



**ADB–WORLD BANK  
TRADE FORUM 2026**

**Trade Policy in a Fragmented World: Accessions,  
Industrial Policy, and the New Multilateralism**

12–14 May 2026 | Siam Kempinski Hotel | Bangkok, Thailand

*Organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank Group*

*In collaboration with the IMD Business School, and  
Paris School of Economics (i-MIP)*

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**BACKGROUND**

The global trading system is undergoing its most profound transformation since the founding of the GATT. Trade has not shrunk - it has reorganized into geopolitical blocs, with rising fragmentation driven by the restructuring of value chains, the proliferation of industrial policies, and systemic trade policy uncertainty. For Asia and the Pacific, which accounts for more than 40 percent of world trade, the stakes are high. Both the path and the cost of inaction are significant.

The Trade Forum—co-organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank Group, with support from IMD Business School, and the Institute for Macroeconomic and International Policies (i-MIP) at the Paris School of Economics—brings together trade ministers and senior officials from across Asia-Pacific, leading academic economists, and international trade experts to discuss the new geopolitics of multilateral trade and their implications for value chain integration and economic resilience.

The Forum focuses on the strategic link between trade policies and industrial policies and their role in supporting sustainable development and integration into global value chains. Trade policy alone is often insufficient to capture emerging opportunities in global and regional markets. At the same time, industrial policies that are not well aligned with trade frameworks risk inefficiencies, protectionist bias, or limited scalability.

Specific sessions will focus on (i) enhancing market access through WTO and regional agreement accessions, by improving trade regulatory infrastructures and trade facilitation supportive of green trade; and (ii) leveraging market access by designing effective industrial policies, including by developing special economic zones, and maximizing the benefit of critical minerals for economic development.


The Forum provides a platform for knowledge exchange, policy dialogue, and the presentation of new analytical tools including the ADB Trade and Climate Portal and the SNOW model.


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## PROGRAMME

## DAY 1: TUESDAY, 12 MAY

08:45–09:00	REGISTRATION
09:00–10:30	OPENING PLENARY SESSION
	<p>The 2026 ADB-World Bank Trade Forum opens with a high-level plenary session dedicated to exploring how trade and industrial policies can work in tandem to support sustainable development and deeper integration into global value chains.</p> <p><b>Session Lead</b> Mr. Julian Clarke Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB</p> <p><b>Opening Remarks</b> Mr. Yevgeniy Zhukov Director General, Climate Change and Sustainable Development (CCSD), ADB</p> <p>Ms. Melinda Good Division Director, Thailand and Myanmar World Bank Group</p> <p>H.E. Dr. Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara Chairman of the Advisory Council to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand</p> <p><b>Special Statements</b> H.E. Werapong Prapha Thailand Trade Representative Office of Thailand Trade Representative Kingdom of Thailand</p> <p>H.E. Filipus Nino Pereira Minister, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Timor Leste</p> <p>Hon. Allan Gepty Undersecretary, Department of Trade and Industry Republic of the Philippines</p> <p>H.E. Aziz Nazar Deputy Minister, Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, Republic of Tajikistan</p> <p><b>Keynote Address</b> Dr. Richard Baldwin Professor of International Economics, IMD Business School</p>
10:30–10:45	 GROUP PHOTOGRAPH   Chandra 3

10:45–11:00	 <b>MORNING COFFEE BREAK</b>
11:00–11:10	<b>MODALITY AND RULES OF THE FORUM</b>
	<p>This session will outline the operational modalities and rules of procedure that will govern the forum discussions, ensuring an orderly, inclusive, and productive environment for all participants.</p> <p><b>Moderator</b>      Mr. Giulio Zanetti ADB Consultant, Intellectual Property and Trade Lawyer</p>
11:10–12:40	<b>SESSION 1: BUILDING RESILIENCE IN AN ERA OF STRUCTURAL TRADE UNCERTAINTY</b>
	<p>The global trading system has faced unprecedented levels of trade policy uncertainty in recent years, affecting investment, trade flows and supply chains. High trade policy uncertainty has been associated with weaker trade growth, delayed investment, and the gradual reconfiguration of global supply chains. This session will discuss strategic implications of this new environment and explore practical strategies to build resilience.</p> <p>This session will (i) examine the drivers and dimensions of current trade policy uncertainty, including geopolitical shifts, trade tensions, and emerging trade measures; (ii) assess the economic and development implications of prolonged uncertainty for developing member countries; (iii) explore practical strategies to build resilience against trade policy shocks; and (iv) identify the role of development partners, including ADB and the World Bank, in supporting policy predictability and trade continuity.</p> <p><b>Session Lead</b>   Prof. Richard Baldwin IMD Business School</p> <p><b>Keynote</b>        Mr. Denis Medvedev Global Director for Trade, Competition and Business, World Bank Group</p> <p><b>Presenter</b>      Prof. Bernard Hoekman European University Institute</p> <p><b>Discussant</b>    Mr. Jong Woo Kang Director, Economic Research and Development Impact, ADB</p> <p><i>Digital Q&amp;A, followed by plenary discussion</i></p>
12:40–14:00	 <b>LUNCH</b>

