

# Geneva WATCH

An overview of the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral trade negotiations

Charles Akande, Editor

## TPP Group Renew Support for the Agreement; Plan to Meet Again in May

**As widely anticipated, the Trans-Pacific Partnership's (TPP) high level representatives breakfast in Viña del Mar (Chile) did not produce any significant decisions as to where the 11 Members – Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Malaysia, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam – plan to go with the accord after the U.S.'s decision to withdraw from the pact.**

“The high level representatives exchanged views on their respective domestic processes regarding TPP and canvassed views on a way forward that would advance economic integration in the Asia Pacific,” the group said in a statement released after the meeting.

The breakfast meeting, which took place on March 15<sup>th</sup> on the margins of the High Level Dialogue on Integration Initiatives for the Asia Pacific, did not include U.S. representative, ambassador Carol Perez, given the Trump administration's decision to walk away from the accord to focus on bilateral deals that would put “America first.”

The remainder of the TPP members, meanwhile, reiterated their “firm commitment to collaborate in keeping markets open and to the free flow of goods, services and investment, advancing regional

economic integration, and strengthening the rules-based international trading system,” the group said, noting their concern with the rise of protectionist policies worldwide.

In a trade policy agenda released early this month, the Trump administration said the U.S. people have grown frustrated with their existing trade agreements, which have not been beneficial to American workers and businesses. As such, President Donald Trump has called for a new approach which seeks, among other things, to strengthen the American manufacturing base and expand the country's agricultural and services industry exports.

“As a general matter, we believe that these goals can be best accomplished by focusing on bilateral negotiations rather than multilateral negotiations – and by renegotiating and revising trade agreements when our goals are not being met” a recent U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) report states.

“By withdrawing from the TPP, the president sent a clear signal that the United States would take a new approach to trade issues, and paved the way for potential bilateral talks with the remaining TPP countries,” the USTR report mentioned, with regard to next steps with the TPP.



The remaining TPP members “recalled the balanced outcome and the strategic and economic significance of the TPP, highlighting its principles and high standards as a key driver for regional economic integration and promoter of economic growth, competition, innovation and productivity, with the potential of generating jobs and lowering costs for consumers.”

They called for their senior trade officials to meet again to prepare for the next ministerial gathering, which will take place in the margins of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting of ministers responsible for trade, on May 20-21, 2017.

Geneva Watch is published by Dairy Farmers of Canada, Chicken Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Canada, Turkey Farmers of Canada and Canadian Hatching Egg Producers to report on the various events occurring in Geneva, particularly on the WTO negotiations on agriculture.

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