

**European Economic and Social Committee  
Section for External Relations (REX)**

**"The core role of trade and investment in meeting and  
implementing SDGs"**

5 September, 2017, 9.30 am -1 pm, EESC (Rue Belliard 99-101),  
room JDE 63.

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**1. Can trade and sustainable development be mutually reinforcing?**

- 1.1. **In principle yes provided that governments have made the effort to create their own national SDG strategy and started the process of consultation of their own respective major stakeholders**
- 1.2. Trade is an intersectoral undertaking and hence important sector ministries should provide inputs to the ministry of trade/commerce and get regular updates on trade metrics- both imports, exports, NTBs, GATT, GATS.
- 1.3. at the same time, a country should ideally have a development strategy which includes assessment of its current comparative advantages and identification of future competitiveness
- 1.4. it would be useful to revisit the findings of the country's last trade policy review (TPR) and use the results of the TPR for building forward looking trade policy.
- 1.5. regarding investment, consideration are necessary as to the usefulness of current agreements (Bits, FTAs, RTAs, PTAs) and assessment of whether future investment agreements might be useful or not.
- 1.6. countries should look for complementarities between their current investment policy and how this fits or does not fit with their trade policy and SDG strategy

**2. Are there SDGs which are particularly dependent on the existence on an open, rule-based, equitable multilateral trade system?**

Goal 17. strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development trade

**Target; 17.11 increase significantly the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the LDCs share of global exports by 2020**

Targets for the systemic issue regarding trade policy coherence

17.14 enhance policy coherence for sustainable development

Indicator, 17.14.1 Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development , source:

(<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabledevelopmentgoals>)

### **3. What should be the role of private sector in achieving SDGs through trade and investment policies?**

- 3.1. to inform itself about the respective home country and host countries' SDGs strategies and to align its business with these strategies as much as this is possible and feasible
- 3.2. be willing to engage in discussion with the governments of the countries where it operates as to what the enterprise could contribute in regard to implementing the national SDG strategies
- 3.3. be mindful of countries' commitments towards fighting climate warming, e.g. knowing the countries' voluntary commitments to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and to align business strategy with a country's NDC and with its SDG plan.
- 3.4. respect the OECD' responsible business conduct and investment agreement and apply its standards
- 3.5.1. read UNCTAD's world investment report (WIR) 2010 which focused on low-carbon investment

### **4. Can civil society be instrumental in achieving SDGs through trade policy?**

- 4.1. Civil society organisations could play a crucial role in supporting a country's trade policy provided the respective country has communicated its SDG and trade strategy and provided the government engages in trade policy consultations with private sector and CSOS.
- 4.2. **Goal 17 and Target 17.17 state: encourage and promote effective public, public- private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.** implementing the SDGs requires all of the above forms of partnerships, including with CSO.

- 4.3. CSU should learn how to play conduct monitoring of the country's SDG strategy and implementation in a constructive manner. By the same token, governments should provide adequate transparency, inclusiveness and participation.

## 5. How can "aid for trade" be an efficient tool for achieving sdgs?

- 5.1. Developed countries must bear in mind that they are co-responsible for the achievement of SDG 17 and Target 17.11 which states: increase significantly the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the LDCs share of global exports by 2020
- 5.2. Developed countries should also bear in mind SDG 17 and target 17.17 which states: *encourage and promote effective public, public- private, and civil society partnerships*, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

An important CSO partner are cooperatives who produce goods and services and often organise community based social activities. a large number of LDCs and low-income DCs suffer from multiple conflicts. Cooperatives can provide support for social integration and inclusion of minorities (women, young, elderly, ethnic and religious minorities).

### references:

1. on SDGs: <http://www.csend.org/publications/negotiation-a-diplomacy/item/382-deliberation-on-post-mdg-2015-development-agenda>
2. on Trade: <http://www.diplomacydialogue.org/publications/trade-diplomacy.html>

