

## INVITATION

### **THE FUTURE OF TRADE RULES** **Round Table Discussion**

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017, 2-6 pm  
Indian Women Press Corps, 5 Windsor Place, New Delhi 110001

Coorganised by  
Forum on Free Trade Agreements and  
Economic & Political Weekly as Knowledge Partner

15<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Dear friend in the media,

You will agree that it is a time of unprecedented change with respect to trade rules. There have been and continue to be many developments that must be understood for their likely political and practical implications.

A complete thinking turnaround is taking place, particularly in EU and US. The outcome of the US elections itself signals change, with a new protectionism in trade policy. President Trump's election rhetoric on trade deals is turning into reality, with his executive order withdrawing USA from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Within Europe, Brexit has triggered off debates about the future of not only United Kingdom, but also the European Union itself.

The end-of-the-year will witness another Ministerial Conference (MC) of the WTO with a predictable tug-of-war between the developed world pushing 'new' issues, and the developing countries hoping for the *Doha Development Round* to see the light of day. Meanwhile, the Government of India's Ministry of Commerce & Industry has begun its preparatory process for the MC11.

Within Asia Pacific it is a hectic time for trade talks. China was actually seen routing for free trade at Davos 2017. Japan and Australia are still hopeful of some kind of mega-regional trade partnership to emerge from a TPP post 'US-exit'. The negotiations of the ASEAN-centred Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) are well underway. In fact, India will be playing host to the next round of talks of RCEP's Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) in July.

In such a setting what positions should a country like India be taking? What do all these mean for Indian industry and more so for its people? What has India's experience been thus far on the trade front? When economic globalisation and 'free' trade is itself coming under intense scrutiny, what are the possible future pathways? These are amongst the questions that need to be asked.

We cordially invite you and fellow media persons to participate in a round table discussion on 'The Future of Trade Rules'. This is a first of a series of conversations that the Forum is organising. This particular discussion brings together senior journalists, who have long been following the trade negotiations and covering trade-related law and policy issues. It also brings academe and researchers with expertise on the WTO, FTAs/BITs and other trade agreements. The intent is to bring to the table analysis and evidence, and more forward-looking reflections on the WTO-FTA model in general and the RCEP and other trade negotiations in particular.

We solicit your kind interest and involved participation in the discussions. Please send confirmations in reply. For more details you may contact [tradetalks2017@gmail.com](mailto:tradetalks2017@gmail.com)

Sincerely,



(Shalini Bhutani)  
Forum on FTAs



(Paranjoy Guha Thakurta)  
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