APEC Public - Private Dialogue on Identifying and Addressing Difficulties and Challenges That Hinder SMEs from Taking Trade Benefits and Advantages of RTAs/FTAs in the Region (SME 06 2015T)

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: Viet Nam
APEC Public – Private Dialogue on Identifying and Addressing Difficulties and Challenges that Hinder SMEs from Taking Trade Benefit and Advantages of RTA/FTA in the Region

(Hanoi, Vietnam 07-08 January 2016)

• Speakers and participants came from seven APEC member economies (Japan, Mexico, Malaysia, Peru, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam).

• Most of the Workshop participants: from the public sector, academic institutions and the private sector relating to FTA/RTA.
• **Purposes:**
  + increase the awareness of both public and private sectors about the great trade and investment benefits of the implementation of signed RTAs/FTAs to SMEs.

  + Develop a set of policy recommendations to address potential difficulties and challenges that hinder SMEs from taking advantage of trade and investment benefits of signed RTAs/FTAs.

  + sharing best practices and experiences of how to utilize trade and investment opportunities from RTAs/FTA

• **This project:**
  + is in line with the APEC 2015 theme of Inclusive Growth;

  + is designed to implement APEC Leaders and Ministers’ instructions in 2011, 2012 and 2013 as well as the Boracay Action Agenda to Globalize MSMEs of MRT 21;

  + greatly contributes to one of the main objectives of the 2013-2016 SMEWG Strategic Plan
• **Outcomes:**
The Dialogue included two days for presentations and discussions:
+ on the current state-of-play and trends of RTAs/FTAs utilization of SMEs in the region
+ prospects and challenges for SMEs to minimize the costs of RTAs/FTAs while maximizing their benefits,
+ impediments to increase RTAs/FTAs utilization by SMEs and policies to promote RTAs/FTAs utilization by SMEs

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**Key recommendations:**

• Government agencies need to act as facilitator;
• Needs to look into new things as new SMEs emerging such as online business, social enterprises, services industry and tourism;
• Seminar on global enterprises for SMEs;
• Develop strategies to promote innovation and technology transfer to improve the competitiveness of SMEs;
• Best practices on innovation and entrepreneurship;
• The Internet: important infrastructure to help SMEs do business and export. On this point, it is shared that APEC may develop a work plan to enabling the participation of SMEs in digital trade;
• Impacts of FTAs/RTAs on agriculture.