

ICC: global trade deals would generate exports creating 21 million jobs

On behalf of global business, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) recently finalized recommendations for World Trade Organization (WTO) member countries to salvage parts of ongoing Doha trade negotiations that could boost global GDP by US\$960 billion.

Several hundred business leaders and trade experts met for the ICC World Trade Agenda Summit, held on the first day of the ICC WCF 8th World Chambers Congress, the first ever Congress to be held in the Middle East. The four-day Congress in Doha, Qatar gathered close to 2,000 delegates from chambers of commerce, as well as from multinational and small- and medium-sized companies.

Delegates met to give their stamp of approval to a final set of business priorities that would provide a debt-free stimulus to the global economy at a time when governments are struggling to inject growth into their economies.

By simplifying customs procedures – through trade facilitation measures – alone, member countries would deliver global job gains of 21 million, with developing countries gaining more than 18 million jobs and developed countries increasing their workforce by three million.

In March 2012, ICC and the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry launched the ICC Business World Trade Agenda

in response to calls from WTO members and from G20 leaders for fresh approaches following a 12-year impasse in multilateral trade negotiations.

“ICC has consulted with business around the world to develop a set of practical steps for reaching a new trade consensus,” said ICC Chairman Gerard Worms. *“As the actors of trade in the daily marketplace, we are well placed to shed new light on stalled talks. We will mobilize CEOs around the world to make the case to national governments for this new trade agenda.”*

The initiative has developed five recommendations that could achieve tangible outcomes by the end of 2013, to harvest gains from the WTO’s Doha Development Round.

These are:

- Conclude a trade facilitation agreement
- Implement duty-free and quota-free market access for exports from least-developed countries
- Phase out agricultural export subsidies
- Renounce food export restrictions
- Expand trade in IT products and encourage growth of e-commerce worldwide

Business recommendations from the event will be delivered to G20 leaders and WTO ministers ahead of the next G20 Summit in Saint Petersburg and the WTO Ministerial



The ICC World Trade Agenda Summit panels featured some of the world’s leading business and trade policy figures

Conference in Bali later this year.

The Peterson Institute in Washington DC, recently studied ICC's Business World Trade Agenda, to quantify the potential benefits from the recommendations.

It is estimated that the payoff from liberalizing trade in services could generate world trade gains of US\$1.1 trillion, which would translate into global employment gains of nine million jobs. At the same time, a meaningful WTO agreement on liberalizing trade in environmental goods, even on a plurilateral basis, could deliver US\$10.3 billion of additional exports.

"The potential gains in terms of exports, jobs and GDP growth from multilateral trade liberalization are substantial," said Victor K Fung, ICC Honorary Chairman; Chairman, Fung Group. *"For these reasons, international business strongly encourages political leaders to steer clear of protectionism and nationalism – and return to building inclusive open trade to stimulate global recovery and growth for many years to come."*

The ICC WCF Congress is the year's biggest international gathering of chambers and their business leaders. The event provided a unique opportunity for interaction among the global community of 12,000 chambers of commerce.

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"Sharing a common belief that open markets can bring about positive change in the world we have converged in Doha to identify the challenges and opportunities brought about by shifts in the global economy and to help chambers and their business leaders adapt to them," said Peter Mihok, Chairman, ICC World Chambers Federation. ■