

Trade Facilitation & the Commonwealth Small States Office

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The Commonwealth

Outline of the presentation

1. Commonwealth Small States & CSSO Office - background & functions
2. Trade Advisers program
3. Trade Facilitation Support
4. Other areas of work
5. On-going and future projects

The Commonwealth Small States Office (CSSO)

- Opened on 17 January 2011, after CHOGM summits in Kampala (2007) and Trinidad & Tobago (2009) and inspired by the New York CSSO - a diplomatic base for Small States envoys
- Purpose: facilitating the representation and ensure effective participation of small and developing states in Geneva-based international mechanisms
- To provide CW small states with a presence and ensure they are able to project & articulate their national interests in international negotiations, in particular on matters of trade
- **31 Commonwealth Members are Small States = 59% of the Membership (SIDS and SVEs), and represent the core of our TACB actions and programs**
- It also supports other Commonwealth small states not physically present in Geneva (Belize, Tonga, etc.)
- Represent the Commonwealth Secretariat vis-à-vis the United Nations, WTO and other international organisations in Geneva
- Currently: **5 Permanent Missions** (Malawi, Guyana, Seychelles, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands) & **2 regional organisations**: OECS (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States) and Pacific Island Forums (PIFS), prospects for **9 additional Members still to join**
- **Dedicated Trade Advisers since 2012 (increased to 2 in 2019); 2 Human Rights Advisers**

Trade Advisers' Program

- ❑ Enhance and increase the effective and meaningful participation of Commonwealth Small States (CSS) in multilateral trade governance instances (Geneva and elsewhere);
- ❑ Provide dedicated and timely support in the form of technical papers, notes, strategic advice on WTO-related matters, including on implementation of Trade Facilitation Agreement from CSS based in Geneva and/or request received from their capitals;
- ❑ Facilitate access to other organisations and facilities based in Geneva working on Trade Facilitation and liaise with potential partners towards organizing workshops and technical activities;
- ❑ Platform for experience sharing - offer valuable experiences and best practices in trade facilitation, providing opportunities for greater knowledge sharing within the Commonwealth (diversity of CWS profiles)

Assistance and Support: Trade Facilitation

❖ Support towards TFA implementation

- Match-making with potential donors, development partners and relevant international organizations (Geneva & elsewhere) to seek TACB projects;
- Assistance in the design and preparation of project proposals
- Support in notifications of category C commitments

❖ Advocacy and awareness-raising

- Organizing CSSO workshops & experience-sharing activities and events with other TF stakeholders
- Preparing technical briefs & memoranda in support of internal ratification process
- Liaising and engaging with the TF Community and providing networking opportunities for CW Membership

❖ Day-to-day operation and support in TF-related activities in Geneva

- Participating and reporting meetings of the TF and other specialized WTO Committees (CVA)
- Drafting briefs, reports and statements in preparation for meetings
- Preparing and commissioning technical papers and analytical pieces on TF issues on *ad hoc* basis

Assistance and Support: Negotiations and Emerging Trade Issues

❖ *Ad Hoc* Support

- WTO proposal analysis, drafting, preparation and interpretation;
- Analytical and legal briefs and State of Play reports ;
- Inputs for statements and proposals

❖ Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building efforts

- Hosting workshops & capacity-building activities and regional/national workshops
- Preparing & commissioning analytical briefs & *memoranda* in relation to on-going WTO issues
- Monthly newsletter and negotiating briefs

❖ Strengthen Collaboration and Visibility

- Encourage collaborative engagements between like-minded countries, with WTO groupings and IOs to build common positions and share knowledge, experiences
- Initiate profile-raising activities: organisation & participation in workshops, conferences & seminars in collaboration with other organisations and development partners



Commonwealth and Trade Facilitation: next projects

Trade Facilitation Workshop in Sydney
(Nov/2019) for Pacific and PIFS
(collaboration with AUS/DFAT)

Trade Policy Workshop in Fiji
(Feb/2020) for CW CSS non-WTO
Members (TF; RTAs; Pacer+)

TF projects: exploratory talks with
Mauritius, Malawi and St. Kitts and
Vanuatu

Launch of the “Trade Facilitation: A
Roadmap” on TACB (Oct. 2019)

Thank you!

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