

WORLD TRADE INSTITUTE AND MINISTRY OF FINANCE MALAYSIA

A 3.5 DAY WORKSHOP ON NEW CHALLENGES IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE REGULATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR MALAYSIA

16–19 February 2009, Putrajaya, Malaysia

As part of the WTI's ongoing series of training activities in Malaysia¹, the WTI was invited by the Ministry of Finance of Malaysia to conduct a three and a half day workshop on 'New Challenges in International Trade Regulation: Implications for Malaysia' on 16–19 February 2009 in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

The WTI facilitators were Pierre Sauvé, the Institute's Deputy Managing Director and Director of Studies, Gary Horlick, of the Washington, D.C.-based law firm Horlick & Associates, H.E. Roberto Echandi, Ambassador of Costa Rica to the European Communities and Sufian Jusoh, Research Fellow at the WTI who also acted as the workshop coordinator. The WTI also invited H.E. Manickam Suppremaniam, former Ambassador of Malaysia to the WTO, as a resource person for workshop discussions on trade policy formulation.

The workshop commenced with a welcoming address delivered by the Undersecretary of the Economics and International Division of the Malaysian Treasury. This was followed by a discussion on Trade and Services: Economic and Rule-Making Challenges, led by Pierre Sauvé. Sufian Jusoh then led a discussion on the issue of government procurement liberalization in Malaysia immediately after lunch. This was followed by presentations by Pierre Sauvé on the Challenges of Preferential Liberalization of Trade and Services, and also on the Evolving landscape of Investment Rule-Making.

Pierre Sauvé started the second day of discussions with a continued focus on key trends in investment rule-making. Sufian Jusoh followed with a presentation on taxation in cyber space: digital products and e-commerce in the WTO and in preferential trade agreements. The afternoon session was devoted to an in-depth discussion of recent developments in investment law and investment arbitration, led by H.E. Roberto Echandi.

On the third day, the workshop focused on trade policy formulation, with Gary Horlick, H.E. Roberto Echandi and Ambassador Suppremaniam as lead facilitators, each one focusing on key lessons flowing from country experiences (Horlick for the United States, Echandi for Costa Rica and Suppremaniam for Malaysia).

The workshop concluded with a discussion on the future prospects for multilateralism and the WTO, with Gary Horlick and Pierre Sauvé facilitating discussions. The discussion saw Gary Horlick tackle the trade policy priorities of the Obama Administration, followed by a presentation by Pierre Sauvé of the findings of the Warwick Commission report on the future of the multilateral trading system, to which he took part as a Commissioner.

¹ *The workshop at the Ministry of Finance is the third staged by the WTI in the past twelve months, with previous events held at the Attorney General's Chambers between March and June 2008, and at the Malaysian Central Bank (Bank Negara Malaysia) in November 2008.*

The workshop and the presentations by WTI experts received a very favorable reception by the 54 participants taking part in the event and drawn from various departments and agencies under the Ministry of Finance of Malaysia.