

WTI Global Economic Governance Seminar Series

Webinar co-hosted by the WTI and Asian Center for WTO & International Health Law and Policy of NTU College of Law (ACWH)

SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRY MEMBERS IN WTO NEGOTIATIONS: SEARCHING FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

FRIDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2021
12.30-14.00 CET (ONLINE)

Background

Fervent negotiations are going on at the WTO in certain key areas, including fisheries subsidies, investment facilitation for development and e-commerce, among others. In these negotiations, special and differential treatment (S&DT) has constantly been a critical issue, where Members put much efforts trying to hammer out balanced deals.

There is a general consensus among WTO Members that S&DT is an integral component of all WTO agreements, including the new disciplines currently negotiated. However, when coming to drafting specific provisions, developed, developing and least developed country Members have sharp differences concerning the contents and extents of S&DT to be included.

Different kinds of S&DT had been used in previous negotiations, such as: longer implementation periods; flexibilities or lesser degrees of certain substantive obligations or commitments; capacity building to secure trade or other opportunities; technical assistance and other support to build implementation capacities; among others.

Different approaches were also adopted to conduct S&DT negotiations, such as the need-based or evidence-based approach vis-à-vis the open-ended block exemptions. In addition, an issue also arises concerning whether the adoption of any approach other than open-ended block exemptions is a deprivation of “developing country status” under the WTO.

Purpose of the Webinar

The purpose of this webinar is to raise awareness in the academic community and to facilitate a well-informed debate among government officials on the issue of S&DT in the WTO, a critical but difficult issue in some areas of current negotiations. Discussion will focus on, but not limited to, the fisheries subsidies negotiations, which may serve as an example of the high difficulty of addressing the S&DT issue.

Moderator and Panelists

The webinar will be moderated by [Ms. Cherise Valles](#), the Deputy Director of the Advisory Centre on WTO Law (ACWL).

Panelists:

- Mr. Stephen Fevrier, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the OECS at the United Nations
- Mr. Alexandre Guido Lopes Parola, Permanent Representative of Brazil
- Mr. João Aguiar Machado, Permanent Representative of the EU
- Ms. Gothami Silva, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka
- Mr. Kazuyuki Yamazaki, Permanent Representative of Japan
- Mr. Chang-fa Lo, Permanent Representative of the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu

Hosting institutions

The Webinar is co-hosted by the World Trade Institute (WTI) of the University of Bern and the [Asian Center for WTO & International Health Law and Policy of NTU College of Law \(ACWH\)](#). Professor Peter Van den Bossche (the Director of Studies of the WTI) will make an opening statement for the Webinar. Professor Tsai-yu Lin (the Director of the ACWH) will make the concluding remarks.

Join Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87858376602?pwd=THIPN0oycVZkUHhQYnp0NzNpeEZwZz09>

Meeting ID: 878 5837 6602

Passcode: 956710