLU during Fall 2023 was focused on “Analyzing the Differentiated Integration Policy of the European Union” and providing recommendations for the OECS states. The report highlights how Differentiated Integration (“DI”) plays a crucial role in the European Union’s functioning, allowing for tailored integration approaches considering the diverse characteristics of member states.

The TradeLab clinic which began in Fall semester 2023 and concluded in Spring 2024 prepared a confidential report on the topic “Navigating Through The WTO Agreement On Fisheries Subsidies: Analysis From The Lens Of Sustainable Development And Implications For Developing Members”. The confidential report delves deeper into the provisions of the Agreement, aiming to identify the lacunae and enforcement obstacles arising from its loosely drafted text and less stringent sanctions.



The TradeLab project at NLUJ during Fall semester 2023 focused on the “Assessment And Strategic Approaches For The CRGO Steel Sector: Enhancing Quality And Compliance within India”. The report conducted a thorough doctrinal legal analysis, examining the existing domestic laws, regulations, and policies in India with respect to CRGO steel by conducting a comparison with legal frameworks in other jurisdictions.

CTIL conducted a TradeLab clinic in Fall semester 2023 which concluded in the Spring 2024 semester on the topic “Bitter To Better: Comparative Analysis Of Due-Diligence Regulations In The Cocoa Industry Regarding Human Rights Violations And Protection From Deforestation”. This was a confidential report where the beneficiary required the students to focus on the complexities of the cocoa production industry’s compliance with relevant norms under international and domestic laws.



The TradeLab project at GMU during Fall 2023 semester primarily focused on the “Foreign Subsidies Regulation (FSR) of the EU and its overlap with WTO’s Subsidies and Countervailing Measures Agreement”. The confidential report conducted doctrinal legal analysis of EU’s FSR and its implication for Indian industries.

## WTO CHAIRS PROGRAMME: CTIL



*The WTO Chairs Programme, initiated by the World Trade Organization (WTO), is a crucial academic initiative designed to advance research, education, and outreach related to international trade and the functions of the WTO. The program serves as a conduit for a multifaceted approach to understanding and engaging with global trade dynamics.*

The WTO Chairs Programme, initiated by the World Trade Organization (WTO), is a crucial academic initiative designed to advance research, education, and outreach related to international trade and the functions of the WTO. Under the WTO Chairs Programme, (WCP) participating academic institutions and scholars receive support for research projects, enabling the examination of key trade-related topics. It also encourages the development of courses and teaching materials related to international trade and WTO matters, thereby enhancing the quality of education and training. The program, established in collaboration with select academic institutions worldwide, serves as a conduit for a multifaceted approach to understanding and engaging with global trade dynamics. Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) obtained the India Chair from WTO through a joint application from Centre for Trade and Investment Law (CTIL) and Centre for WTO Studies (CWS).



Dr. James J. Nedumpara is the Chairholder of WCP India Chair. Capacity building is a core facet of the WTO Chairs Programme, strengthening the capabilities of academic institutions and researchers, particularly in developing nations.

**WTO CHAIRS PROGRAMME: SIGNIFICANCE**

This program strives to deepen the understanding of global trade issues, particularly in developing countries, and bridge the gap between academic research and real-world trade policy.

By fostering a global network of expertise, the WTO Chairs Programme along with CTIL facilitates knowledge sharing and cooperation, strengthening the role of academia in shaping international trade policy and promoting a deeper understanding of the WTO's role in the global trading system.



WTO OMC





# Alumni TESTIMONIALS



## ACHYUTH ANIL

*Graduate Student Researcher  
Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment*

CTIL has been the most fulfilling, invigorating and engaging place of work I have encountered. My time at the Centre has always been challenging, interesting and educational but also fun with a lot of space for personal and professional growth. The particular questions and topics that the Centre works on is always at the forefront of some of the most pressing issues at that particular time in the field of International Trade and Investment Law. As the Centre advises the Government of India, there are chances of undertaking new and groundbreaking research in India's particular areas of interests or stances in the field can be unique with limited academic disclosure in those areas. On top of the fascinating research, Prof. James is great to work with and a great mentor.



