

ABAC Document Overview

ABAC for Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) Meeting

7:00-8:00 a.m., Monday 21 January 2013
Pasay Room A, Level 3
Shangri-La Hotel, Manila

Background

ABAC for TPP was established in May of 2012 under the leadership of Tony Nowell of New Zealand and Juan Raffo of Peru. ABAC has long been supportive of initiatives that can serve as pathways or building blocks toward a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP), but Members had been reluctant to indicate more support for one initiative over another (i.e. TPP over an ASEAN-led initiative). In this respect the establishment of a group of ABAC Members focused on support for TPP was somewhat remarkable.

ABAC USA has been supportive of ABAC for TPP's activities, but has not taken an active role in the group. There is scope for ABAC USA to take a more active role should there be interest among US members.

Objective

The group's main objectives are to leverage the ABAC to advocate for the early conclusion of the TPP and share information among private sector stakeholders. ABAC for TPP meetings are open to ABAC members from non-TPP countries as well, making it an opportunity to share information with business people from economies that could potentially join negotiations in the future.

Activities

The group has met on the margins of every ABAC meeting since it was established to discuss how Members can support efforts to conclude the TPP. It is likely that it would be difficult to find agreement among ABAC members on highly technical or controversial issues. In 2012, ABAC for TPP sent a letter to trade ministers from TPP economies calling for negotiating countries to conclude the agreement in a timely manner and ensure that the TPP is high quality, comprehensive and inclusive. At the APEC meetings in Vladivostok, ABAC for TPP arranged a meeting with TPP trade ministers to reinforce these messages, however logistical issues forced the cancellation of the meeting.

January 21 Meeting

The ABAC for TPP meeting in Manila will include a report out on the activities in Vladivostok, a summary of progress at the December round of negotiations and outlook for the next round in Singapore in early March. This will be followed by a discussion of what ABAC for TPP can do to support the negotiations, including possibly releasing an open letter or statement to trade ministers.

Additionally, ABAC for TPP meetings have only been attended by private sector participants to date, however there will likely be a number of APEC officials in attendance, including Atul Keshap from the US State Department.

ABAC for TPP meeting

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Proposed Agenda

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| 1. Feedback on Vladivostok | Tony Nowell/Juan Raffo |
| 2. Outcome of 15th TPP Round in Auckland
and outlook for 2013 | Stephen Jacobi |
| 3. ABAC for TPP role and strategy | Tony Nowell/Juan Raffo |

Note:

This is an ABAC side meeting, not part of the ABAC-SOM dialogue. Senior Officials are welcome to attend as guests and participants along with interested ABAC Members and staffers.



Media release

6 December 2012

Businesses in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and United States call for urgent action to conclude TPP in 2013

Business representatives from four economies have met in Auckland to press for more urgency in concluding the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations currently underway.

“In September business representatives from across the TPP member economies urged governments to conclude an ambitious, comprehensive and high standard outcome in 2013,” said Cal Cohen, President of the Emergency Committee for American Trade (ECAT) speaking on behalf of the US Business Coalition for TPP.

“We are glad this call has been taken on board and we express our strong support for this goal. It is now time for negotiators to tackle the more sensitive issues to ensure this deadline can be met.”

“TPP has the capacity to change the way business is done in the Asia Pacific region. This is what is needed to grow economies and create jobs,” said Stephen Jacobi, Executive Director of the NZ US Council and NZ International Business Forum.

“We appreciate the task is complex but we urge negotiators meeting in Auckland this week to accelerate their efforts and narrow their differences so the benefits of TPP can be brought forward at a time of increasing economic difficulty.”

“Canada is joining the TPP negotiations for the first time here in Auckland and is determined to participate in a way that builds consensus for a strong outcome,” said Kathleen Sullivan, Executive Director of the Canadian Agri-food Trade Alliance (CAFTA).

“Our immediate priorities are addressing the proliferation of non-tariff barriers which impede trade and issues like rules of origin that can prevent trade occurring even when FTAs are put in place. There is a lot at stake for Canada in TPP and we are glad to be participating as one of eleven APEC economies.”

“Australia has a lot to gain from a successful outcome to TPP which can provide an opportunity to reduce the complexity associated with the noodle bowl of over-lapping and contradictory FTAs in the region,” said Bryan Clark, Director, Trade and International Affairs, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI).

“Simplification of the supply chain will translate into reduced business costs and increase the time in which products move around the region. That can only advantage businesses and consumers and lead to better economic outcomes for all member economies.”

Asia Pacific business organisations have earlier reaffirmed their view that a successful TPP will be:

- **Comprehensive** – with no product exclusions and with commercially meaningful and flexible rules of origin.
- **High quality** – with strong standards across all main areas, from transparency, investment and government procurement to intellectual property, e-commerce and sanitary and phytosanitary measures.
- **Ambitious** – with the elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers on trade in goods and services and investment no later than 2020, the deadline set for free and open trade and investment in the Bogor goals.
- **Innovative** – with concrete new commitments on new generation and behind the border issues, including eliminating chokepoints in the operation of regional supply and value chains, fostering small and medium-sized business participation in expanding trade, facilitating regulatory coherence, and promoting and protecting innovation.
- **Enforceable** – with clear commitments, and strong and transparent state-to-state and investor-to-state dispute settlement mechanisms.
- **A living agreement** – open to accession by other Asia-Pacific economies, provided these economies share TPP's ambitious vision and can demonstrate their ability to accede to an agreement with the characteristics described above.

Business representatives from TPP member economies will join government negotiators and other representatives of civil society at a Stakeholder Forum in Auckland on 7 December.

ENDS

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