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APEC MARKET ACCESS GROUP PRESENTATIONS ON FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

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Introduction

There is a renewed interest and upsurge of activity with APEC on free trade agreements (FTAs) and regional trading arrangements (RTAs) in response to calls from Ministers at their meeting in Los Cabos, Mexico in October 2002. APEC Ministers

noted the growing number of regional trade agreements and free trade agreements (FTAs) being negotiated and concluded, to which many APEC members are parties. They believed that such agreements are instruments to achieve the Bogor goals and that they should be consistent with both APEC's principles and WTO rules. Ministers instructed officials to engage in a constructive exchange of views on the RTAs and FTAs.

APEC Leaders

called for an exchange of views in APEC on regional and bilateral trade agreements, noting that these agreements need to be consistent with WTO rules and disciplines and APEC's goals and principles.

To address these calls from Leaders and Ministers, APEC Senior Officials held a Trade Policy Dialogue to discuss FTAs and RTAs at SOM II in May 2003.

Role of the Market Access Group (MAG)

MAG provides a forum where APEC member economies can share information and exchange views on FTAs/RTAs. At the first MAG meeting of 2003 in Chiang Rai, Thailand, fourteen APEC member economies delivered presentations outlining their FTA approach and the current status of their negotiations to conclude new agreements. The contents of the presentations from Australia, Canada, Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines, Chinese Taipei and the United States are summarised below.

Approaches to FTA Negotiations

APEC ministers have agreed that FTAs are instruments to help achieve the Bogor Goals and Leaders noted that these agreements need to be consistent with WTO rules and disciplines and APEC's goals and principles.

Australia

Australia is engaged in a range of activities to foster stronger regional and economic linkages, including through exploring possibilities for developing closer bilateral trade and investment links with important trading partners and regional groups.

Australia is actively pursuing complementary WTO-consistent regional and bilateral trade initiatives where these hold out the prospect of more ambitious trade outcomes within a shorter timeframe than would be possible at the multilateral level, and where initiatives would make a positive contribution to the overall objective of global trade liberalisation and reform.

Australia is open to considering further regional arrangements in its efforts to encourage additional liberalization in the region and multilaterally. Any FTA entered into by Australia will be consistent with WTO rules and disciplines and APEC goals and principles. The initiatives described above have the potential to deliver wider benefits, not least by helping to build wider support for trade liberalisation and reform.

Canada

As a trade-oriented and globally integrated economy, Canada benefits from a healthy, open, transparent, rules-based international trading system, both at the multilateral and regional levels. While the WTO remains the cornerstone of its trade policy, Canada also favours the pursuit of reductions in barriers to trade and investment at the regional and bilateral levels.

Canada's regional and bilateral trade initiatives are a means to secure markets for Canadian business, to gain better access to lower cost goods and services, and to strengthen rule-making. In addition, Canada believes that regional and bilateral initiatives can complement and reinforce multilateral liberalization. These agreements can play a positive role in advancing global negotiations either by flagging new issues and helping to place them on the global agenda, or by providing innovative solutions to trade problems that can subsequently be elevated and adapted from the bilateral or regional to the multilateral arena.

Canada is already a free-trade partner of the United States, Mexico, Israel, Chile, and Costa Rica. Currently, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) process is Canada's key regional priority. Canada is also proceeding at various stages of negotiations with the European Free Trade Association countries, Singapore, and the Central America Four countries. In addition, Canada has announced exploratory discussions towards possible free trade negotiations with CARICOM, as well as the Andean Community and the Dominican Republic.

New Zealand

While the WTO remains New Zealand's number one trade policy priority, New Zealand recognises that free trade agreements are an opportunity not only to remove tariff barriers on a bilateral basis, but also to deepen economic integration with its trading partners across the wider trade and investment relationship. This is based on a recognition that trade flows are affected as much by internal regulatory and administrative barriers as by tariffs, quotas and other external barriers to trade.

Accordingly, New Zealand prefers to describe its preferential trade agreements as Closer Economic Partnerships. It is clear that trade agreements with key trading partners can open up important new opportunities for New Zealand exporters - and in a shorter timeframe than through the WTO. We closely monitor free trade developments in the region and the potential adverse impacts these might have on New Zealand.

