Trade, Climate Change and Development Monitor

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OPINION IN LEAD

COP 19: Warsaw deliverables

From 2-4 October 2013, forty ministers and their representatives, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat officials, the Co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), along with the representatives of the business sector, gathered in Warsaw, Poland. The occasion was the pre-COP meeting in which they presented their views and discussed a number of issues ahead of the 19th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP19) of the UNFCCC.

This year's COP19 is scheduled to be held in the capital of coal-dependent Poland from 11-22 November 2013. The four pillars of the Bali Action Plan – mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing – adopted during the COP13 in 2007 are expected to take the centre stage in Warsaw. The major negotiations, however, are expected to take place within the ADP – a subsidiary body that was established by COP17 in 2011. The ADP has been entrusted the mandate to develop a protocol – another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the UNFCCC – that would be applicable to all Parties. This protocol needs to be in place no later than 2015 in order for it to be adopted at the twenty-first session of the COP and for it to come into effect and be implemented from 2020.

Keeping issues relating to finance at the forefront might be the magic bullet for the success of the Warsaw Conference. Given that the developed countries have failed to keep their promise of scaling up climate finance, there is a strong demand from the developing countries that the developed countries honour their obligations to provide new, additional and adequate financial support to developing countries that are measurable, reportable and verifiable. There is a demand for a firm and assured commitment of funds for the period from 2013 to 2020, accompanied with a clear roadmap to attain the target of providing US$100 billion every year by 2020. Such commitment and disbursement can be instrumental in overcoming the dearth of adequate funds that threatens to impede the adaptation and mitigation processes being undertaken in many of the developing nations.

The Warsaw Conference could focus on establishing an international financing mechanism with special attention to the vulnerable developing countries. Introduction of such novel mechanism could go a long way in furthering the full operationalization and facilitating close coordination between institutions established in the Bali process, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF). With respect to the sources of finance, at this stage, public financial resources seems a more viable option with a supplementary role being played by the private sector, whose importance is deemed to increase substantially in the years to come.

Coming to the issues of mitigation and adaptation, given that the world is already observing the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases at 400ppm mark, emission reduction remains extremely crucial. In order for the developed countries to restrict global warming below 1.5ºC, their pre-2020 peak emission target should be set at around 25-40 percent reduction on 1990 levels by 2015. The pre-2020 ambition may be addressed primarily through the implementation of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (KP) and the agreed outcome of the Bali Action Plan. Developed countries participating in the second commitment period under the KP have an opportunity of revisiting and significantly increasing their emission reduction targets in 2014. The Warsaw Conference presents opportunity to the developed countries not Party to the second commitment period of the KP to participate in raising the ambition of their comparable commitments under the Convention within 2015.

The contribution of the developing countries has been much larger than the developed countries in the climate change mitigation efforts. Moreover, the pre-2020 mitigation gap would not have existed if the developed countries had committed to an emission reduction of 40 percent below their 1990 levels by 2020. The Warsaw Conference offers an excellent platform for the developed country Parties to immediately undertake mitigation efforts and to provide financial resources to support mitigation and adaptation – including addressing the hydrofluorocarbons issues – put forward by their developing counterparts.

It is highly imperative that the low emission development strategy of the developing countries should not only be supported financially but also be provided adequate technological support. Appropriate technology development and its transfer are of the utmost importance for the developing world, something the developed world could take up the mantle to commit during the upcoming COP19. Technology transfer along with capacity building – identified by the developing countries themselves – is extremely essential to support climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in the developing world.

Meanwhile, it is important for the developing countries to overcome conflict and disagreement between them and generate a strong and unique political negotiation action to strongly put forth their demands through the COP19 in Warsaw.

The COP19 presents an unique opportunity for the countries, especially the developed ones, to commit to implement some attainable targets that have been raised many times including in the past COP meetings. COP19 provides a critical opportunity for the global community to come together and move forward to combat climate change. It is now crucial to maintain the balance between the proposed plans and their actual implementation in terms of tangible works done in the domain of international climate negotiations to not let the credibility of the COP to corrode. All eyes are now on Warsaw for a successful COP19 with some concrete outputs, especially for the developing countries.

