

The French Republic

Positions for Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

I. Encouraging Collaboration for Effective Trade Facilitation

France realizes the strong interdependence that exists between effective trade facilitation and the collaborative economic security among Member States. As a former colonial power, France has maintained historic relations with Asia and the Pacific regions and is determined to maintain its economic interests in the regions. France supports United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO's) resolution A/RES/63/231 which reaffirms the importance of the development of the public and private sectors, productivity growth, trade capacity-building for economic security and sustainability in the global system. However, France realizes that in addition to bilateral negotiations, multilateral and multi-faceted approaches should be adopted to increase collaboration with regional and international trade organizations, to grant greater agency to developing states, ensure effective tariff reductions and help states acquire greater access to markets. **Internationally**, France cooperates with major trade organizations the World Trade Organizations (WTO) and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), International Trade Centre (ITC), and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), to promote and enact better trade policies. Since 2002, France has contributed a total of EUR 24,963,531 to WTO trust funds that are committed to Aid for Trade through the Enhanced Integrated Framework, the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund and the internship program of the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation.¹ France has also dedicated an additional EUR 6 million to WTO trade-related programs to foster their production and export skills of LDCs and ensure that they benefit fully from global trade.² **Regionally**, France works with the Pacific Community and the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) and has been a dialogue partner of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) since 1989. France works with the EU in negotiating Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), which are specific free trade agreements with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, designed to promote development and strengthen regional integrations. **Nationally**, France seeks to strengthen sectoral partnerships with both the first tier and second tier second-tier emerging countries, seek agreements based on mutual profits and benefits while ensuring that French defensive interests and French regulatory policies are preserved. France has effectively improved its balance of trade with Asia and has trade surpluses with has a trade surplus with Australia, Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore. France recommends all Member States in Asia and Pacific regions to engage in economic diplomacy, promote regional and global trade, and enhance labor mobility and trade liberalization, which are conducive to the socio-economic prosperity of the global system. Moreover, France advocates a four point program (**E.E.E.E.**) to promote trade facilitation between the France and Member States in the Asia-Pacific regions: **E**ncouraging diversification of products and services to meet the demands of global markets, **E**stablishing global integration of trade through more multilateral trade agreements with International organizations, NGOs and Member States, **E**valuating the performance of Member States and sectors where the prospects for growth are the strongest, **E**nhancing connections with research and development (RD) groups in the Asia-Pacific regions to promote economic cooperation in the form of joint RD projects, and joint ventures.

¹ World Trade Organization. "France donates EUR 6 million to WTO Aid for Trade programmes." Last modified on December 8, 2015. https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres15_e/pr763_e.htm

² Ibid.

II. The Impact of Overpopulation on Socio-Economic Disparities

France realizes that overpopulation can lead to the scarcity of resources, poverty, and a wide array of socioeconomic disparities. France is thus committed to strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific regions. France supports the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Resolution (E/C.12/FRA/3), which establishes the need to combat socioeconomic issues and guarantees equal opportunities to all segments of the population by ensuring employment.

Internationally, France collaborates with the OECD to enhance the accessibility of employment services, increase youth employment in the economies of the Asia-Pacific region. Along with other partners such as the World Health Organization (WHO), International Labor Organization (ILO), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), France plays a leading role on the Commission on Health, Employment, and Economic Growth. Through active participation and collaboration in Commission on Health, Employment, and Economic Growth, France seeks to address the challenges faced by health workers in low and middle-income countries, stimulate the creation of health and social sector jobs, and work towards the bigger aim of contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). France has also affirmed its commitment to collaborate with China on socio-economic development projects to improve infrastructure, industrialization, and poverty reduction mechanisms in both Asia and Africa. Accordingly, France works with the European Consensus on Development, the Agenda for Change and the Development Cooperation Initiative (DCI) regulations to advance the European Union (EU) development assistance in Asia, aimed at eradicating poverty and promoting social and environmental development through broad-based inclusive and sustainable growth economic policies. **Regionally**, in collaboration with the European Union, France seeks to combat socioeconomic challenges such as youth unemployment, women's unemployment, underemployment, and rural-to-urban employment differences. As a member of the European Commission, France has joined the Youth Employment Initiative and facilitates the transition from education to employment through actions such as counselling and training the less-skilled workers. **Nationally**, as a pro-natalist country, France shares the common problems of a growing aging population with other Asia-Pacific countries like China, Japan, India, and Germany. Given that France has made commendable progress in advocating for economic reforms by collaborating with the OECD, taken exceptional measures including social spending, social transfers and comprehensive healthcare programs to protect the vulnerable groups that comprise of children and the elderly, France serve as a model and a catalyst for promoting sustainable policies to meet socio-economic disparities faced by the Asia-Pacific region. France believes in the action plan (C.A.R.E.) for reducing the socioeconomic disparities resulting from overpopulation in the Asia-Pacific region by: **C**reating greater regional integration in the Asia Pacific by rendering bi-annual meetings and dialogue forums to discuss the distinctive socioeconomic challenges of youth unemployment; **A**ugmenting the educational and training opportunities for a large population of young persons with minimal professional education and skills; **R**eassessing the needs of specific countries terms for effective infrastructure development; **E**ncouraging regional, national, international partners, NGOs and Member States to promote social integration in order to utilize the productivity of a large population of workforce and reduce the socio-economic disparities.