## Smrithi Bhaskar

*LLM Candidate at MIDS Geneva*

I was at CTIL for four years, and I will always look back at my time at the Centre fondly. It was a time of immense growth for me, both personally and professionally. Working at CTIL was a unique experience, not only because of the kind of work that you get to do at the Centre, but also because of the exceptional people here. I think CTIL has attracted some of the best and brightest lawyers in international economic law, all of whom work incredibly hard to make it a collaborative environment, where learning is fostered. I am also incredibly grateful for the opportunities I got as part of the CTIL team, and under the guidance of Prof. James.

# Alumni TESTIMONIALS



## Ronjini Ray

*Assitant Prof. of Law, NLSIU*

I came to CTIL after having worked at trade teams of law firms because I wanted to work on core trade issues and advise the Government of India. I was excited to work with Professor James, who has been my professor and mentor since 2015. At CTIL, I had the opportunity to advise the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and other Ministries regarding trade in services and related chapters in almost all of the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) being negotiated by India. I also got to work on India's position on the new Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) text at the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference. Additionally, I was able to cultivate my research interests by presenting papers at various international conferences including the Society of International Economic Law (SIEL) Conference. It was a privilege to be part of an organization that is so kind and passionate about their subject matter. I will thoroughly miss CTIL but, hopefully I am able to continue my passion for international trade and sustain my connection with the international trade community.



## Arnav Sharma

*Assistant Prof. of Law, NLSIU*

I joined CTIL as an enthusiastic International Lawyer eager to delve into International Trade and Investment policy. I feel fortunate to have worked on key emerging disciplines at the Centre, particularly in areas such as State-Owned Enterprises, Subsidies, Government Procurement, and Energy and Raw Materials. The Centre, under the guidance and leadership of Head and Professor James Nedumpara, provided me with excellent opportunities to grow and conduct research in various domains. Working at CTIL allowed me to expand beyond the realms of law and policy, gaining a deeper understanding of government processes, international treaty-making, negotiations, and the necessary groundwork. I believe CTIL is a truly unique place to work. It offered a young lawyer like me numerous opportunities, challenges to solve, and domains to explore. It was indeed a proud privilege to be part of this institution.

# Alumni TESTIMONIALS



## Bhavnish Kaur Chabbra

*LLM Candidate, NYU, USA*

CTIL provided me an incredible opportunity to assist the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India on ongoing trade agreement negotiations, policy formulation and WTO-related legal issues. It allowed me to develop an in-depth understanding on how international trade law works in practice at a State level and how India's interests are represented at various international forums. Additionally, CTIL provided avenues to pursue my research interests and engage in capacity-building activities like the CTIL-Tradelab Clinic, WTO Chairs Programme, and SAIELN conference. My time at the Centre allowed me to forge many long-lasting relationship and will always remain a memorable experience for me.



## Mahima Ahuja

*Associate, DSK Legal*

My journey at CTIL has indeed been an interesting and fulfilling one. I joined as the Cost Accountant for the Trade Remedies Advisory Cell, where I had the opportunity to work on various challenging and intriguing projects. Under the guidance of Prof. James J. Nedumpara, who truly believes in talent, provided me with the opportunities beyond my profession, where, I was able to contribute to several opinions and FTA negotiations. Being the only Cost Accountant among a team of lawyers was a unique and enriching experience, where I learned to approach problems from a different perspective and contribute in ways that were both challenging and rewarding. Working closely with legal professionals, I gained invaluable insights into the intricacies of trade law and policy. The mentorship and camaraderie have made my time at CTIL truly memorable and impactful. I can't be thankful enough for this experience.

# Alumni TESTIMONIALS



## MANYA GUPTA

*LLM Candidate, Georgetown University, USA*

With a desire to work in other areas of trade law and to understand how trade policy functions, I joined CTIL as a research fellow in 2019. Under the mentorship of Prof. James Nedumpara and other senior colleagues, I was able to hone my research and drafting skills. I got unmatched opportunity of working on India's then largest negotiations on Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. I had the opportunity to work on some of India's first agreements in areas such as government procurement, subsidies, state-owned enterprises. Having spent 5 enriching years at the Centre, I can confidently say that CTIL is undoubtedly one of the very few places in India where an individual gets to work so closely on government's trade and industrial policies, and it truly is a fulfilling experience to see that the research that is done CTIL helps in shaping policy decisions which hold significance globally.