ANALYSIS

South Asia implements business regulatory reforms

Given the global economic system of the twenty-first century, there is no denying that the private sector is the engine of sustainable economic growth of any world economy. A business friendly environment that enables entrepreneurs to build their businesses and reinvest in their communities is key to local and global economic growth. Governments play a critical role in supporting and facilitating the growth of the private sector; they set the rules and regulations, and create an environment that is ideal for doing business and fostering entrepreneurship.

According to the latest Doing Business Report 2014: *Understanding Regulations for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises* – the flagship report of the World Bank and International Finance Corporation, 114 economies around the world significantly stepped up their pace of improving business regulations and implemented 238 reforms in 2012/13, making it easier to do business. The report added that if economies around the world were to follow best practices in regulatory processes for starting a business, entrepreneurs would spend 45 million fewer days each year satisfying bureaucratic requirements.

The Doing Business Report benchmarks the regulations that affect private sector firms, in particular small and medium-size enterprises. It looks at how countries have performed on 10 indicators – starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts, and resolving insolvency. These indicators broadly cover all the areas that have direct implications on the ease of doing business.

Singapore tops the global ranking on the ease of doing business. Joining it on the list of the top 10 economies with the most business-friendly regulatory environments are Hong Kong, New Zealand, the United States (US), Denmark, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Georgia, Norway, and the United Kingdom. More importantly, the report finds that South Asia leads the world in the share of economies implementing business regulatory reforms in 2012/13. Six of eight economies in the region completed 11 reforms simplifying the process of starting a business, strengthening access to credit, or easing the process of paying taxes.

According to the report, Sri Lanka is one of the 29 economies in the world that improved the most in the ease of doing business. It is also the regional leader in implementing regulatory reforms and is ranked 85 out of 189, followed by the Maldives (95th), Nepal (105th), Pakistan (110th), Bangladesh (130th), India (134th), Bhutan (141st) and Afghanistan (164th). Sri Lanka's government took steps to simplify access to electricity for firms, reduce fees in construction permitting, and implemented an electronic system for filling taxes and paying for port service.

Unfortunately, India – South Asia's largest economy and a country that hopes to be a world power – has slipped down two positions in 2014, and is way behind most of its South Asian neighbours. Despite being the only South Asian country with a complete online system for filing and paying taxes, India lags behind many regional counterparts in terms of paying taxes. Moreover, it is the worst performer in South Asia in three indicators: starting a business, dealing with construction permits and enforcing contracts. However, the ease of doing business in India is still better than in Afghanistan and Bhutan, although Afghanistan and Bhutan have both implemented a few important regulatory reforms. Afghanistan strengthened access to credit by implementing a unified collateral registry, and aims to reduce the time and cost to obtain a business licence by eliminating the inspection of the premises of newly registered companies. And Bhutan improved access to credit information by passing regulations that govern the licencing and operation of its credit bureau, and made starting a business easier by reducing the time required to obtain the security clearance certificate.

Similarly, Bangladesh and Nepal made business start-up faster by reducing administrative processing. Specifically, Bangladesh automated the registration process and reduced the time required to obtain a trading license and to complete the tax and value added tax registration, while Nepal reduced the administrative processing time at the company registrar by establishing a data link between agencies involved in the incorporation process which reduced registration time from 15 to 7 days. The island nation of Maldives also implemented reforms and made paying taxes easier for companies by introducing electronic filing systems for corporate income tax, sales tax and pension contributions. Moreover, the report states that the Maldives has advanced the furthest in narrowing the gap with the most efficient practice and regulations in registering property since 2009.

While smaller South Asian economies implemented regulatory reforms to improve the business environment in their respective countries, India and Pakistan were the only two South Asian countries that failed to introduce even a single business friendly reform. Like India, Pakistan's global ranking slipped three positions in ease of doing business as the country's performance deteriorated on almost all indicators, mainly on getting an electricity connection and paying taxes.

The poor performance of India and Pakistan in the ease of doing business adds to the challenges faced by South Asia's two largest economies in attracting foreign investment, which is likely to dampen economic growth not only in the two countries, but also in South Asia. Though other smaller South Asian countries have successfully implemented business regulatory reforms in their effort to provide impetus for private sector lead growth and to attract foreign investment, given the relatively small size of their economies and their limited contribution to regional growth, improvements in the business environment of South Asian countries excluding India and Pakistan will not be able to offset the economic effects of decrease in foreign investment in the larger South Asian economies. Hence, in spite of the noteworthy regional progress in implementing business reforms, the poor performance of India and Pakistan more than offsets the progress made by other South Asian countries.

