

Concept Note
WCP - Nepal 3rd Annual Conference
on
Climate Change and Trade Sustainability in South Asia
Kathmandu | 11-12 January 2025

Introduction

South Asia is uniquely positioned as a region characterized by immense opportunities and considerable challenges. The ongoing climate crisis poses significant threats to the region's economic growth, sustainability, and food security. These vulnerabilities are further compounded by the region's diverse geography, socio-economic disparities, and substantial population living below the poverty line. South Asia's vulnerability to climate change is evident in its inclusion of five nations—Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, and Nepal—in the V20 (Vulnerable Twenty) group, a coalition of countries systematically exposed to climate risks.

Despite these challenges, South Asia is witnessing dynamic economic growth, characterized by an expanding middle class and increasing consumer demand. However, this growth risks exacerbating environmental pressures unless managed through sustainable practices. Against this backdrop, to navigate this dual imperative of climate adaptation and economic development several critical questions arise. How can South Asia effectively mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis while sustaining trade and economic growth? What collaborative mechanisms can be established to foster sustainable trade and capitalize on emerging opportunities? How can digital transformation and trade innovation strengthen the region's resilience to climate risks? What measures can position South Asia as a global leader in climate-resilient trade practices? How can South Asia's economies balance environmental preservation with inclusive economic growth?

About WTO Chairs Programme (WCP) - Nepal

The WTO Chairs Programme (WCP) is an initiative designed to enhance the expertise of academic institutions in understanding WTO (World Trade Organization) work and issues. It aims to improve research, teaching, and outreach to policymakers.

In Nepal, Kathmandu University School of Management is implementing Phase 3 of the WCP for four years (2022-2026). The program focuses on:

1. **Research:** Supporting research related to international business and trade.
2. **Curriculum Development:** Developing courses focused on international business and trade.
3. **Capacity Building and Outreach:** Facilitating capacity building and outreach events and workshops in collaboration with the government, ministries, private sector organizations, and international agencies.

WCP - Nepal 3rd Annual Conference on Climate Change and Trade Sustainability in South Asia

The WCP - Nepal 3rd Annual Conference on Climate Change and Trade Sustainability in South Asia, organized by Kathmandu University School of Management (KUSOM) under the WTO Chairs Programme (WCP), aims to provide a platform for dialogue among scholars, policymakers, industry leaders, and stakeholders.

Set against the backdrop of South Asia's unique challenges and opportunities, the conference aims to explore how the region can navigate the complexities of climate change while advancing trade and economic growth in a sustainable manner. The conference will explore innovative pathways for aligning trade practices with

climate resilience, addressing critical issues such as regional and global trade dynamics, digital transformation and trade innovation, sustainable economies, and gender inclusion in trade.

Theme

The conference will delve into the interplay between climate change and trade, with a focus on leveraging sustainability as a driver of economic growth and regional cooperation. By addressing topics like circular economies, digital transformation, and leadership in sustainable trade, the event seeks to foster actionable solutions for the region's most pressing challenges.

The major thematic tracks around which the conference is structured are as follows:

- Climate Change and Sustainability
- Regional and Global Trade Dynamics
- Digital Transformation and Trade Innovation
- Global Trade and Business Dynamics: Marketing, Leadership, and International Perspectives

The conference will feature a series of events, including paper presentations, panel discussions, plenary sessions, and a paper development workshop. It will also host a Networking Dinner, providing an opportunity for distinguished guests, government officials, and industry leaders to connect and engage. The conference is structured around four key tracks, each addressing critical issues at the nexus of climate change, trade, and sustainability.

Prospective Participants

The conference will bring together approximately 125 participants, including academicians and researchers, policymakers and government representatives, private sector leaders and industry experts, civil society organizations, and media.

Outputs

- Compilation of research insights and policy recommendations in the conference proceedings.
- Live coverage on social media and other platforms to amplify outreach.
- Identification of actionable pathways for advancing climate-resilient trade in South Asia.

Organizers and Partners

The conference is hosted by WTO Chairs Program - Nepal at Kathmandu University School of Management (KUSOM) in collaboration with the following organizing partners

- WCP – India, Centre for Trade and Investment Law (CTIL), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), New Delhi, India
- Faculty of Management, Purbanchal University, Biratnagar, Nepal

Resources

The event will be supported in the form of technical and financial contributions from KUSOM, and conference organizing partners.

For further details, please visit the official website: [WCP-Nepal](#).