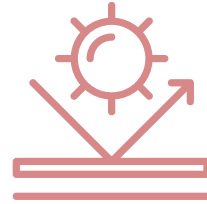
## RISHABHA MEENA

*Law Officer, HPCL*

My journey at the CTIL began with my internship which provided me with the opportunity to work with Professor Nedumpara on diverse issues of international economic law. Subsequently, I joined CTIL as a Research Fellow and was promoted to Senior Research Fellow and Associate. Over the past four years, CTIL provided me with the opportunity to work on various domestic trade policy issues, WTO compliances and dispute settlement, and FTA negotiations. I believe that it is the knowledge that I have gained at the CTIL provided me with the opportunity to prepare training content on how to negotiate Free Trade Agreements as part of the Trade for Development initiative of the UAE Government. Overall, I recommend CTIL to everyone interested in pursuing a career in international economic law and it is the only place that provides you with the unique first-hand experience of international economic law.

# INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

## PMI-CTEI-CTIL INTERNSHIP



On November 26, 2021, the Centre for Trade and Investment Law signed a historical tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Permanent Mission of India to the WTO, Geneva (PMI) and Centre for Trade and Economic Integration at The Graduate Institute, Geneva (CTEI). The MOU consisted of five cooperation elements between CTEI and CTIL, one of which included internship opportunities provided by CTIL to the students from CTEI.



## CTIL-DOC FLAGSHIP INTERNSHIP

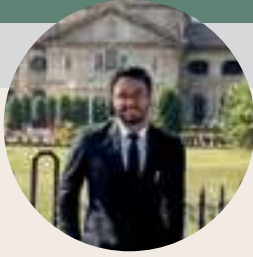
CTIL in association with the Department of Commerce (DoC), runs the Department of Commerce Flagship Internship program for law students from premier educational institutes in India. This programme began in 2017 and CTIL has offered internships to a number of students under this programme. The programme is open to LL.M students, fourth and fifth year students from five-year integrated law courses, and final year students from three-year LL.B. course.

## CTIL INTERNSHIP



The Centre for Trade and Investment Law offers internship opportunities to undergraduate and postgraduate students of law to enable them to gain practical experience in the field of international trade and investment law issues. Internships opportunities are open to students who are in the advanced stages of their degree programme. Preference will be given to students who have completed courses in WTO law and public international law.

# INTERN Testimonials



**Jyotivita Singh**  
**B.A.LL.B 2021-26**

**National Law University  
Nagpur**

I interned at Centre for Trade and Investment Law for the month of May, 2024 in physical mode. Getting this opportunity to study and research about WTO, GATT and various other aspects of International Trade Law, which helped me gain a clearer perspective of my future approach towards International Trade as one of my career options. Interning at CTIL was a fulfilling experience with regards to the work culture and ease of getting involved with environment here, both personally and professionally. All my allotted mentors and other members of CTIL were patient and kind to help me understand new concepts and gave me enough liberty to work and present my best. I thank CTIL for giving me this opportunity.



**Jigyasa Bohra,**  
**BA. LL.B (Hons.)**  
**2021-26**

**National Law Institute  
University, Bhopal**

My internship at the research Center for Trade and Investment Laws (CTIL) was an incredibly enriching experience. The environment was not only intellectually stimulating but also highly supportive, fostering my growth in every aspect. The mentors were exceptional, always available to guide me through complex legal concepts and encourage my analytical skills. The collaborative culture and open arena for creative thinking allowed me to apply innovative approaches to various research projects. I had the opportunity to delve into international trade law and policy, contributing to significant projects and discussions. This experience has greatly enhanced my understanding and passion for the field, preparing me for future endeavors with confidence and clarity.