Trade agreements or closer economic partnerships (CEPs) are also important from a strategic perspective, as they can make a useful contribution to moving the WTO process forward, and can also serve as a useful means by which the Bogor Goals of free and open trade and investment can be achieved.

Good quality CEPs should be comprehensive, with few or no exclusions, consistent with WTO provisions and APEC goals and principles, and ideally open to other economies to join. Sub-standard FTAs not only undermine the Bogor goals, but also threaten multilateral liberalisation, by offering a soft option to countries which are reluctant to make the difficult decisions necessary to liberalise sensitive sectors.

New Zealand sees value in sharing experience and information in APEC on ways to maximise the benefits of comprehensive, high quality CEPs, including approaches on dealing with sensitive sectors.

The Philippines

On the whole, the Philippines believes that trade liberalization through RTAs and FTAs, especially if handled properly, serves a positive influence – a building block - to the multilateral trading system. RTAs and FTAs provide a useful avenue for developing economies to pursue further liberalization without the handicap of having to enter into binding obligations in the WTO, where the negotiating agendas although decided by consensus, are not always advantageous to developing countries.

Chinese Taipei

At present, Chinese Taipei is not a member of any FTA/RTA. Chinese Taipei recognises that there has been a proliferation of FTA/RTAs being proposed and negotiated around the APEC region and they note that there are potential adverse and unintended effects and risks associated with such a proliferation of FTA/RTAs.

Chinese Taipei established a FTA Task Force last year in the Board of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Economic Affairs. The responsibilities of this Task Force include: (1) outsourcing researchers to explore the feasibility of signing FTAs; (2) conducting studies on the impact of our signing FTA/other economies' signed FTAs on Chinese Taipei's import and export trade; (3) coordinating and preparing Chinese Taipei's negotiations with other economies.

Chinese Taipei hopes that all APEC economies' FTAs will be consistent with APEC goals and support the multilateral trade agenda, not posing as a substitute, and it is important that FTAs serve as building blocks for multilateral liberalisation in the WTO.

However, since all existing and proposed FTA/RTAs declare that they are WTO consistent, this means they must comply with Article 24 in the GATT and Article 5 of GATs. Under these articles, an FTA/RTA is WTO consistent if it covers substantially all the trade and other regulations of commerce, and if the parties to the FTA/RTA do not raise barriers to non-parties while they lower barriers among themselves. There has been an ongoing debate on the definition of what "substantial trade" means, what is included in "other regulations" of commerce and so on.

Therefore Chinese Taipei suggests that APEC has to consider whether the organisation can add value to the FTA process by agreeing on some set of guidelines or principles, or whether APEC's role should be just confined to information sharing and possibly a study of best practice. This matter should be deliberated further in APEC.

Existing FTAs

Australia

Australia is currently party to four preferential trading arrangements: the Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (ANZCERTA or CER); the Canada-Australia Trade Agreement; the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement and the Papua New Guinea Trade and Commercial Relations Agreement.

Since its inception in 1983, the **CER** has become one of the most comprehensive and successful preferential trading arrangements in the world. The Australian and New Zealand economies have become increasingly integrated and benefited significantly through steady growth in two-way trade and investment. Achievements under CER include free trade, free movement of people, mutual recognition provisions and no substantive restrictions on investment. Its current focus is on "third generation" trade facilitation issues, such as implementation of a joint food standards system and a proposal to establish a joint therapeutic products agency to facilitate trade through standards recognition. CER continues to evolve particularly in the area of business harmonization and taxation issues. Further cooperation in science and technology, bio-security and quarantine, and on industry and competition issue is also expected to result in developing an even more integrated trans-Tasman economy.

Negotiations on a **Singapore-Australia FTA** (SAFTA) were finalised in November 2002. SAFTA, which is expected to enter into force later in 2003, establishes a more open, predictable and transparent framework for bilateral trade and investment across a wide range of areas, including services, investment, telecoms regulation, competition policy, government procurement, technical standards, intellectual property, electronic commerce, temporary business entry and customs procedures. Tariffs will be eliminated and SAFTA provides a framework for the mutual recognition of technical standards and professional qualifications. SAFTA is comprehensive in scope and conforms to WTO rules.

