

**6<sup>th</sup> Trans-Pacific Partnership Negotiating Round in Singapore,  
27 Mar – 1 Apr 2011**

**SOLID PROGRESS AT THE TPP SINGAPORE ROUND**

1. Strong progress was made at the 6<sup>th</sup> Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Negotiating Round which took place in Singapore from 27 March to 1 April 2011. Shifting to a higher gear this round, the discussions were substantive, and covered all areas including goods, services, investment and government procurement. Taking a longer-term perspective, the negotiators also explored proposals on how to make this FTA a “living agreement” that would facilitate the eventual entry of new members and adapt itself to the evolving business environment.

2. Singapore Trade & Industry Minister Lim Hng Kiang was pleased with the substantive progress made during the Singapore Round. ***“The TPP is an ambitious and complex undertaking. Each of the nine Parties has different economic priorities. It will take time and commitment to reach a consensus on all issues. The progress made in Singapore has been most encouraging. I hope that all Parties can keep up the commitment in future rounds and achieve this vision together,”*** he said.

**The Singapore Round**

3. Over 400 negotiators from the nine TPP parties —Australia, Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, United States, Vietnam and Singapore – participated in the discussions. Over 20 working groups were involved and embarked on text-based negotiations, with some of them started as early as 24 March.

4. The discussions on goods covered the initial market access offers for all sectors. On rules of origin, the discussions have progressed to product-specific rules. The parties also discussed the concept of cumulation in

conferring origins to goods. This is a key element of a regional FTA that takes into account the distributed supply chains of modern businesses.

5. Offers for services, investments and government procurement were also tabled ahead of the round and discussed this time. Ahead of the next round of negotiations in Vietnam, the parties agreed to continue bilateral consultations to exchange requests for improvement.

6. There was substantive discussion on the legal framework to enable the efficient administration and smooth functioning of the agreement when implemented. Negotiators also had in-depth discussions on the dispute settlement mechanism.

7. Recognising the importance of addressing modern business needs, a negotiating group on horizontal Issues such as enhancing competitiveness, making supply chains more seamless was formally established in Singapore. Moving beyond concepts, the discussion progressed to fleshing out textual proposals on how to implement the ideas. Other issues discussed include how to promote development, encourage the participation of SMEs in trade and improve regulatory coherence amongst the parties.

8. Minister for Trade & Industry, Lim Hng Kiang, noted that the TPP Agreement had the potential to set the benchmark for future free trade agreements. ***“Businesses are constantly evolving. Government practices must also adapt to their changing needs. The TPP sets the stage for Singapore to work with eight other like-minded Asia Pacific countries to develop new practices that will benefit our businesses and people,”*** he said.

9. Other working groups such as E-Commerce, Intellectual Property Rights, and Environment also had fruitful discussions. The groups had productive exchanges of views and set the agenda for future rounds.

### **Stakeholders' Participation**

10. The TPP negotiators also engaged stakeholders from business, labour unions and academia during the Singapore Round. Over 50 stakeholders attended a Stakeholders' Forum on 27 March 2011 and exchanged views with the delegates. The TPP Chief Negotiators also hosted a briefing session on 29 March 2011 to update stakeholders on TPP developments.

11. A separate session involving labour unions, employers' federations and chambers of commerce was held on 30 March. This included a dialogue panel comprising NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Mdm Halimah Yacob, SICC Chief Executive Mr Phillip Overmyer and SNEF Executive Director Mr Koh Juan Kiat, who provided insights to Singapore's collaborative tripartite approach in dealing with employment and labour issues. There was a good exchange of views between TPP negotiators and our stakeholders on key challenges facing workers and businesses and how the TPP could benefit them. TPP delegates also visited NTUC Fairprice to better understand the role and contribution of modern social enterprises in enhancing the well-being of workers and the community in Singapore.

### **Next Negotiation Round**

12. The Parties agreed that the Singapore Round had been pivotal in moving negotiations to the next level. The confidence and trust developed amongst the negotiators helped to facilitate constructive exchanges.

13. They agreed to maintain the momentum of the negotiations in the lead up to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders Meeting in Honolulu in November 2011. The next round of TPP negotiations will take place from 20 – 24 June in Vietnam, with some groups starting work earlier.

**MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY**  
**1 APRIL 2011**