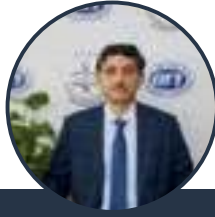
**Siya Mathur,**  
**BBA. LL.B (Hons.)**  
**2022-27**

**Gujarat National Law  
University, Gandhinagar**

International Trade Law was a novel field for me before I interned at the Centre for Trade and Investment Laws. I can confidently say that from my internship at the Centre, I have gained invaluable knowledge about the discipline that has contributed to my academic and professional growth. This was possible only because the Centre and its people gave me the space for learning and making mistakes along the way. My mentors never let me feel the pressure of delivering the tasks, which is also the reason I was at ease, and thoroughly enjoyed accomplishing them. The time that I spent at the Centre was definitely worth it, and so I strongly recommend students of law who have an interest in the subject or are keen to explore it, to intern here.

# CTIL TEAM

## Head & Professor



**James J. Nedumpara**

## Research Team



**Shailja Singh**  
Consultant/Associate  
Professor



**Sattwik Shekhar**  
Consultant/Assistant  
Professor



**Shiny Pradeep**  
Assistant Professor



**Sunanda Tewari**  
Consultant/Assistant  
Professor



**Aparna Bhaatacharya**  
Consultant/Assistant  
Professor



**Sparsha Janadhan**  
Associate



**Ridhish Rajvanshi**  
Associate



**Ashutosh Kashyap**  
Associate



**Sugandha Sharma**  
Associate



**Pranav Narang**  
Associate



**Mohit Yadav**  
Associate



**Albeena Wali**  
Associate



**Harjodh Singh**  
Associate



**Priyansha Hajela**  
Associate



**Advait Rao**  
Associate



**Amshuly Chandran**  
Associate



**Ashita Jain**  
Associate



**Shantanu Singh**  
Associate



**Vishishth Malhotra**  
Associate



**Virender Chandel**  
Associate



**Amandeep Kaur Bajwa**  
Research Fellow



**Imjot Kaur**  
Research Fellow



**Pushkar Reddy**  
Research Fellow



**Jamshed A. Siddiqui**  
Research Fellow



**Shana Sharma**  
Research Fellow



**Krishna Bhattacharya**  
Research Fellow



**Swati Bajpai**  
Young Professional



**Shiva Singh**  
Young Professional



**Shrey Apporva**  
Young Professional



**Chamarty S. Sumana**  
Young Professional



**Sarthak Raj**  
Young Professional



**Preetkiran Kaur**  
Young Professional



**Tarun Guddu**  
Young Professional



**Akanchha Srivastava**  
Young Professional



**Udita Sharma**  
Young Professional



**Amaan Ahmed**  
Young Professional



**Kailas Surendran**  
Young Professional



**Snehal U. Kanzarkar**  
Young Professional

Administration Team



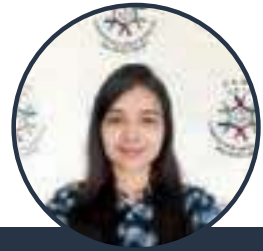
**Jitender Das**  
Sr. Admin. Exec.



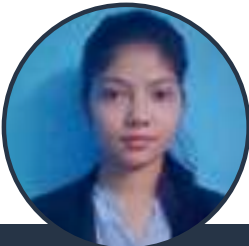
**Sanjeet K. Mishra**  
SR. Admin. Exec.



