



**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE  
KAGAWARAN NG KAPALIGIRAN AT LIKAS NA YAMAN**



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO :** The Directors  
Climate Change Service  
Legal Affairs Service  
Biodiversity Management Bureau  
Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau  
Environmental Management Bureau  
Forest Management Bureau  
Land Management Bureau  
Mines and Geosciences Bureau

**FROM :** The Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, International Affairs  
and Climate Change *and* Chairperson, DENR Trade Focal Group

**SUBJECT :** HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DENR TRADE FOCAL GROUP MEETING  
NO. 2024-05 HELD ON 21 AUGUST 2024

**DATE :** 19 SEP 2024

This has reference to the DENR Trade Focal Group Meeting No. 2024-05 held last 21 August 2024, via Zoom videoconferencing. The meeting was attended by the Trade Focal Group Members of the DENR Offices and Bureaus. In this regard, hereunder are the highlights of the meeting with corresponding action taken and next steps per agenda items:

<b>AGENDA</b>	<b>HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS / ACTION TAKEN</b>
<b>REGIONAL</b>		
ASEAN Trade in Goods Upgrade Negotiation (ATIGA)	<p>The PPS discussed the updates on the ATIGA.</p> <p>In preparation for the forthcoming 11<sup>th</sup> round of negotiation to be held on 26-29 August 2024, the PPS facilitated a line-by-line discussion of the latest Trade and Environment Chapter text. Attached is the matrix of the latest chapter with comments and inputs during the meeting.</p> <p>Pending Chapters and Articles for comments of the DENR:</p>	<p>Trade Focal Group Members noted the updates on the ATIGA.</p> <p>The members agreed to submit to PPS-PSD any additional comments/inputs on the pending articles under the ATIGA until 22 August 2024. However, the PPS-PSD did not receive any additional information.</p> <p>Consequently, in a letter</p>

	<p>1. <b>Transparency</b> - Specific article which tackles publishing of proposed regulations; and</p> <p>2. <b>Trade and Environment Chapter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Article X.2 Basic Principles</li> <li>- Article X.3 General Commitment</li> <li>- Article X.4 Environmental Goods</li> <li>- Article X.5. Cooperation</li> </ul>	<p>dated 27 August 2024, PPS-PSD endorsed the inputs/comments manifested by the DENR representatives during the inter-departmental meeting to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Enclosed is the said letter for reference.</p>
<p>ASEAN - China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA)</p>	<p>The PPS discussed the updates on the ACFTA, particularly on the two chapters:</p> <p><u>Green Economy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The negotiation for the Chapter on Green Economy under the ACFTA has been substantially concluded during the 8th Round of the Joint Committee Meeting, along with all the Working Groups (WG), held in Ha Long, Viet Nam on 05-09 August 2024.</li> <li>- The Working Group on Legal and Institutional Issues (WGLII) has agreed not to develop horizontal provisions (e.g. exceptions, transparency, cross-cutting definitions) for the ACFTA 3.0 Upgrade. In this regard, they recommend for the working groups to negotiate these provisions if they deem necessary to be included in their respective chapter.</li> <li>- Given that the Green Economy Chapter has included 3 of the horizontal provisions (Chapter-specific definitions, Contact Points, and Chapter-</li> </ul>	<p>Trade Focal Group Members noted the progress and next steps on the ongoing discussion of the ACFTA, particularly the two Chapters with DENR's involvement.</p>