Canada

At the FTAA Ministerial on 1 November 2002, the **Canada-Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement** (CCRFTA) and side agreements on labour and environmental cooperation came into force. The CCRFTA demonstrates that it is possible to take into account differences in the levels of development and size of the free trade partners. The FTA with Costa Rica is also important because it sends a clear signal of our commitment to the hemisphere and will give momentum to the FTAA.

The fifth anniversary of the **Canada-Chile FTA** (CCFTA) was celebrated in 2002 and results over the first five years are positive. Total two-way trade in goods, based on both Canadian and Chilean import statistics, reached \$US 839 million in 2001, a 26% increase over 1997. During that period, Canadian investment in Chile increased sharply, making Canada the second largest investor in Chile after the US for approved investment.

Last year marked the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the **Canada-Israel FTA** (CIFTA). Virtually all industrial products are now traded tariff-free, while tariffs on agriculture products have been significantly reduced. Trade in goods and services exceeded \$CDN 965 million in 2001, an increase of 6% over the previous year.

Korea

FTA negotiations between **Korea and Chile** commenced in November 1998 and the FTA was successfully completed on 24 October 2002. The Korea-Chile FTA is Korea's first FTA and the first FTA in trans-Pacific countries. It took four years to conclude the FTA through six times of negotiation rounds. The Korea-Chile FTA includes various sectors such as Trade in Goods, Investment and Trade in Services, GPA and IPR.

In respect of Trade in Goods, the customs duty on 96% of products is to be eliminated within 10 years including the immediate elimination of the duty on 67% products. Some agricultural products were excluded from the FTA negotiations but all tariffs on industrial products bar one are to be eliminated immediately. In the services sector, the FTA covers all cross-border trade in services excluding financial, air and so on.

New Zealand

Australia and New Zealand have one of the most open economic and trade relationships between any two countries. This is based on a comprehensive set of trade and economic arrangements, collectively known as the **CER (Closer Economic Relations)**, which underpins substantial flows of merchandise trade, services, investment, labour and visitors between the two countries.

Since its inception in 1983, our CER relationship has both deepened and broadened with both countries moving progressively towards much closer integration of policies, laws and regulatory regimes through processes of coordination, mutual recognition and harmonisation.

The Agreement between **New Zealand and Singapore** on a Closer Economic Partnership (ANZSCEP), which entered into force on 1 January 2001, was New Zealand's second bilateral free trade agreement. The CEP was conceived with the aim of enhancing the already excellent bilateral relationship between the two countries, serving the dual purpose of promoting economic growth for the parties, while also promoting greater international trade liberalisation.

The agreement is comprehensive and of high quality, covering trade in both goods and services, and is in conformity with GATT Article XXIV:8(b) and GATS Article V. No sectors are a priori excluded, and the agreement removed all tariffs on goods from the date of entry into force. While it is too early to make any definitive judgements on the effects of the Singapore CEP, it is clear that the Agreement has been helpful in raising New Zealand's profile in Singapore.

The Philippines

The **Association of Southeast Asian Nations** (ASEAN) evolved from a group established in 1967 to encourage cooperation in economic, political, and cultural fields among five

members - Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. It has since expanded to include Brunei Darussalam, which joined in 1984, and Vietnam, in 1995. Cambodia, Lao-PDR and Myanmar joined the group in 1999.

In 1978 a preferential trade arrangement was put in place to encourage greater intra-regional trade. This arrangement was not very successful in achieving the goal of greater integration as only a limited number of goods were eligible for regional trade preferences.

In 1992, with Singapore in the lead, the ASEAN members undertook a series of meetings and consultations which led to the creation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA). AFTA sought to increase ASEAN's competitive edge as a production base for the world market. The mechanism to achieve this is the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) scheme, where intra-regional tariffs will be reduced within a 15-year time period beginning in 1993. The Philippines is one of the six original signatories to AFTA.