Based on Doing Business Report 2014.

NEWS

Bangladesh poised to hike garment wages amid the slowdown forecast for garment export growth

Rock bottom wages and trade deals with Western countries have propelled Bangladesh's garments sector to a US$22 billion industry accounting for four-fifths of the poor country's exports. The minimum monthly wage for garment workers is 3,000 taka, around half of what those in rival Asian exporters Vietnam and Cambodia earn and just over a quarter of the rate in top exporter China, according to International Labour Organization data from August.

The world's second largest clothing exporter hopes to announce a new minimum wage early next month, bowing to international pressure after a string of fatal factory accidents that thrust poor working conditions and pay into the spotlight. Factory bosses have formally offered 3,600 taka, but workers want the minimum wage, which was last raised in 2010, to go up to 8,000 taka a month – two and a half times the current rate.

Wages have not kept up with inflation, which is running at a nearly 9 percent annual average since the last hike in July 2010. The wage would need to hit 3,877 taka just to keep pace with inflation, which is more than factory owners have offered. Factory bosses counter that they would like to pay workers more but can only cover this cost by charging Western retailers more, which could jeopardise Bangladesh's sole appeal – its bargain basement rates.

Some factories are already struggling with higher costs due to retailers demanding stricter safety standards after the accidents. Many workers say they will go on strike again if their demands for a pay hike are not met. While some staff would accept an offer below the 8,000 taka, anything under 6,000 is likely to spark widespread protests from their unions. Garment factory workers need around 6,450 taka a month just for their basic living costs, according to a survey by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, a Dhaka think-tank, published in September, with many relying on small loans. Given the predicament, the wage negotiations must somehow strike a balance between Western fashion giants, politically-connected factory owners and protesting staff.

Meanwhile, an updated assessment of economic trends and prospects in developing Asia forecasts a slowdown in the growth of Bangladesh's ready-made garment exports in the current fiscal year following a series of deadly industrial accidents in the country. "Export growth is projected to slow down to 7 percent on an expected weaker expansion in garment exports because of some unfavourable buyer reaction in the aftermath of fatal factory fires and the horrific factory collapse in April," the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in its latest Asian Development Outlook Update.

The projection is significantly lower than the government's estimate at 12.3 percent for the year ending 30 June 2014, which includes higher garment exports. The ADB also said the US suspension of its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) will have a negative impact on Bangladesh's economy, even though garments are not covered by the scheme.

Source: http://in.reuters.com, 21.10.2013 and http://www.just-style.com/, 07.10.2013.

Food Security Act will not distort trade, India tells FAO

India made it clear at the just-concluded Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) meeting of the Committee on World Food Security in Rome that the procurement of food grains and distribution under the new Food Security Act will not be substantially higher than the ongoing public distribution system, indicating that it will not contribute to international price distortions.

India had to make its position clear in the wake of some of the World Trade Organization (WTO) countries questioning the huge stocks that the country is holding to provide subsidised food grains under the new legislation. Countries like the US, Canada and Pakistan fear that procuring food grains at a minimum support price from farmers and selling at subsidised rates to 67 percent population (as provided for in the Act) will distort international trade. WTO members are meeting in Bali in December for a Ministerial meeting where the issue will be discussed.

On his return from the meeting, Indian Minister of State (Independent) for Food and Public Distribution K.V. Thomas told journalists in New Delhi that he explained that with higher production of foodgrains, India had contributed to world trade by exporting 10 million tonnes of rice, 5 million tonnes of wheat and 2.5 million tonnes of sugar this year. “India has enough foodgrains till 2014 for internal consumption as well as to provide to countries that need foodgrains. We also explained that the Food Act is a shift from a welfare-based to a rights-based approach in providing food security to the poor and protecting human dignity. This is a new turn in our view, we told FAO members,” he said.

India backs the G-33 proposal that wants subsidies, which are a part of the procurement of foodgrains for public stockholding for poor and marginal farmers, not to be regarded as a prohibited subsidy by the WTO. The Agreement on Agriculture allows “market distorting subsidies” up to a limit of 10 percent of the total production. Some developing countries, including India, are demanding that this limit be raised.

