

Report on APEC Seminar on Trade Logistics

APEC Seminar on Trade Logistics was held on 23-24 June 2008 in Beijing. Participants, including officials from APEC economies, experts from international organizations and representatives from academia and private sectors have broad discussion on the current situations in APEC region on logistics, including the infrastructure, human resources and government policies as well as the regional cooperation.

1. Latest development of trade logistics

In the first part of this session, the expert from UNCTAD gave a very detailed introduction on the major features of recent development of trade logistics and its future trend. The presentation mainly focuses on the current development in transportation. Through a number of figures, it gives a clear picture on the fast development in seaborne trade which then stimulates the container movement together with the shipment industry expanding. To meet the demand for logistics, efficient ports become more competitive. Among 20 top ports in the world, 15 are in APEC. This reflects APEC's fast growth in the trade which results in fast growth in logistics and efficient logistics services. Together with the development in maritime transportation, there is also an increasing trend in inland transportation due to the demand for multimodal transport. In the future, to meet the globalization, it is expected that there will be more investment in the transportation infrastructure and the industry will continue to be promising.

In the second part of this session, the representative from Hong Kong,

China gave a comprehensive and informative introduction on negotiations in WTO on logistics services. The presentation covers general information on GATS and new round of services negotiations. It focuses on the collective request on logistics services and gives detailed information on the logistics checklist. In her presentation, she also gives general introduction on Hong Kong, China's development on logistics which indicates that trading and logistics sector is one of Hong Kong, China's economic pillars with the world-class infrastructure and efficient logistics services.

In the discussion, interests have been shown on the coverage of the checklist especially those sectors which are currently excluded in the GATs and also those sectors which duplicate in other services negotiations. The general view is that the checklist intends to cover all the sectors relating to logistics services. However, the finally outcome will depends on the negotiations.

2. Current Status and Policies on Trade Logistics in APEC Region

Representatives from Peru, Viet Nam, China, Mexico and Thailand give the presentations on their development in the logistics. From these presentations, it is easy to find that there is recognition on the importance of the logistics services. However, due to the different level in the infrastructure, human resources and government policies, the development model and level in logistics are quite different.

The expert recommended by ADB also gives introduction on inland transport collaboration inside the Asean as well as with China mainly

based on a study in the region. It shows that the inland transportation construction has not only connected the region, but also has brought changes to the region including the people. However, it also shows that road construction is for the purpose of connectivity, but connectivity is far more than infrastructure. Observations given by participants indicate that from the experience in the Asean discussion as well as relevant negotiations in the WTO, inland connectivity sometimes could be difficult.

3. Exploring the future cooperation in APEC on trade logistics

The expert from UNCTAD gave presentation on UNCTAD 3 pilots as examples of cooperation in trade logistics. The purpose for the pilots is to smooth the cross board movement of goods by establishing corridors and clusters. Though not all 3 pilots are successful, at least they show that with no transshipment or transit charge cross the boarder, the time and cost have been significantly reduced.

The presentation given by APEC CTI Chair focuses on how APEC could enhance the work on trade logistics. The picture she presented to the Seminar shows that APEC has already done a lot of work in areas that relate to trade logistics. As APEC continues to play the leading role in trade facilitation, there should be more work APEC could do in trade logistics.

Participants showed great interest in enhancing cooperation in this area. Some of them indicated that their economies are in the early stage of developing trade logistics and lacking of needed resources. Therefore, they hope that APEC could have more activities in this area especially on capacity building. For possible future work plan, views also expressed that

the current work in Asean could be a useful reference for APEC to take the first step. Asean members are encouraged to take a leading role in this regard.

The experts from ADB and China gave the presentations on the cooperation between the government and business. The presentations gave detailed information on importance to enhance the cooperation between the government and business as well as cooperation among the business. A survey introduced by the expert from China also shows that the cooperation is essential for creating good environment for the business.

In conclusion, the Seminar has met its objectives and provided an opportunity to explore the possible future work to add value to the APEC current work on trade facilitation. Though it is the first time for APEC trade officials to talk about the trade logistics and the discussion is quite general, it has given some food for future thought.