14:00–15:30	<b>SESSION 2: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR GLOBAL TRADE Vice-Ministerial Plenary</b>
	<p>In a world where the multilateral trading system is under stress, what pathways lie ahead? This session explores potential futures for global trade selectively including: (i) a 'porous blocs' model where regional groupings trade between themselves through managed access; (ii) rival geopolitical hegemonies forcing countries to align; and (iii) a 'light multilateralism' among like-minded groupings outside the WTO framework.</p> <p>This session will present and unpack plausible future trajectories for global trade; gather insights and reactions from vice-ministers representing diverse economies in the Asia-Pacific region; and identify practical implications for trade policy, industrial policy, regional cooperation, and development strategies.</p> <p><b>Session Lead</b> Prof. Bernard Hoekman European University Institute</p> <p><b>Presenter</b> Prof. Simon Evenett IMD Business School</p> <p><b>Panelists</b></p> <p>H.E. Mr. Werapong Prapha Thai Trade Representative, Office of Thai Trade Representative, Kingdom of Thailand</p> <p>Hon. Allan Gepty Undersecretary, Department of Trade and Industry Republic of the Philippines</p> <p>H.E. K.A. Vimalenthirarajah Secretary, Ministry of Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Co-operative Development, Sri Lanka</p> <p>H.E. Aziz Nazar Deputy Minister, Ministry of Industry and New Technologies Republic of Tajikistan</p> <p>Mr. Riley Mesepitu Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Industries, Labour, and Immigration, Solomon Islands</p>
15:30–15:45	 <b>AFTERNOON COFFEE BREAK</b>
15:45–16:30	<p>A 30-minute Guided Group Brainstorming designed to identify the main challenges faced by countries in the region and their main needs.</p> <p><i>Final Q&amp;A</i></p>

16:30	COCKTAILS (venue The Addition)
<b>DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, 13 MAY</b>	
09:00–10:30	<b>SESSION 3: AI AND TRADE — TECHNOLOGY, PRODUCTIVITY, AND THE FUTURE OF TRADE POLICY</b>
	<p>This session will examine the transformative impact of artificial intelligence on trade patterns, productivity, and growth, with a focus on Asia and the Pacific. Drawing on new research including the World Bank’s 2026 World Development Report on AI, the World Trade Organization’s 2025 World Trade Report on AI and the World Bank’s East Asia and the Pacific Economic Update, the session will explore AI’s implications for productivity, global value chains and industrial policy.</p> <p>This session will (i) present how artificial intelligence is reshaping trade patterns, productivity, and global value chains, with a focus on Asia and the Pacific; (ii) identify emerging policy implications, including how AI is influencing industrial policy, trade rules, and economic growth strategies; and (iii) discuss how economies in Asia and the Pacific can harness AI for trade-led growth while managing associated risks and disruptions.</p> <p><b>Session Lead</b> Ms. Katherine Stapleton Senior Economist, World Bank Group</p> <p><b>Presenters</b> Mr. Eddy Bekkers Research Economist, World Trade Organization</p> <p>Mr. Alessandro Barattieri Senior Economist, World Bank Group</p> <p><b>Discussant</b> Mr. Adam Jakubik Economist, International Monetary Fund</p>
10:30–10:45	 <b>MORNING COFFEE BREAK</b>
10:45–12:30	<b>SESSION 4: TRADE AGREEMENT ACCESSIONS IN ASIA-PACIFIC — WTO, ASEAN, CPTPP, AND RCEP</b>
	<p>This session combines ADB’s WTO, ASEAN, CPTPP, and RCEP accession work into a comprehensive overview of the trade agreement accession landscape in Asia-Pacific. The session opens with a keynote on Uzbekistan’s WTO accession process, followed by country presentations and structured discussion covering CPTPP (Cambodia, Philippines), RCEP (Sri Lanka, Bangladesh), and WTO accession priorities. Key legal, regulatory, and capacity issues are explored with a view to strengthening ADB’s TA program.</p> <p>This session will (i) provide a comprehensive overview of the current trade agreement accession landscape in Asia-Pacific; (ii) share practical lessons from Uzbekistan’s ongoing WTO accession process; and (iii) explore country-</p>

specific challenges and opportunities related to CPTPP, RCEP, and WTO accessions, as well as ASEAN regional integration