**Parmod Kumar**  
SR. Admin. Exec.



**Neha Bansal**  
Training Coord.



**Sita**  
Finance Executive



**Roohi Khan**  
SR. Admin. Exec.



**Vijay Kumar Rai**  
Admin. Assistant



**Anil Kumar**  
Personal Assistant



**Reenu**  
Personal Assistant



**Komal**  
Data Entry Operator



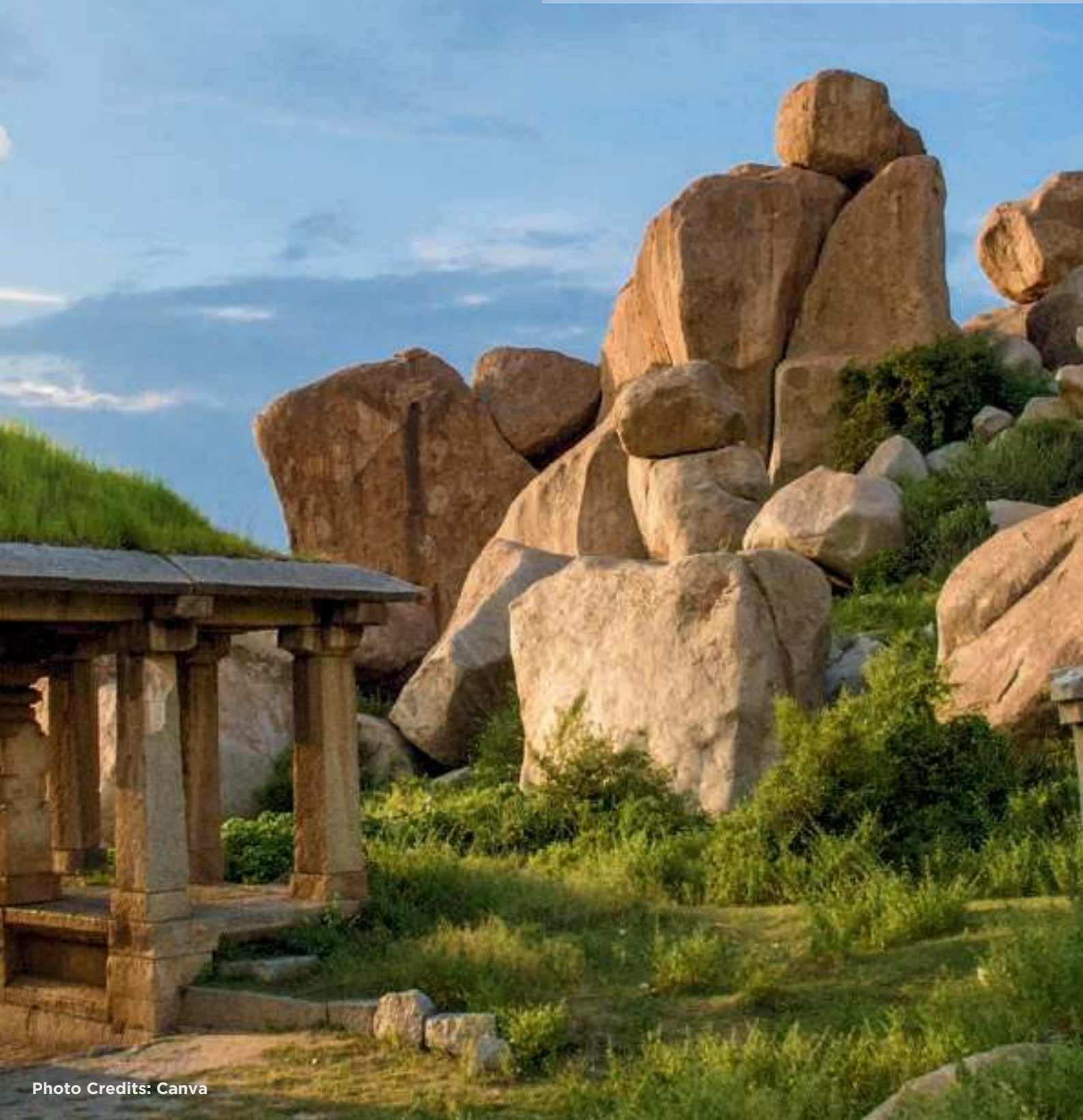
**Arun Kumar**  
MTS



**Neeraj Kumar**  
MTS

## HAMPI, KARNATAKA

Hampi is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the Indian state of Karnataka. It was once the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire, which thrived from the 14th to the 17th centuries. The site is renowned for its stunning ruins, which include temples, palaces, and market streets, all set amidst a dramatic landscape of boulders and hills. Notable structures include the Virupaksha Temple, Vittala Temple with its iconic stone chariot, and the royal enclosures. Hampi is celebrated for its rich history, architectural grandeur, and cultural significance, attracting historians, archaeologists, and tourists from around the world.



# SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL MAGAZINE



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