

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)**  
**Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation**  
**First session, Bangkok and online, 22–24 February 2023**

**India's statement**

**Agenda Item 2: Making trade in Asia and the Pacific more competitive, sustainable and inclusive**

**Madam/Mr. Chair,**

**India has recently taken over Presidency of G20 and its Theme is - “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” or “One Earth · One Family · One Future”** which is drawn from the ancient Sanskrit text of the Maha Upanishad.

The theme affirms the value of all life – human, animal, plant, and microorganisms – and their interconnectedness on the planet Earth and in the wider universe. The theme also spotlights LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), with its associated, environmentally sustainable and responsible choices, both at the level of individual lifestyles as well as national development, leading to globally transformative actions resulting in a cleaner, greener and bluer future.

**Madam/Mr. Chair,**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development defines international trade as an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction that contributes to the promotion of sustainable development. The growth in trade itself has however been affected in recent years due to disruptions in economic activity and global trade on account of COVID-19 pandemic and the recent geopolitical developments in Europe.

The countries all over the world have taken various fiscal and structural reforms to counter the impact of pandemic and are now back to the path of recovery. India too has reached a pre-pandemic level of development owing to a series of reforms undertaken by the Government which has resulted in India emerging as one of the fastest growing market economies with GDP growth of 8.7% in 2021-22 and expected growth of 7% during 2022-23. India's economic growth in recent years has been principally led by private consumption and capital formation and they have helped to generate employment. Moreover, world's second-largest vaccination drive involving more than 2 billion doses also served to lift consumer sentiments.

The relatively high growth despite strong global headwinds reflects India's underlying economic resilience; of its ability to recoup, renew and re-energise the growth drivers of the economy. India is now the third-largest economy in the world in PPP terms and the fifth-largest in market exchange rates. As expected of a nation of this size, the Indian economy in FY 2023

has nearly “recouped” what was lost, “renewed” what had paused, and “re-energised” what had slowed during the pandemic and since the conflict in Europe.

**Madam/ Mr. Chair,**

As a result of our special emphasis on economic reforms which include fiscal consolidation, minimizing regulatory compliances, promoting ease of doing business, accelerating infrastructure development, undertaking Goods and Services Tax reforms and direct tax reforms, the exports in goods and services during the period April – January 2022-23 has grown at the rate of 17.3% and reached about USD 641 billion with two months remaining in the current financial year.

To create more trade linkages, India has so far signed 13 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with its trading partners, including the 3 Agreements, namely India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA), India-UAE Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement signed during the last two years. In addition, India has signed 6 limited coverage Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs). These Trade Agreements have resulted in growth in both exports and imports with FTA partners. India is further engaged in FTA negotiations with four key economies – the UK, the European Union (EU), Canada and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). We are also a negotiating member of Indo Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). These FTA initiatives will promote supply chain diversification and resilience contributing to inclusive and sustainable growth.

**Madam/Mr. Chair,**

India has implemented several measures to facilitate trade since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic. We shifted to a common digital platform for issuance of electronic preferential Certificates of Origin at the start of pandemic in April 2020 and are working on facilitating further exchange of information in digital format across partner countries, in the next phase of its development.

India ratified the World Trade Organization’s Trade Facilitation Agreement in April 2016 and has completed compliance of its commitments on implementation of various provisions of TFA. India has taken a number of measures for reducing the cost of imports and exports such as establishment of a National Single Window System to route all import related formalities, simplification of fees and charges for various clearance related activities at the borders, paperless filing of import/export documents through ‘E-sanchit’ project etc.

The trade facilitation measures have resulted in India scoring 90.32% in UNESCAP’s 2021 Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation. The Survey hailed this as a remarkable jump from 78.49% in 2019. India achieved a 100% score in the Transparency index and 96.3% in Paperless Trade index.

**Madam/Mr. Chair,**

On investment front, the measures taken by the Government such as FDI policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business have resulted in increased FDI inflows into the country. India registered its highest ever annual FDI inflow of US\$ 84.84 billion during the financial year 2021-22. India is offering opportunities for investors in setting up state of the art of manufacturing units across various sectors which is supported by a conducive ecosystem which includes a large competitively priced skilled workforce, a stable tax regime with globally competitive tax rates.

**Madam/Mr. Chair,**

Green Hydrogen Mission --The recently launched National Green Hydrogen Mission, with an outlay of USD 2.3 Billion (Rs.19,700 crores), will facilitate transition of the economy to low carbon intensity, reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports, and make the country assume technology and market leadership in this sunrise sector. Our target is to reach an annual production of 5 Million Metric Tonnes by 2030.

**Madam/Mr. Chair,**

India has undertaken a number of policy initiatives to enable business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development. India is the first country to legislate the need to undertake Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) activities by businesses under its Companies Act 2013 with the aim to integrate social and environmental concerns in the business operations. The scope of CSR activities was expanded a few years ago to allow firms to support research and innovation by government-funded incubators, opening up exciting possibilities for companies to depart from traditional ways of spending CSR. The Samridhi Fund, a USD 55 Mn social venture fund, set up by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) provides risk capital to companies supporting economic, social or environmental benefits to the poor in certain low-income States of India.

**Madam/Mr. Chair,**

The pandemic has reminded us of the importance of multilateralism and adherence to a rules-based global order in achieving the larger good in an equitable and sustainable manner. India remains committed to the multilateral trading system. Multilateral institutions have an important role to play in building mutual trust, in minimizing the impact of disruptions through cross-country cooperation and, most importantly, in ensuring global recovery with efficacy.

**Thank you, Chair.**