**Session Lead** Mr. Paolo Vergano  
Consultant, ADB

**Presenter** Mr. Azizbek A. Urunov, Representative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on WTO Issues, Chief Negotiator

**Panelists** H.E. Filipus Nino Pereira  
Minister, Ministry of Commerce and Industry,  
Timor Leste

Mr. Buavanh Vilavong  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR

Mr. K.A. Vimalenthirarajah  
Secretary, Ministry of Trade, Commerce, Food Security and  
Co-operative Development, Sri Lanka

Mr. Fabio Artuso  
Consultant, ADB

*Digital brainstorming on national needs and challenges to join trade agreements, followed by roundtable discussion.*

12:30–13:30

 LUNCH

13:30–15:00

### **SESSION 5: INDUSTRIAL POLICY IN A FRAGMENTED TRADE LANDSCAPE**

Industrial policy has returned to center stage globally. Governments are re-embracing targeted interventions to promote strategic sectors, enhance competitiveness, and build resilience in the face of geopolitical fragmentation and supply chain disruptions. This session examines the compatibility of industrial policy instruments with WTO rules and regional trade commitments; the role of special economic zones and eco-industrial parks; and practical experience from Central Asia. The session draws on ongoing ADB technical assistance programs in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

This session will: (i) review recent analytical work on how industrial policies can be formulated and implemented to achieve national development objectives; (ii) examine the compatibility of industrial policy instruments with WTO rules and regional trade commitments; (iii) explore the role of special economic zones (SEZs) and eco-industrial parks in promoting sustainable industrialization; (iv) share practical lessons from ADB-supported industrial policy reforms in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan; (v) identify opportunities and

constraints for developing member countries in pursuing industrial policy within existing trade rules.

**Session Lead** Mr. James Villafuerte  
Regional Lead Economist, ADB

**Presenters** Prof. Simon Evenett, IMD Business School  
  
Mr. Tristan Reed, Lead Economist, World Bank

**Panelists** H.E. Aziz Nazar  
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Industry and New Technologies  
Republic of Tajikistan

Mr. Adam Jakubik  
Economist, International Monetary Fund

Ms. Anabel Marin  
Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies

Mr. Giulio Zanetti  
Consultant, ADB

*Digital brainstorming on main challenges and needs relating to the establishment of national industrial policies, followed by plenary discussion.*

15:00–15:15

 AFTERNOON COFFEE BREAK

15:15–16:30

**SESSION 6: NON-TARIFF MEASURES AND ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS – THE ADB TRADE AND CLIMATE PORTAL**

Non-tariff measures (NTMs) have become the dominant source of effective trade costs in Asia. This session presents new methodological advances in quantifying NTMs, with a demonstration of the ADB Trade and Climate Portal—a new tool for tariff simulation, NTM analysis, and trade-climate linkage modeling.

This session will (i) present recent methodological advances in quantifying the trade effects of non-tariff measures; (ii) demonstrate the capabilities and applications of the ADB Trade and Climate Portal; (iii) explore the relevance of NTMs to promote exchanges of environmental goods, in view also of meeting climate objectives; (iv) identify opportunities for using NTM analysis to inform trade policy and trade-climate linkages; and (v) gather feedback from policymakers and practitioners on the Portal's functionality and utility.

**Session Lead** Mr. Neil Foster-McGregor  
Principal Economist, ADB

<b>Presenters</b>	Mr. Julian Clarke Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB
	Mr. Gianluca Santoni Research Economist, Paris School of Economics (i-MIP)
<b>Panelists</b>	Mr. Vilavong Souththanalaxay Director of Trade Facilitation Division Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
	Ms. Elena Antoni Climate Change Specialist, ADB
	Mr. Fabio Artuso Consultant, ADB
	<i>Digital Q&amp;A, followed by plenary discussion</i>

### DAY 3: THURSDAY, 14 MAY

09:00–10:30

#### SESSION 7: HOW TO MAKE THE LEAP TO HIGH INCOME: USING COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE TO BECOME AN OECD MEMBER


#### CASE STUDY: BUILDING THAILAND'S FUTURE TODAY — ADB/WORLD BANK RESEARCH SOFT LAUNCH

The World Bank and ADB present new collaborative research on Thailand's trade and GVC transformation for the World Bank flagship report *Building Thailand's Future Today*. This research examines Thailand's path from upper-middle to high-income status, with a focus on the automotive/EV sector, electronics, and advanced manufacturing. The session draws on new quantitative models (SNOW) and innovation-export analysis, with implications for Thailand's CPTPP accession and industrial upgrading strategy. This soft launch offers an opportunity for stakeholders to engage with preliminary findings and provide feedback ahead of the final report.