	<p>specific Review), the working group is still waiting feedback from ASEAN Member States (AMS) whether to include the remaining 12 provisions listed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Copy of the agreed text and updates yet to be circulated by DTI</li> </ul> <p><u>Supply Chains Connectivity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cleaned Articles on Definitions, Objectives, Cooperation, and Contact Points, as well as Article 2.3 (Strengthen Infrastructure Connectivity)</li> <li>- Harmonized terms throughout the Chapter, including Articles cleaned by the WG – Trade in Goods (TIG)</li> <li>- Agreed on the common understanding on self-declaration of a crisis by a Party, under the definition of Humanitarian Crisis</li> <li>- Agreed on the implementation of this Chapter shall be undertaken through ways and means considered appropriate by the Joint Committee, as mentioned in the Article on Cooperation</li> </ul>	
<p>ASEAN - Canada Free Trade Agreement (ACAFTA)</p>	<p>PPS briefly discussed the updates on the proposed ASEAN - Canada Free Trade Agreement (ACAFTA), as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In reference to the 7th ACAFTA TNC round in Kuala Lumpur on 25 February-01 March 2024, Working Group on Trade and Sustainable Development (WG-TSD) was agreed to be</li> </ul>	<p>Trade Focal Group Members noted the progress and next steps on the ACAFTA, particularly the possible creation of the WG – TSD.</p>

	<p>established. The structure of the TSD chapter is subject to discussion by the working group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The working group held its first meeting on July 30, 2024, which was primarily an introductory discussion. DTI-BITR as the lead agency for WG-TSD will coordinate accordingly once the working group begins substantive discussions.</li> </ul>	
<b>BILATERAL</b>		
<p>Philippine United Arab Emirates (PH-UAE CEPA)</p>	<p>PPS - PSD briefly discussed the updates on the ongoing PH – UAE CEPA negotiations which commences last May 14, 2024, with the 2nd round of negotiation concluded last July 8-10, 2024 in Manila.</p> <p>The DENR is co - leading with DOLE on the Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) Chapter and providing technical support to the Trade in Services (TIS) Chapter particularly on the Environment related sector and subsector offers under the PH – UAE CEPA. Considering that the TSD Chapter was proposed by the Philippines, the DENR drafted the environment provisions of the TSD Chapter.</p> <p>PPS-PSD mentioned the forthcoming 3rd round Negotiation of the PH-UAE CEPA on September 16 - 18, 2024 in Dubai, UAE.</p> <p>The PPS also discussed briefly the latest text of the TSD Chapter, particularly on the two items:</p> <p><b>Preambular Statement:</b> LAS suggested changing the term “<i>objective</i>” to “<i>goals</i>” to be consistent with the 2030 Sustainable Agenda.</p>	<p>Trade Focal Group Members to updates on the PH – UAE CEPA.</p> <p>Remaining members who are yet to provide comments and inputs on the latest TSD Chapter were reminded to submit the same until 11 September 2024. The said comments will form part of the Philippine position for the upcoming 3rd Round of Negotiations</p>

	<p>ERDB, EMB, FMB, CCS and BMB agreed.</p> <p><b>Article XX.2.3 Scope</b> On item b., the ERDB suggested rephrasing into the management <i>“of hazardous or toxic chemicals, substances, materials or wastes”</i> or the dissemination of information related thereto. EMB agreed.</p> <p>On item c., ERDB suggested to rephrase into <i>“conservation and protection of protected areas particularly wild flora and fauna, including threatened species and their habitats”</i> since it is broader and it includes various categories of threatened species.</p> <p>LAS and ERDB agreed to retain the phrase <i>“as well as protected areas”</i> after the habitats.</p>	
<p>Philippine - European Union Free Trade Agreement (PH - EU FTA).</p>	<p>PPS - PSD provided a brief overview of the proposed Philippine - European Union Free Trade Agreement (PH - EU FTA).</p> <p>The 1st round of negotiation will be held on <b>14-18 October 2024</b> in <b>Brussels, Belgium</b>.</p> <p>In preparation for the 1st negotiating round, the DTI is requesting the DENR’s confirmation to be part of the TWG on Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter together with DOLE (Labor) NEDA (Inclusivity); and on the TWG on Energy Raw Materials Chapter as technical support to DOE.</p> <p>The EU also provided the zero-draft text of the proposed chapters.</p> <p>The documents were forwarded to the respective Offices through a memorandum dated 15 August 2024.</p>	<p>Trade Focal Group Members were reminded to submit the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nominate a representative/s to be included in the DENR Negotiating Team for the PH - EU FTA. To date, the PPS – PSD already received the nominations from CCS and ERDB; and</li> <li>2. Comments/inputs on the zero-draft text of the TSD and ERM Chapters. To date, please be informed that the PPS – PSD already received comments and inputs from FMB, ERDB and CCS.</li> </ol> <p>A separate meeting will be conducted for a line-by-line discussion of the zero-draft text of the TSD</p>

