



A book release function and panel discussion on the book titled **“TPP and India: Implications of Mega Regionals for Developing countries”** edited by Dr. Harsha Vardhana Singh was organised by IPE Global Ltd, IISD, Geneva and DFID India in collaboration with CII, New Delhi on 1st February 2016 in New Delhi.

Delivering the welcome address, Mr. Sunil Mitra, Team Lead, Knowledge Partnership Programme (KPP) and formerly, Finance Secretary, Government of India not only spoke about the impact and reach of the projects carried out under the Knowledge Partnership Programme but also explained that the book is an outcome of the project titled “India and the Evolving Global Trade Regulation : Implication for Trade Policy Reforms, capacity augmentation and cooperation with low income economies in Africa and Asia” carried out by IISD, Geneva and encompasses a comprehensive analysis of the potential impact of the mega FTAs not only on the LIC’s in Asia and Africa but also on the Indian economy and provides several recommendations on how to mitigate the adverse impact of these mega FTAs and more importantly how emerging economies like India can cooperate with LIC’s in helping them deal better with the mega FTAs. He also said that the project has been highly successful in sensitising Indian policy makers about the challenges and opportunities posed by the upcoming mega FTAs.

He further mentioned that in the context of mega FTAs and the changing global trade architecture domestic trade policy reforms would be required in India to build up capacity, modern and international standards for manufacturing and services, labour standards, IPR regime and technical upgradation etc. Mr Mitra talked about the possible cooperation with developing countries in the area of improving standards has also been taken up as a part of this project. Ms. Tamar Bello, Head Global partnerships, Government of UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) India also acknowledged the efforts of the study to bring out the importance of Mega FTAs for India and developing countries and also mentioned about the kind of work that DFID is carrying out through its Supporting Indian Trade and Investment for Africa (SITA) projects in Asia and Africa. She said that the SITA Africa project responds to the challenges that selected East African countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania – face in increasing and diversifying exports. It also addresses trade priorities of the beneficiary countries so that they can achieve sustainable development. Giving the special address Chandrajit Banejee, Director General, CII talked about the how Indian industry and business needs to gear up to the changing rules in international trade due to upcoming mega FTAs.

Speaking at the event, Commerce and Industry Minister, Ms. Sithraman said that “necessary steps to boost India’s trade and investment have been taken in the wake of the emerging trade architecture”. The Minister also elaborated on the steps Government of India is taking to deal with any kind of adverse impact of these trade agreements among a group of countries. She also launched the book at the event titled “TPP and India: Implications of Mega regionals for developing countries” edited by Harsha Vardhana Singh. The book is a compilation of papers commissioned under the KPP funded by the Government of UK’s Department for International Development and managed by IPE Global contains a comprehensive analysis of the potential impact of the mega FTAs not only on India but also on developing countries in Asia and Africa and provides several recommendations on how to mitigate the adverse impact of these mega FTAs and more importantly how emerging countries like India can cooperate with LIC’s in helping them deal better with the Mega FTAs.

In the vote of thanks Mr. Ashwajit Singh, Managing Director, IPE Global reiterated the commitment of IPE Global to further support research on this important topic of mega FTAs and highlighted how the KPP had been highly successful in reaching out to nearly 40 plus countries in Africa and Asia and help developing countries in their developmental efforts.

The book release was followed by a panel discussion. The panel discussion had eminent experts such as Ambassadors Seshadri and Jayant Dasputa, Dr. Rajiv Kumar , ex. Commerce secretary Mr. Rajiv Kher and Chief Economic Advisor, Dr. Arvind Subramanian All the panelists discussed the implications of the mega regionals in the context of the trading environment becoming more challenging and threatening to exclude India. The mega regional agreements potentially have a wide ranging impact on growth and development opportunities, with significant implications for the geo political developments in the next decade or two they opined.

Towards the end, the author of the book Dr. Harsha Vardhana Singh summed up how the book is an outcome of the project which has made successful attempts in sharing India’s strategy to deal with the mega FTAs with developing countries in Africa. One of the key achievements of the project has been the signing of the MOU between the Quality Council of India and African Organisation for Standards for sharing and exchange of information, policies and ideas on standards across sectors to meet the standards set by the TPP. He hoped that the book would be highly successful in keeping up the awareness and efforts of the government on this important topic.