The AFTA-CEPT timetable covers nearly all sectors, including agriculture. There are phase-in periods for some sensitive sectors which are extended up to 2010, and a small number of sensitive sectors are temporarily excluded. The timetable for completion of the free trade area has been accelerated from 2008 to 2003, then to 2002 for the six original signatories to the agreement on the CEPT.

The coverage of the CEPT has been widened since its original inception, by including into the scheme products that were originally excluded, like unprocessed agricultural products. AFTA has also widened its scope beyond the CEPT scheme by including other measures to complement and supplement the removal of tariffs and other barriers to trade. These initiatives include harmonization of standards, reciprocal recognition of tests and certification of products, and removal of barriers to foreign investment.

Finally, AFTA's original goal of 0-5 percent ending tariff rates was deepened by targeting a zero ending tariff rates on all products by 2010 for the original six members and by 2015 for the four new members.

The United States

The **US-Chile FTA** will be the first comprehensive trade agreement between the United States and a South American country. Both the US and Chilean trade ministers expect this Agreement will encourage progress on negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), to meet its goal of completion by 2005, as well as the ongoing global trade negotiations. Ambassador Zoellick has characterized this agreement as "a win-win state of the art FTA for the modern economy – it not only slashes tariffs, it reduces barriers for services, protects leading-edge intellectual property, keeps pace with new technologies, ensures regulatory transparency and provides effective labour and environmental enforcement." Ambassador Zoellick further noted that what distinguishes this free trade agreement from some others is that everything has been kept on the table "so that even for sensitive products, whether it takes 6 years, 8 years, 10 or 12 years, at the end it is totally open, no quotas no tariffs."

Current Status of FTA Negotiations

Australia

In May 2002, **Australia** and **Thailand** announced they would begin negotiations towards a “Closer Economic Relations” Free Trade Agreement which will be broad in scope, covering not only the liberalisation of trade in goods and services, but also cooperation and trade facilitation in a range of other areas where there are real and measurable benefits.

Australia and **the United States** agreed to launch negotiations to conclude an FTA in November 2002. Australia is working with other major trading partners, including Japan and China, to enhance the trading relationship.

Canada

Canada is pleased with progress in negotiations for the **Free Trade Area of the Americas** (FTAA) agreement. The November 2002 Ministerial meeting in Quito was a success with Ministers recommitting to the deadline of completing the negotiations by January 2005. FTAA Ministers also approved the release of the second draft version of the consolidated text.

Ministers approved a conceptual framework for technical cooperation in the hemisphere (Hemispheric Cooperation Program or HCP) to help the smaller countries participate effectively in the negotiations. Ministers also reaffirmed their collective commitment to the elimination of agricultural export subsidies in the hemisphere and to seeking a balanced overall package of significant results for other measures affecting agricultural trade in the FTAA and the WTO.

An upcoming milestone will be the exchange of initial offers for the sectoral market access negotiations (Agriculture, Government Procurement, Services, Industrial Goods and Investment) in February 2003. Countries will then have until June 15 to request improvements. The next FTAA Ministerial will take place in November 2003 in Miami.

Canada has also held a series of exploratory talks towards the possibility of FTAs with the **Andean Community**, **the Dominican Republic** and **CARICOM**. Some issues remain outstanding regarding Canada’s negotiation with the **European Free Trade Association** and both sides are reflecting on the best approach to move the negotiations forward.

Separate bilateral negotiations were launched with **Singapore** in October 2001 and with the **Central America Four** (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua) in November 2001. Parallel cooperation agreements on labour and the environment are also being pursued. Several negotiating rounds have been held. With the CA4, both sides would like to conclude early this year, but a precise deadline for conclusion has not been set. Given Singapore’s status as a free port, Canada is seeking to improve market access for services and investment, as no balance is possible with respect to goods alone.

Korea

Consultations are continuing for a possible **Korea-Japan FTA**. Korea and Japan decided to start a joint study on FTA on November 1998, and both sides agreed to promote the study by

establishing Korea-Japan FTA Joint Study Group composed of specialists from government, business and academic field at the summit meeting in March 2002. The fourth Joint Study Group has been held to discuss various issues for successful launch of inter-governmental FTA negotiation in two years.

