

Parallel Session on the Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation?

【Basic Information】

Moderators:

Keynote Speeches Section:

Yi Xiaozhun Former Deputy Director-General of the WTO

High-end Dialogues Section:

Tian Wei Host of CGTN

In-depth Exploration Section:

Zhao Zhongxiu President of the University of International Business and Economics

Keynote Speeches:

Ling Ji Vice Minister and Deputy China International Trade Representative of the Ministry of Commerce of China

Don Farrell Australian Minister for Trade and Tourism,
Special Minister of State

High-end Dialogues:

Arancha González Dean of the Paris School of International Affairs (PSIA) at Sciences Po,
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain

Roberto Azevêdo Former Director-General of the WTO

Yi Xiaozhun Former Deputy Director-General of the WTO

Tim Yeend Associate Secretary of Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Wu Fulin Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of China

In-depth Exploration:

Pamela Coke-Hamilton Executive Director of the International Trade Centre (ITC)

Peter Draper Professor, University of Adelaide in Australia

Wang Rongming President of Shanghai University of International Business and Economics

Wang Xinkui President of Shanghai WTO Affairs Consultation Center

【Brief Introduction】

On the morning of November 6, 2023, the Parallel Session on “The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation?” of the Sixth Hongqiao International Economic Forum (HQF) was hosted by the Ministry of Commerce of China at the National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai). Yi Xiaozhun, Former Deputy Director-General of the WTO, presided over the keynote speeches session. Ling Ji, Vice Minister and Deputy China International Trade Representative of the Ministry of Commerce of China, delivered a speech, and Don Farrell, Australian Minister for Trade and Tourism and Special Minister of State, gave a video address. A number of representatives from international organizations, government departments, industrial institutions, and academia participated in the discussion.

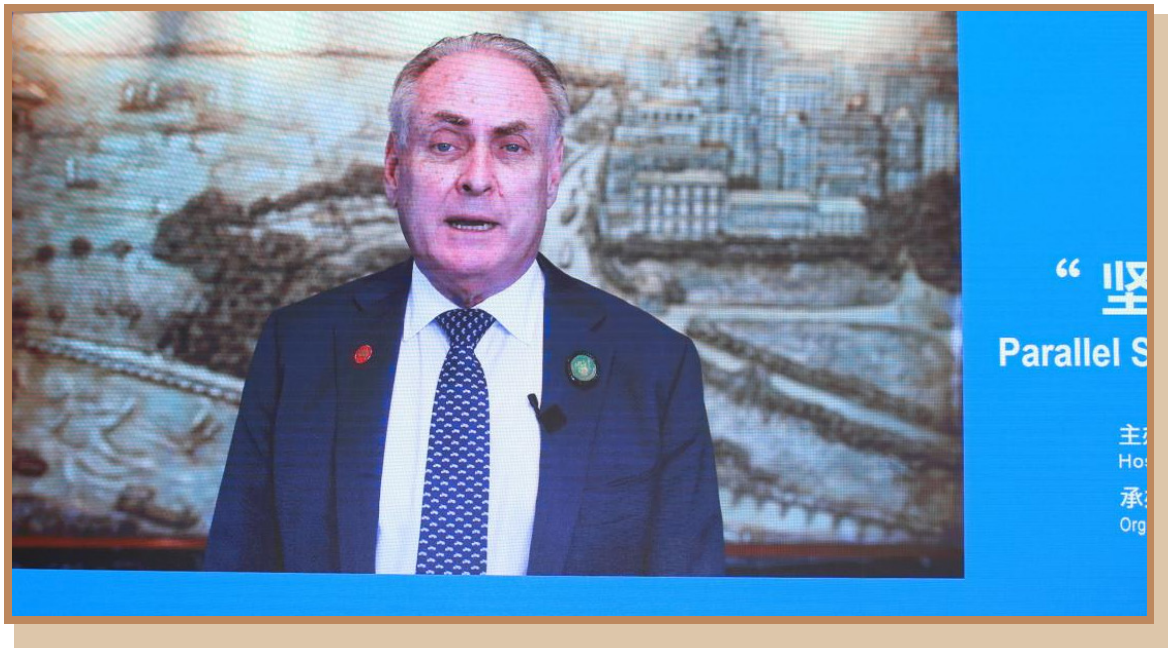


【Keynote Speeches】



Ling Ji, Vice Minister and Deputy China International Trade Representative of the Ministry of Commerce of China, attended the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation? in Shanghai and delivered a speech