Source: http://www.thehindu.com/, 13.10.2013.

LDCs table draft decision on services waiver

The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) group at the WTO has tabled a draft decision for Bali on the operationalisation of the waiver concerning preferential treatment to services and service suppliers of the LDCs. The Draft Decision has been put forward by Nepal, on behalf of the LDC Group, for consideration as part of the outcome of the upcoming Bali Ministerial Conference.

The Draft Decision, amongst others, proposes that the operationalisation of the services waiver be a standing item on the agenda of the Council for Trade in Services, and that an annual review be undertaken to assess the status of operationalising the waiver. It also proposes that the General Council convene a Signaling Conference in July 2014, with a view "to accelerating the process of securing meaningful preferences for LDC services and service suppliers and to fully operationalize the waiver". The draft decision also highlights the issue of lowering, ideally removing market access barriers, domestic regulatory as well as administrative barriers, and other relevant measures that may impede current or potential LDC services exports. Furthermore, it urges donors and international institutions to increase financial and technical support aimed at overcoming these constraints in trade in services.

In the preamble, the Draft Decision proposes, amongst others, that the Ministerial Conference reaffirm that the waiver granted by Members to provide preferential treatment to services and service suppliers of least-developed countries (WT/L/847) constitutes an important positive effort to help increase the participation of LDCs in world services trade, and note that WTO Members are yet to make use of the Waiver since its adoption in 2011.

Source: http://www.twnside.org.sg, 18.10.2013.

India building better border infrastructure for trade with Bangladesh

India is developing border infrastructure with Bangladesh to boost two-way trade and Indian companies are already showing keen interest to invest in various segments and joint ventures in the neighbouring country, India High Commissioner Pankaj Saran said on Wednesday.

In the last fiscal year (2012-13) Bangladesh had exported US$562 million worth of goods to India. “This is the highest ever volume of exports to India since the creation of Bangladesh in 1971,” Mr Saran told reporters at the Akhaurah India-Bangladesh check post near Agarthala, who was there as part of a 18-member high-level Indian team led by Gouri Kumar, Secretary, Border Management, to supervise the ongoing works of the Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Akhaurah, two km west of the heart of Agartala city. The officials will also be visiting the ICP at the Petrapole-Benapole check post in West Bengal.

The Indian government is setting up 13 world class ICPs along the country's borders with Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar and Nepal. The ICPs are envisaged to facilitate the effective and efficient discharge of sovereign functions such as security, immigration, customs, and quarantine while providing support facilities for smooth cross-border movement of people, goods and transport.

Mr Saran said the Indian government had given highest priority to developing various infrastructures along the 4,096km India-Bangladesh border with West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram. He added that Dhaka and New Delhi were also trying to simplify the travel documents including visas of various types so that the people of the two countries can travel easily and in large numbers. Moreover, for the benefit of the people on both sides of the border, the two countries have started setting up of "border *haats*" (markets) along the India-Bangladesh border. "These would boost local trade and people-to-people contact between the two countries," stated Mr Saran. He concluded that, India-Bangladesh relations are moving "in the right direction".

Like the Airports Authority of India, the Indian government had set up a Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) in 2010.

Source: http://www.mizonews.net, 11.09.2013.

Toward 2030: South Asian and sub-Saharan African nations most at risk from 'disasters and climate extremes'

A recent report – The geography of poverty, disasters and climate extremes in 2030 - published under the joint imprimatur of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the UK Met Office and the Risk Management Solutions – a private company specialising in risk management, states that extreme weather linked to climate change is increasing and may cause disasters that nullify progress on poverty reduction. The report adds that without concerted international action, up to 325 million "extremely poor" people will be living in 49 very hazard-prone countries in 2030 – mainly in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

According to the report, Nepal and Pakistan are among the 11 nations most at risk of disaster-induced poverty. It argues that if the international community is serious about eradicating poverty by 2030, it needs to identify and then act where the poor and disaster risk are most concentrated. The report suggested that the disaster risk management (DRM) should be put at the heart of poverty eradication efforts. More importantly, the report stresses that the post-2015 development goals must include targets on disasters and climate change, recognising the threat they pose to the headline goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030.

Source: http://www.climatecentre.org, 24.10.2013.

