

## **B20 – Trade & Investment – Trade Dialogues**

Regarding Trade & Investment, B20 firmly believes that a rules-based multilateral system that ensures open trade with a level playing field is crucial for inclusive development. The WTO has a central role as the guardian of such system.

An ambitious and positive agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is urgently required in order to avoid trade frictions, which in turn lead to economic disruptions.

In this time of crisis, when significant players are questioning multilateralism with concerns about fairness, sustainability and reciprocity, it is particularly important not to look the other way and to double our efforts, re-focus and respond to the concerns of our constituencies.

Negotiations and agreements to foster this agenda should ensure the possibility of subsequent multilateralization and should be open to all countries.

In this respect, we identified several topics to call upon the attention of the G20 Leaders.

- 1- Addressing state related competitive distortions is at the top of our Trade & Investment agenda. We call upon G20 leaders to recognize the principle of competitive neutrality: that means no business entity should have an advantage or disadvantage solely because of its ownership. It immediately follows through that a fresh approach is required to establish rules to ensure state-owned enterprises don't get privileged access to any form of non-commercial assistance and significant lessening leading to elimination is applied to current discriminatory policies.
- 2- Digital trade is a fundamental aspect of the world economics dynamics but multilateral rules have not kept up with this reality. Consequently, several categories of barriers have developed over time such as data localization requirements, specific technology requirements or disclosure requirements to grant market access, barriers to internet services, as well as many other discriminatory practices. B20 encourages a more extensive initiative on digital trade to provide regulatory coherence and identify regulatory gaps that need to be addressed to facilitate an open inclusive and transparent digital trade with strong data protection and data privacy

regulations. A timely achievement of e-commerce disciplines related to trade in digital goods and services is also amongst our priorities.

- 3- SMEs are an essential component of inclusive trade, and G20 leaders should consider all policies that facilitate SMEs insertion in global value chains. In this respect, the strong correlation between “deep” preferential agreements (including WTO-plus and WTO-extra policies) and global value chain developments is clear. B20 would welcome further concrete joint public-private work in the arena of technical barriers to trade, and phytosanitary measures to ensure transparency and adherence to international standards. Not only participating in international trade with cumbersome regulations is challenging for MSMEs but also access to trade defense in case of facing unfair competition needs special attention.
- 4- In the field of Investment, which the WTO DG rightly characterized as the flip side of the same coin, B20 applauded the G20 guiding principles for global investment and encourages further consensus on policies that would address intellectual property concerns improving transparency and predictability of investment measures, while at the same time streamlining administrative procedures to facilitate investment.
- 5- Finally, other topics under discussion include how to strengthen the WTO multilateral system with recommendations on issues such as enforcing timely and accurate member notifications, improving the dispute settlement body avoiding deadlocks but most importantly B20 encourages a more extensive and permanent contact between WTO and the business community in a structured form.