Ling Ji, Vice Minister and Deputy China International Trade Representative of the Ministry of Commerce of China, noted that in recent years, unilateralism and protectionism have been on the rise. To this end, the multilateral trading system should respond positively and effectively, to promote the development of world trade through greater opening-up, enhance the solidarity of the WTO members through greater inclusiveness, and participate in WTO reform in a more active manner. China has achieved mutual benefits with the WTO, contributing to global trade. Over the past two decades after acceding to the WTO, China has consistently supported the multilateral trading system and vigorously defended multilateral trade rules through concrete actions. China will adhere to genuine multilateralism, promote the improvement of the global economic governance system, and contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.



Don Farrell, Australian Minister for Trade and Tourism and Special Minister of State, attended via video the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation? and delivered a speech

Don Farrell, Australian Minister for Trade and Tourism and Special Minister of State, pointed out that the Australian Prime Minister's participation in the China International Import Expo (CIIE) fully demonstrates Australia's support for the event and indicates Australia's willingness to engage in dialogue and common development with China. China-Australian trade is an important part of the multilateral trading system. The two countries share many common interests, and have broad cooperation space in addressing climate change and developing a green economy. Australia supports the multilateral trading system, urges the prompt resumption of the normal operation of the dispute settlement mechanism, and hopes that all parties will work together to ensure the success of the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) to be held in Abu Dhabi.

【High-end Dialogues】



Arancha González, Dean of PSIA at Sciences Po and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain, attended the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation? in Shanghai and participated in the section of High-end Dialogues

Arancha González, Dean of PSIA at Sciences Po and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain, believed that global trade faces challenges such as the global financial crisis, climate change, protectionism, geopolitical tensions, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The most significant challenge, however, is the spread of the outdated “zero-sum game” mindset. Countries need to embrace the concept and practice of win-win cooperation. China and the EU share common goals and the need for open markets; they have mutual interests and can work together. The WTO is crucial, and China and Europe can collaborate to uphold the multilateral trading system.



Roberto Azevêdo, Former Director-General of the WTO,
attended the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation?
in Shanghai and participated in the section of High-end Dialogues

Roberto Azevêdo, Former Director-General of the WTO, thought that the current global economy is undergoing various transitions, with geopolitics and global trade under pressure, globalization in retreat and protectionism becoming increasingly prevalent. Climate issues have gained attention, with new targets such as “achieving net-zero emissions by 2050” set after the Paris Agreement. The WTO should give full play to its role and restore the trade dispute settlement mechanism. Even with the WTO fully functioning, existing rules need to be adjusted to address new development needs. The WTO should continue to serve as a platform for dialogue, and prevent unilateral actions from disrupting the current trade system.



Yi Xiaozhun, Former Deputy Director-General of the WTO,
attended the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation?
in Shanghai and participated in the section of High-end Dialogues

Yi Xiaozhun, Former Deputy Director-General of the WTO, pointed out that the biggest challenge in current global economic governance is the shift of some developed countries from supporting free trade to protectionism and unilateralism. Their policies and practices, prioritizing domestic interests, purchasing domestic goods, or imposing local content requirements on investments, violate WTO principles. Major economies such as China, the United States, and the EU should reconfirm the direction of WTO reform. They should continue to promote global trade towards liberalization and facilitation, reaffirm commitments to multilateral trade rules, cooperate within the framework of the multilateral trading system, and prevent the world from sliding further towards unilateralism.



Tim Yeend, Associate Secretary of Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, attended the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation? in Shanghai and participated in the section of High-end Dialogues

Tim Yeend, Associate Secretary of Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, believed that global trade is currently facing plenty of challenges such as geopolitical issues, energy security, food safety, and climate change with increased uncertainty. The WTO is a crucial platform for resolving trade disputes among various parties. Australia hopes to engage in more dialogues on WTO reform to ensure that the organization stays abreast of the times and addresses new issues in the multilateral trading system. Yeend hopes that the WTO represents a more integrated and open global environment. On the MC13 to be held in Abu Dhabi, it is necessary to discuss and address urgent challenges, especially those related to climate issues.