South Asian economic growth not enough for poverty reduction

The South Asian region has achieved an economic growth averaging 6.5 percent annually during 2000-12, however, this is not enough to reduce poverty and ensure food security, said a report launched by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on 2 October. The report, titled "SAARC Regional Poverty Profile", underlined that still 32 percent South Asian people live on less than US$1.25 per person a day.

"While some countries of the region may be near achieving the millennium development goal of halving the proportion of people in extreme poverty by 2015, the region in general has still high incidences of poverty, hunger and malnutrition," said the report.

Food production has improved considerably over time in all countries of the region, but inter-country and intra-country variations persist. For instance, India is self-sufficient in all major food items except pulses and edible oils, while Pakistan is self-sufficient in wheat and rice. Nepal, whose index of per capita food production has improved marginally, still depends on import for most of its food items including cereals, pulses and fish, while Bangladesh is more or less self-sufficient in rice but imports wheat. Afghanistan, Bhutan and Maldives depend on import of most food items to meet their domestic demand, while Sri Lanka meets nearly 99 percent of its rice requirements internally but imports 97 percent of its demand for pulses.

Addressing the function, Chairman of Nepal's Interim Government Khil Raj Regmi said youth, women and small farmers have to be mainstreamed and empowered to address the food security issue and achieve the over-arching goal of poverty alleviation in the region. Ms Caitlin Wiesen, manager of the United Nations Development Program for Asia Pacific Region, said most of the world's poor, some 540 million in number, live in South Asia and therefore, wise and concentrated efforts are needed to address this massive problem.

The report launching program coincided with a symposium about the best practices of poverty alleviation in South Asia, under which, experts discussed pros and cons of poverty reduction for two days.

Source: http://news.xinhuanet.com/, 02.10.2013.

India tops global chart of remittances

India has topped the global chart of remittances with a whopping US$71 billion in remittances in 2013, just short of three times the FDI it received in 2012, according to a revised World Bank forecast. The top recipients of officially recorded remittances for 2013 are India (with an estimated US$71 billion), China (US$60 billion), the Philippines (US$26 billion), Mexico (US$22 billion), Nigeria (US$21 billion), and Egypt (US$20 billion), the report issued on 2 October said. Other large recipients include Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Ukraine.

As a percentage of GDP, the top recipients of remittances, in 2012, were Tajikistan (48 percent), Kyrgyz Republic (31 percent), Lesotho and Nepal (25 percent each) and Moldova (24 percent).

"These latest estimates show the power of remittances," said Kaushik Basu, Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist of the World Bank. "For a country like Tajikistan, they constitute half the GDP. For Bangladesh remittances provide vital protection against poverty. In terms of volume, India, with US$71 billion of remittances, tops the global chart. To put this in perspective, this is just short of three times the foreign direct investment it received in 2012," he said. "Remittances act as a major counterbalance when capital flows weaken as happened in the wake of the US Fed announcing its intention to reign in its liquidity injection programme. Also, when a nation's currency weakens, inward remittances rise and, as such, they act as an automatic stabiliser," Basu said.

According to World Bank estimates, India and China alone will represent nearly a third of total remittances to the developing world this year. Remittance volumes to developing countries, as a whole, are projected to continue growing strongly over the medium term, averaging an annual growth rate of 9 percent to reach US$540 billion in 2016. Global remittances, including those to high-income countries, are estimated to touch US$550 billion this year, and reach a record US$707 billion by 2016, the Bank said. Remittances to the developing world are expected to grow by 6.3 percent this year to US$414 billion and are projected to cross the half-trillion mark by 2016, the report said.

"Remittances are the most tangible and least controversial link between migration and development," said Dilip Ratha, Manager of the Migration and Remittances Team at the Bank's Development Prospects Group. "Policymakers can do much more to maximise the positive impact of remittances by making them less costly and more productive for both the individual and the recipient country," Ratha said.

Source: PTI, 03.10.2013.

ACTIVITIES

Sixth South Asian Training Programme on CGE Modelling

The sixth South Asian Training Programme on Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) Modelling was conducted from 22-26 October 2013 in Kathmandu, Nepal. SAWTEE organized the training in collaboration with the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), Dhaka and the Centre for WTO Studies (CWS), New Delhi.

The five days training programme provided a basic knowledge of the theory and applications of CGE modelling. Participants were also made familiar with the use of CGE modelling techniques in research pertaining to the issues relating to international trade, climate change and food security using the General Algebraic Modeling System (GAMS) software.