New Zealand

In April 2001, **New Zealand** announced its intention to negotiate a **Closer Economic Partnership Agreement with Hong Kong**, China Special Administrative Region. To date 5 rounds of negotiations have taken place. Good progress has been made, and agreement has been reached on most areas, although there remain some outstanding issues relating to rules of origin and services. New Zealand remains committed to bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

In October 2002, the leaders of **New Zealand, Chile and Singapore** announced the commencement of a **Pacific 3** negotiation for a free trade arrangement linking the three countries. Like New Zealand's CER agreement with Australia and CEP agreement with Singapore, it is envisaged that the proposed P3 agreement will be comprehensive and forward looking with provisions designed to set high quality benchmarks on trade rules, that would help to promote trade liberalisation within the APEC region, while also increasing trade in goods and services and investment among the three countries. It will also be New Zealand's first preferential trade agreement with a Latin American country. Substantive negotiations are due to commence early in the second half of 2003.

New Zealand and Australia are also involved in a Closer Economic partnership dialogue with the ASEAN nations and are hopeful that in time this will prove a useful stepping-stone to further trade liberalisation between ASEAN and the New Zealand and Australian economies.

In October 2002, **New Zealand** and **Mexico** agreed to the commencement of a study to examine the economic impacts of any bilateral FTA.

More information on New Zealand's trade agreements can be found on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade: www.mfat.govt.nz.

The Philippines

ASEAN and China signed the Framework Agreement on **ASEAN-China** Economic Cooperation in November 2002. The agreement serves as the basis for establishing a free-trade area by 2010 for the older ASEAN members and 2015 for the newer members with flexibility on sensitive commodities.

ASEAN and Japan has signed a Joint Declaration on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEP) in November 2002 which covers elements of a possible FTA.

ASEAN and India agreed to work towards closer India-AFTA linkages and to the adoption of an India-ASEAN Regional Trade and Investment Area as a long-term objective of its Economic Ministers consultations.

Proposals for closer interaction between ASEAN and both the US and EU are under consideration. Consultations are underway for a Philippines-Japan Economic Partnership

Agreement and the Philippines is exploring possibilities for closer bilateral engagement with the US through the development of a Trade and Investment Facilitation Agreement.

The United States

The **US-Singapore FTA** will be the first free trade agreement for the United States in Asia. It is comprehensive. In addition to free trade in goods, the agreement covers services, financial services, telecommunications and e-commerce, transparency, anti-circumvention, competition policy, intellectual property, investment, labour and environment. Reflecting the fact that both countries are significant service economies, there is extensive coverage of services in the agreement: general provisions, financial services, professional services, telecommunications, express delivery, audio-visual, computer services, tourism and others. The agreement also makes significant headway on an area that will be increasingly important, which is customs cooperation and issues of transshipment. The US-Singapore FTA will serve as a benchmark for discussions of such arrangements under the President's Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative.

The **Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)** Agreement, under negotiation since 1995, will boost trade and investment among the democracies of the Western Hemisphere by eliminating barriers to trade investment, and services, and by reducing tariffs on exports of goods. It will create a single set of trade rules amongst 34 countries in the hemisphere, increase competition, and bring greater choices to consumers. The FTAA will be comprehensive, covering agriculture, investment services, intellectual property rights, trade remedies, competition policy and dispute settlement. The FTAA is targeted for completion by 1 January 2005.

In January 2003, **the United States and Morocco** launched negotiations on a free trade agreement between the two countries. The agreement will eliminate tariffs and other barriers to trade in goods, agriculture, services, and investment between the US and Morocco. The agreement will help to enhance and solidify economic reforms in Morocco and demonstrate to others the benefits of developing tolerant, open, and prosperous societies. It will also foster convergence of positions with an important developing country in the ongoing WTO negotiations. The United States is refocusing its existing development assistance program to link it more closely with the FTA and help Morocco to meet the FTA's significant obligations. In addition to trade capacity building, US technical assistance will help Morocco in critical areas such as agriculture sector reform.

In January 2003, the **United States** launched free trade negotiations with the **Central American** countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua to eliminate tariffs and other barriers to trade in goods, agriculture, services, and investment.