Wu Fulin, Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of China,
attended the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation?
in Shanghai and participated in the section of High-end Dialogues

Wu Fulin, Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of China, thought that the world economy thrives with opening-up and declines with closure. The era of parallel markets during the Cold War is over, but fragmentation and disorder may be even worse than parallel markets. Faced with the challenges of global governance structures, the most important response is action. The Export-Import Bank of China facilitates fund flows and credit investments to enhance the trade efficiency of enterprises from BRI countries and improve their trade conditions. The international community can, through collective action, coordinate the implementation of green policies in areas such as interest rates, exchange rates, taxes, and fees, so as to offer policy incentives to combat climate change.



Tian Wei, Host of CGTN,
moderated the section of High-end Dialogues of the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads:
More Integration or More Fragmentation?

【In-depth Exploration】



Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director of ITC, attended the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation? in Shanghai and participated in the section of In-depth Exploration

Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director of ITC, stated that Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which account for 90 percent of the world's enterprises, provide two thirds of jobs, contributing significantly to achieving sustainable development goals. In the current international economic and trade environment, SMEs face severe challenges. ITC hopes to bridge the gap between government and business, assisting SMEs in entering markets and making their voices heard internationally. Over the past few decades, an increasing number of SMEs have participated in trade dialogues under the WTO's multilateral trading system. It was hoped that more financing opportunities would be provided to enable SMEs to integrate more deeply into the trading system.



Peter Draper, Professor of the University of Adelaide in Australia, attended the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation? in Shanghai and participated in the section of In-depth Exploration

Peter Draper, Professor of the University of Adelaide in Australia, expressed that the WTO currently has policy foundations such as agricultural rules, subsidy and anti-dumping rules, and the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, but the crucial aspect is the measures taken for enforcement. Updating relevant rules to respond to contemporary needs is also crucial, and new standards are required to address a range of new environmental issues. Australia is actively promoting work in this direction. Simultaneously, the WTO needs reform — on the one hand, it should focus on upholding international trade rules and increase dialogue and exchange opportunities among parties, and on the other hand, it should join global actions against climate change and propose medium and long-term trade solutions to climate and environmental issues.



Wang Rongming, President of Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, attended the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation? in Shanghai and participated in the section of In-depth Exploration

Wang Rongming, President of Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, believed that the WTO currently faces such three survival crises as the inability of the dispute settlement mechanism to function normally, the abuse of security exception clauses by certain members, and the adoption of unilateral measures by some members. The pace of WTO reform must be accelerated to effectively enhance the authority and effectiveness of the WTO. Actions must be taken actively to maintain its status of main channel of the multilateral trading system, prioritize addressing key issues that threaten the survival of the WTO, and ensure the normal operation of all functions of the WTO. It is necessary to address the issue of equity of the rules, respect the respective development patterns of members and guarantee special and differentiated treatments for developing members.



Wang Xinkui, President of Shanghai WTO Affairs Consultation Center, attended the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation? in Shanghai and participated in the section of In-depth Exploration

Wang Xinkui, President of Shanghai WTO Affairs Consultation Center, noted that global economic development faces three major challenges: re-balance, digital transition, and green transition. In the current context of the dysfunctional WTO rule negotiation mechanism and the need for reform in the multilateral trading system, it is essential to persist in incremental progress without stopping. On agendas where consensus can be reached, efforts should be made to achieve results to prevent the WTO from becoming marginalized and paralyzed. Dialogue must be maintained, and issues such as climate change, green transition, digital transition, and global economic re-balance can be discussed within a multilateral framework. The international community should gradually develop rules and negotiation mechanisms through the platform of WTO, while at the same time continuously stockpiling knowledge and talent.



Zhao Zhongxiu, President of the University of International Business and Economics, attended the Parallel Session on The Global Trading System at a Crossroads: More Integration or More Fragmentation? in Shanghai and moderated the section of In-depth Exploration