

WTO Chairs Panel at the Society of International Economic Law

Four WTO Chairs and two members of the WCP Advisory Board presented a WTO Chairs Panel at the Society of International Economic Law Conference in Washington DC in July 2018. The Panel was entitled, “Interesting Times: “Trade and” the Future of the WTO?” and was well-attended.

Mark Wu, Harvard Law School, WTO Chairs Programme Advisory Board Member, served as the moderator. Michael Ewing-Chow, National University of Singapore, WTO Chair, presented a paper on Trade and Food Security – Beyond Economic Gains - An Existential Issue. Bradly Condon, ITAM, WTO Chair for Mexico, presented a paper on Trade and Environment: How WTO Law Promotes Evidence-Based Environmental Policies. Valentina Delich, Flacso and University of Buenos Aires, WTO Chair for Argentina, presented a paper on Trade and Agri Standards: WTO as a Discipline for Fairness and Market Access. Pinar Artiran, Istanbul Bilgi University, WTO Chair for Turkey, presented a paper on Trade and Competition: Time to embrace the complementarity and interdependence. Henry Gao, Singapore Management University, WTO Chairs Programme Advisory Board Member, served as Commentator.

Bradly Condon’s paper, on Trade and Environment: How WTO Law Promotes Evidence-Based Environmental Policies, made the following arguments:

In a political environment in which many question the benefits of the multilateral trading system, it is important to explain the role of WTO law in public interest regulation. This paper will show how WTO law can be a positive force for environmental protection, in the GATT, TBT Agreement, SPS Agreement, SCM Agreement, and TRIPS Agreement. WTO law plays a key role in promoting science-based environmental policies and technological innovation, both of which are essential to addressing environmental issues. Ideally, it should do so in a way that harnesses the power of markets, where evidence demonstrates that market-based regulation is the best way to solve environmental problems. WTO law achieves an acceptable balance between requirements for scientific discipline in the formulation of environmental policy and flexibilities that permit sufficient regulatory autonomy to permit variation in policy approaches to common issues and that allow WTO Members to take into account changing conditions, advances in scientific knowledge, and changes in tolerable risk.

