

Roundtable Discussion on WTO MC 14 Future of Trade and Development Cooperation

18 March 2026

Tamarind Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

Agenda

09.30 – 10.00 hrs. Registration

10.00 – 10.45 hrs. Inaugural Session

- Welcome Remarks: **Prof. Sachin Kumar Sharma**, DG, RIS
- Welcome Remarks: **Dr. Amrita Saha**, Lead, Trade & Development, IDS
- Special Remarks: **Dr. Seshadri Chari**, Member, Governing Council, RIS

10.45 – 11.00 hrs. Signing of MoU between RIS, IDS and Sussex University

11.00 – 11.30 hrs. Group Photo, Tea and Coffee

11.30 – 13.00 hrs. Panel 1: WTO MC14: What Comes Next for Global Trade?

WTO MC14 will be a pivotal moment for global trade. Progress on key challenges is critical to restoring stability and confidence in the trading system. As geopolitical dynamics and economic priorities evolve, the rules-based framework will need to adapt to a rapidly changing landscape, including emerging issues such as digital trade, investment facilitation, and sectoral negotiations. This panel will examine the future of trade governance. From rule-making and dispute settlement to development priorities and institutional reform, it will explore how countries and coalitions may navigate the next phase of global economic cooperation.

Chair: **Mr. Harsha Vardhana Singh**, Former DDG, WTO and Chairman of IKDHVAJ Advisers LLP, New Delhi

Speakers:

- **Mr. G. D. Lohani**, Former Minister (Customs), PMI to the WTO, Geneva
- **Dr. Atul Kaushik**, GDC Fellow, RIS
- **Prof. Dibyendu Maiti**, Delhi School of Economics (DSE)
- **Ms. Supreet Khosla**, Networking Lead, Palladium

Q&A

13.00 – 14.00 hrs. Lunch

14.00 – 15.30 hrs. Panel 2: The Disconnects in Inclusive Trade

International trade has long been promoted as a pathway to development, yet its inclusiveness remains contested. Despite growing recognition of the need to link trade with broader development goals—such as poverty reduction, gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion—growing trade has often remained as the dominant objective, at the expense of these other dimensions. Recent global trade turbulence and emerging issues including environmental and labour standards further challenge trade's role to promote inclusion. This panel will discuss the persistent disconnects between the intended development impacts of trade policies and the lived realities of marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Chair: **Dr. Mattia Di Ubaldo**, Deputy Director, UK Trade Policy Observatory (UKTPO)

Speakers:

- **Prof. Sambit Bhattacharya**, University of Sussex
- **Ms. Ranja Sengupta**, Senior Researcher, Third World Network India (TWN)
- **Dr. Sabyasachi Saha**, Associate Professor, RIS
- **Mr. Kaustuv Chakrabarti**, South-South & Triangular Cooperation Expert, World Food Programme

Q&A

15.30 – 16.00 hrs. Closing Session

Closing remarks by:

- **Dr. Amrita Saha**, Lead, Trade & Development, IDS
- **Dr. Prabir De**, Professor, RIS, New Delhi

16.00 hrs. High Tea