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European Union

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DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

SEMINAR ON THE RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRD TRADE POLICY REVIEW OF CAMBODIA

Background and rationale:

Cambodia's Third Trade Policy Review at the WTO took place in Geneva on 26 and 28 March 2025.

There was great interest on the part of WTO Members regarding Cambodia's trade and investment policies and the progress made since its Second Trade Policy Review, which took place in 2017. This was proven by the more than 340 detailed questions raised by Members, on all different aspects of Cambodia's trade and investment regime, including:

- economic environment;
- participation in global value chains;
- changes to the investment regime (incentives, registration requirements, restrictions; national treatment);
- participation in the WTO including notifications and adherence to plurilateral agreements and initiatives;
- implementation of the ASEAN Framework, including ATISA and bilateral FTAs;
- customs procedures and fees;
- licensing and permit requirements;
- trade facilitation; implementation of the national roadmap; risk management in the National Single Window; implementation the AEO Programme;
- tariffs: reasons for certain MFN rates exceeding bound rates;
- support schemes for agricultural exporters and SMEs and MSMEs;
- standards and technical regulations: amendments to the Law on Standards; labelling requirements; SPS regulatory requirements; risk analysis; compliance with the WTO SPS Agreement;
- government procurement: information on incentives for SMEs, the international competitive bidding method, and implementation of the e-procurement system;
- intellectual property: Law on Compulsory Licensing for Public Health; National Committee for Intellectual Property and the Cambodian Counter Counterfeit Committee; Law on E-commerce; enforcement of IPRs; status of ratification of the WIPO- agreements; copyright and related rights;
- agriculture: details on the Priority Policy Programme; the Strategic Development Plan for Cambodian Agro-Industries; the National Policy for Agricultural Development 2022-2030; and the Food Reserve System; Action Plan for the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sector;
- energy: steps to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050; electricity tariff policies;



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- manufacturing: action plan; steps taken to diversify and increase productivity;
- financial services: market access in securities market; incentives framework;
- telecommunications: market access in the digital economy; licensing requirements in e-commerce; measures to improve digital literacy.

Through more than 30 interventions, members praised Cambodia for the progress made since its last review. They were particularly complimentary on the rapid full implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, the speed of economic recovery from the effects of the pandemic, Cambodia's active participation in the WTO; and the changes introduced to the investment regime.

Amidst this positive assessment, Members also identified areas where there may be shortcomings and improvements could be made, such as SPS, tariffs, licensing requirements, intellectual property rights protection, and trade diversification. They also encouraged Cambodia to complete its process of structural reforms by passing the laws and regulations that are still outstanding. This was deemed to be particularly important considering Cambodia's quest to graduate from LDC status in 2029.

Objective:

Bearing in mind the importance of complying with the Review's recommendations, it is crucial to clearly identify shortcomings and put in place action plans to overcome them. This seminar is a first step in this direction, building on the results and recommendations made by the WTO Members during Cambodia's Third Trade Policy Review. It is intended to foster discussion and clarify ideas to facilitate the process of compliance with recommendations made and to identify technical assistance needs to this end. The presence of donors is expected to help coordinate this assistance,

Expected outcomes:

The seminar is expected to:

- facilitate creating awareness of trade policy changes needed,
- contribute to further coordination among agencies in the process;
- to prepare a roadmap to address shortcomings;
- to discuss actions required to this end;
- to identify technical cooperation needs;
- to facilitate coordination with donors,

Participants:

- Line ministries
- DPs/donors
- Academia
- Private sector



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Proposed Tentative Agenda

Date: 07 August 2025

Venue: Hotel (TBC)

Time	Description/Content
08:30-09:00	Arrivals of guests and registration
09:00-09:30	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remarks from the EU delegation or German embassy/GIZ (TBC) Remarks by Her Excellency CHAM Nimul, the Minister of Ministry of Commerce
09:30-10:00	Photo Session and Coffee Break
10:00– 10:30	Session I Presentation on the Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM), TPR Division, WTO/Consultant GIZ <i>Presented by Mr. Angelo Silvy, Consultant GIZ, former Acting Director at the WTO TPR Division</i>
10:30 – 12:00:	Presentation on Result of the 3 rd TPR of Cambodia: Highlighted Achievements, Key Statements, Issues and Recommendations Raised by Discussant and WTO Members <i>Presented by Expert from WTO TPR Division (TBC)</i> Q&A
12:00 – 13:00	LUNCH BREAK
13:00 – 15:00	Session II: Discussions on Key Issues Raised in Written Questions, Implementation Strategy or Action Plan, Implementation Challenges Identified, and Assistance Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoC (market access, trade policy, trade facilitation, and others) MEF (tariffs, incentives, investment) MAFF (agriculture, SPS, and support programs) NBC (financial policy and economic environment) MME (energy, environmental issues, others)



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others (voluntary interventions or comments and dependent on the issues identified as key or critical) • Private sector (Chamber of Commerce) (comments on the presentation)
15:00 – 15:15	Coffee Break and Networking
15:15 – 17:00	<p>Session III</p> <p>Discussion with donors of technical assistance needs, in particular regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifications to the WTO • Trade facilitation and customs reform, including licensing • SPS measures • Government Procurement • Intellectual Property Rights • Participation in WTO multilateral/plurilateral agreements/working groups. <p><i>Moderator: Mr. Angelo Silvy, Consultant GIZ, former Acting Director at the WTO TPR Division</i></p> <p>Participants: GIZ, ADB, UNDP, WB, EUD, and other donors, and public sector's representatives</p>
17:00 – 17:15	<p>Closing Session</p> <p><i>Concluding Remarks by H.E. Sok Sopheak, Secretary of State and Vice Chairman of the Committee of the TPR of Cambodia</i></p>