		and ERM Chapters. Meeting details will be provided in due course.
European Union - Generalised Scheme of Preference Plus (EU – GSP+)	<p>The PPS - PSD discussed the overview of the Philippine participation to the European Union - Generalised Scheme of Preference Plus (EU – GSP+).</p> <p>The DENR serves as the lead agency for the <b>Environment Cluster</b> with the National Economic and Development Authority – Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment Staff (NEDA-ANRES), Climate Change Commission (CCC), and Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR). Initially, NEDA-ANRES served as the secretariat for this Cluster, however for the 5th Monitoring Mission, the DENR will be taking over the Secretariat responsibilities.</p> <p>The <b>5th Monitoring Cycle</b> commences on August 23, 2024. The same with the previously conducted Monitoring Cycle, to maintain the beneficiary status of the Countries, the different Cluster including the Environment is being requested to accomplish their respective scorecards and provide positive feedback and inputs on the issues raised by the EU.</p>	<p>Trade Focal Group Members were reminded to submit the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CCS and BMB to provide written inputs on the Environment Cluster's Scorecards;</li> <li>2. DENR Offices for submit updated focal/s for the EU – GSP + related matters. To date, please be informed that the PPS – PSD received the updated focal/s of EMB, FMB and ERDB; and</li> <li>3. DENR concerned offices to submit inputs/comments on the GSP+ country report for C.Y 2020-2022 published by the European Commission. To date, please be informed that the PPS- PSD already received initial comments from the EMB through a memorandum last February 2024.</li> </ol>
DENR's Certificate of Concurrence (COC)	<p>PPS - PSD discussed the objectives of the three Agreements requiring the DENR concurrence, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clean Economy Agreement under the Indo- Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF);</li> <li>2. ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS); and</li> <li>3. ASEAN Trade in Services.</li> </ol>	<p>Trade Focal Group Members were reminded to submit their comments and concurrence on the three (3) Agreements. To date, this Office received the concurrence of the following Offices:</p> <p><b>Clean Economy:</b> ERDB, MGB and EMB; and  <b>AFAS/ATISA:</b> LMB and FMB</p>

Please submit your comments/inputs on the pending trade and environment related matters under your purview to the Policy and Planning Service on or before **20 September 2024** through this e-mail address: [psddivision@gmail.com](mailto:psddivision@gmail.com), copy furnished [policy@denr.gov.ph](mailto:policy@denr.gov.ph). You may access the relevant meeting documents using this link: <https://tinyurl.com/y7yncbpd>.

For your information and appropriate action (*if any*), please.

  
DR. NORALENE M. UY, *EnP.*

**MEETING ATTENDEES**

DENR Offices/ Bureaus	Representative/s
Legal Affairs Service	Atty. Rosette Ferrer Atty. Juris Ida Parojinog-Parel Atty. Maria Clarissa Silvestre Atty. Andrea Cabagbag Atty. Angelie Maningas
Climate Change Service	Mr. Albert Magalang Mr. Carl Santiago
Biodiversity management Bureau	Ms. Nermalie Lita Ms. Kimberly Francisco
Environment Management Bureau	Mr. Janus Alpano Mr. Alwin Jay D. Robel
Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau	Dr. Lynlei Pintor
Forest Management Bureau	Mr. Alejandrino Sibucan, Jr. Mr. Leonardo Arcenal
Mines and Geoscience Bureau	Engr. Geleni Bello- MeTD Ms. Diory Carr Mr. Muriem Discocho- PPIAD
Policy and Planning Service	Ms. Mary Lou Retos For. Hazel Jasmine Chua Ms. Zayrelle Ann Suello Ms. Nim Hydee Eusebio For. Kelsie Miniano Ms. Debra Tante

### ACTIVITY PHOTOS