During the negotiations, the United States will press for broad liberalization in market access for goods and services, including e-commerce; the elimination of non-tariff barriers; science-based food inspection systems; strong protections for intellectual property and for investors; increased transparency in government regulation and procurement; strengthened capacity to protect workers and the environment; and meaningful dispute settlement mechanisms.

By stimulating trade, this FTA will reinforce free-market reforms in the region, help deepen democracy, the rule of law, and sustainable development. It will further the regional integration that the Central Americans themselves have begun, and complement the work on

the Free Trade of the Americas. The participants will seek to complete the negotiations by December 2003.

Negotiations for **US- Southern African Customs Union (SACU) FTA**, announced in November 2002 and just initiated, are a key part of the US's broader trade liberalization efforts. Through bilateral, regional, and multilateral trade initiatives, the United States is seeking to spark competitive liberalization of trade, target the needs of developing countries, and support African efforts to move to the mainstream of the global economy. The proposed FTA with SACU is in keeping with AGOA (the African Growth and Opportunity Act), which encourages the pursuit of free trade agreements with sub-Saharan African countries. It will complement the efforts of African leaders to boost economic growth and development through increased trade.

A free trade agreement with SACU will deepen US economic and political ties to sub-Saharan Africa and lend momentum to development efforts for the region. The negotiations could result in real benefits for both SACU and the US in terms of improving market access for products and services of both partners. Furthermore, working together on issues of common interest through bilateral negotiations will enhance the ability of all parties to forge consensus in other multilateral trade negotiations, especially the WTO. Trade capacity building will be a key component of the negotiations, both to ensure that SACU countries have the resources they need to participate effectively in the negotiations and to implement the final agreement.

The **United States** announced its intention to initiate free trade negotiations with **Australia** in November 2002, and these negotiations were launched in March. The United States will seek a comprehensive agreement that eliminates tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods, agriculture, services, investment, IPR, government procurement, and other areas. The agreement is expected to further boost trade in both goods and services, enhancing employment opportunities in both countries.

An FTA also will encourage additional foreign investment between the United States and Australia, adding to the many jobs that the significant investment flows between the two countries currently support. In addition, an FTA will result in greater business integration, especially in the information technology sector, increasing the efficiency and the competitiveness of both economies. An FTA will further enhance already close US-Australian cooperation on the WTO Doha Development Agenda, including on agriculture issues.

Current Activity of RTAs

Australia

As a regional initiative, the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (CER) signed a Closer Economic Partnership (CEP) agreement in September 2002, which introduces a formal and structured approach to promoting trade, investment and regional economic integration between ASEAN and CER. Under the CEP Initial Work Program, priority has been given to elimination of technical barriers to trade and non-tariff barriers, customs cooperation, capacity building, trade and

investment promotion and facilitation, standards and conformity assessment, electronic commerce and small and medium enterprises.

Korea

One of the most historic regional agreements was the *First Agreement on Trade Negotiations among Developing Countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific*, the so-called **Bangkok Agreement**, which was established to promote economic development and public wealth through trade liberalization and enhancement among developing countries.

In 1963, tariff reductions were first discussed by the representatives of 13 countries of Asia-Pacific region, and on 31 July 1975, seven countries including Bangladesh, India, Laos, Korea, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Thailand signed the Agreement. Following ratifications from Bangladesh, India, Laos, Korea and Sri Lanka, the Agreement came into effect from 17 June 1976. In addition, the GATT Council granted the Bangkok Agreement a waiver on Most-Favoured-Nation-Treatment, in accordance with Article 25.5 of the GATT Agreement. Thailand and the Philippines have not ratified the agreement.

Since China became the Bangkok Agreement's sixth member, we estimate that the Bangkok Agreement will become a more significant Regional Trade Agreement in APEC. Under the Bangkok Agreement, Members have applied preferential tariff on total 1,311 products of HS 6 digit to each other.

As a way of promoting the Bangkok Agreement, a third round of negotiations was launched by the Standing Committee at its meeting in September 2002. The negotiations focus on increasing the number of products and the inclusion of the services sector to the Agreement's coverage.

Members decided to change the name of the Bangkok Agreement into the **Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement** to enhance the Agreement, and Members are trying to encourage the accession of new members.