
Multistakeholder Round Table 4: Upholding the multilateral trading system, and harnessing the potential of science, technology and innovation

2nd July 2025: 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Fibes 1, Sevilla, Spain

Background

International trade is an engine for inclusive growth and poverty eradication and contributes to the promotion of sustainable development. Yet, the multilateral trading system is increasingly under threat. Trade restrictions, including tariffs inconsistent with WTO rules, principles and commitments, are on the rise globally amidst rising trade tensions and stalling multilateral negotiations. At the same time many developing countries with limited productive capacities and trade infrastructure continue to experience challenges in integrating into regional and global value chains and generating higher-value addition in commodities and critical minerals.

Over the last decades, the world has seen unprecedented progress in science, technology and innovation (STI). While technology holds promises in advancing sustainable development and resilience, enhancing productivity, creating new industries and business models and contributing to poverty eradication, it can also have unintended economic, environmental and social impacts. Moreover, developing countries' ability to leverage its full potential remains constrained. Deepening gaps in innovation and access to technology and inadequate access to digital infrastructure, data and digital public goods have resulted in persistent digital divides between and within countries.

The Compromiso de Sevilla outlines commitments to uphold the multilateral trading system and harnessing the potential of STI. On international trade, it reaffirms the principles of the multilateral trading system and lays out specific actions to improve capacities to trade and increase local value addition for commodities and critical minerals, with a focus on the furthest behind. The Sevilla outcome also puts forward measures at the national and international levels to close digital divides and leverage scientific and technological advances.

Guiding Questions

- What actions and commitments related to trade and STI in the Sevilla outcome are of highest priority from your perspective, and how will you advance their implementation?
- How do you plan to build on the outcome document in Sevilla to support developing countries' integration in regional and global value chains and local value addition of critical minerals and commodities?
- How can commitments in the Sevilla outcome document help closing digital divides within and between countries?