This session will (i) present preliminary findings from the World Bank-ADB collaborative research on Thailand's trade and GVC transformation; (ii) introduce the SNOW quantitative model and its applications for trade and industrial policy analysis; and (iii) gather feedback from Thai policymakers and regional stakeholders on the research findings and explore opportunities for deepening the research or expanding it to other sectors or countries.

**Session Lead** Ms. Katherine Stapleton  
Senior Economist, World Bank Group

**Presenter** Ms. Csilla Lakatos  
Senior Economist, World Bank Group

	<p><b>Panelists</b></p> <p>Mr. Darnp Sukontasap Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand</p> <p>Mr. Neil Foster-McGregor Principal Economist, ADB</p> <p>Mr. Gianluca Santoni Paris School of Economics (i-MIP)</p> <p>Mr. Julian Clarke Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB</p> <p><i>Digital brainstorming on identifying the comparative advantage that could lift countries to high income status, followed by plenary discussion.</i></p>
10:30–10:45	 <b>MORNING COFFEE BREAK</b>
10:45–12:15	<p><b>SESSION 8: VALUE CHAIN UPGRADING FOR ASIA PACIFIC'S RESOURCE-RICH COUNTRIES</b></p>
	<p>This session examines the strategic importance of critical minerals for Asia-Pacific economies, the emerging regulatory landscape, and the opportunities for resource-rich ADB member countries to move up the value chain. The session will also introduce the broader critical minerals work program being developed collaboratively between ADB and World Bank, outlining potential areas for technical assistance, policy dialogue, and investment support.</p> <p>This session will (i) explore opportunities and strategies for value chain upgrading in the critical minerals sector—moving from extraction to processing, refining, and manufacturing; (ii) introduce the ADB-World Bank collaborative work program on critical minerals; (iii) gather input from participating countries on their needs, priorities, and challenges related to critical minerals development.</p> <p><b>Session Lead</b> Mr. Edimon Ginting Senior Advisor, Office of the Director General and Officer-in-Charge, Regional Cooperation and Integration, and Trade, CCSD, ADB</p> <p><b>Presenter</b> Ms. Anabel Marin Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies</p> <p>Mr. Kwang Jo (KJ) Jeong Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB</p> <p><b>Panelists</b> Mr. Farrukh Yusufzoda First Deputy Chairman,</p>

	<p>State Committee on Investments and State Property Management, Republic of Tajikistan</p> <p>Ms. Rose Marie Mendoza Acting Director, Manufacturing Industries Service, Board of Investments, Republic of Philippines</p> <p><i>Digital brainstorming on countries' needs, followed by plenary discussion.</i></p>
<b>12:15–13:30</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>13:30–14:30</b>	<b>SESSION 9: INTERACTIVE SYNTHESIS, POLICY MESSAGES, AND WAY FORWARD</b>
	<p>Breakout groups to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key findings and policy messages from the three-day Forum for the reform agenda</li> <li>• Specific areas where ADB and World Bank Group could provide technical and financial assistance to support domestic reform processes.</li> </ul> <p>Group work and plenary discussion moderated by ADB Team.</p>
<b>14:30–15:35</b>	<b>WRAP-UP AND CLOSING</b>
	<p><b>Session Lead</b> Mr. Yevgeniy Zhukov, Director General, CCSD, ADB</p> <p><b>Presenter</b> Prof. Simon Evenett, IMD Business School</p> <p><b>Synthesis Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Alessandro Barattieri, Senior Economist, World Bank Group</li> <li>• Ms. Katherine Stapleton, Senior Economist, World Bank Group</li> <li>• Mr. Julian Clarke, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB</li> <li>• Mr. Edimon Ginting, Senior Advisor, Office of the Director General and Officer-in-Charge, Regional Cooperation and Integration, ADB</li> </ul>
<b>15:35–16:00</b>	<b>AFTERNOON COFFEE BREAK</b>