The training programme brought together young researchers, policy makers and government officials from the five different countries of South Asia, namely Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. A total of 32 participants benefitted from the training programme. The training programme was conducted by Dr Selim Raihan, Professor of Economics at the Dhaka University.

Acknowledging the dearth of quantitative research in the South Asian region, SAWTEE and SANEM initiated the CGE modelling training in 2008 with a goal of imparting quantitative tools and techniques to the young researchers in the region. The CWS has supported the training programme since its fifth edition. The training programme has contributed in expanding the number of quantitative research – especially on trade, climate change and food security issues – in the region.

Projects Inception Meeting - "Trade and Transport Facilitation Audit in South Asia " and "Promoting Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises for Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable Development in South Asia"

A two-day inception meeting of two projects supported by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), namely "Trade and Transport Facilitation Audit in South Asia" lead by South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) and "Promoting Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises for Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable Development in South Asia" lead by UNDP Asia Pacific Regional Centre (APRC), Bangkok, was organized in Kathmandu on 1-2 October 2013. The main objective of the two-day inception meeting was to present the relevance and the objectives of the two projects, and more importantly to gather expert opinions and suggestions in order to efficiently implement and increase the effectiveness of the projects for maximum impact.

More than 50 participants, including researchers, policy makers, private sector representatives and media, among others, from different South and Southeast Asian countries, participated in the inception meeting. Relevant issues such as analysis of import and export processes, methodologies for understanding trade and transport bottlenecks, methodology for trade and trade facilitation audit in South Asia, empirical model for trade flows and trade costs, constraints faced by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in participating in value chains, relevant MSME development projects in South Asia, promoting MSMEs for inclusive economic growth, among others, were thoroughly discussed in the meeting.

Specifically, with regard to the Trade Facilitation Audit study project, participants stressed that the inclusion of transit costs and problems of policy synchronization in the project methodology would be extremely useful. They also called for the harmonization of the project with similar projects being implemented in South Asia to create synergy. Additionally, suggestions were put forward for the need to realize the difference between protocol and practice, and to be cautious when establishing regional trade facilitation benchmarks. The valuable suggestions received from the inception meeting will be taken into consideration while implementing the projects.

Sixth South Asia Economic Summit

The 6th South Asia Economic Summit (SAES) was held in Colombo on 2-4 September 2013. SAWTEE was one of the core partners of the summit organized by the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS). The theme of the event was "Towards a Stronger, Dynamic and Inclusive South Asia". Overall, the Summit discussed the needs of South Asian nations to strengthen their economic growth prospects while managing risks and challenges in building a stronger region. The main issues that were discussed were under four broad themes: Harnessing Human Capital Potential; Managing Climate Change, Water Resources and Food Security; Addressing Intra-country Growth Disparities; and Building Competitiveness of the Private Sector.

SAWTEE prepared and presented the theme paper on "Managing Climate Change, Water Resources and Food Security in South Asia". SAWTEE also participated as a panelist in the session on "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend", "Road to Bali: South Asian Position for the Ninth WTO Ministerial", "Towards a Green Growth Path" and "Meeting the Food Security Challenge".

Dr Posh Raj Pandey, Executive Chairman; Mr Puspa Sharma, Research Director; and Mr KamaleshAdhikari, Director (on study leave) and currently a PhD scholar at the Australian National University, represented SAWTEE at the 6th SAES.

Dr Ratnakar Adhikari appointed as the Executive Director of EIF

Dr Ratnakar Adhikari, Chief Executive Director of SAWTEE, has been appointed as the Executive Director of the Executive Secretariat for the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF). Dr Adhikari joined the Executive Secretariat for the EIF on 7th October 2013.

The EIF, an Aid for Trade programme for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), is a global partnership between LDCs, Donors and International Organizations that support EIF Countries to be more active players in the global trading system by helping them tackle supply-side constraints to trade. In this way, the EIF works towards a wider goal of promoting economic growth and sustainable development and helping to lift more people out of poverty.

Dr Adhikari comes with extensive country experience in trade and development as well as in management, and joins the program at a critical phase, when it is building on the recommendations from the Mid-term Review of the EIF with the strategic focus on consolidating the in-country efforts and delivery of results.

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