



# 19th RCEP Meeting

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The 19th round of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) meetings and other related meetings were held from 17 to 28 July 2017 in Hyderabad, India. RCEP is a proposed comprehensive regional economic integration agreement amongst the 10-ASEAN countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and its six Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) partners, viz. Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, Korea and India.

During the 19th round, parallel meetings were held by the three main Working Groups on Trade in Goods, Trade in Services and Investment, including their respective Sub-Working Groups. Working Groups in other areas like Intellectual Property, electronic commerce, Legal and Institutional Issues etc. also had their meetings.

The Meeting was inaugurated by Ms. Rita Teatota, Secretary, Department of Commerce, Government of India on 24 July 2017. The Secretary mentioned that it is important that RCEP offers a positive and forward looking alternative in the face of growing protectionism across the world. The Secretary further highlighted that while RCEP is a beacon of hope for free trade, its real success will be measured by its ability to bring prosperity, economic growth, decent living standards, creation of jobs and greater business opportunities for the people of the region, in an equitable manner. The Secretary reiterated the importance of being guided by the Guiding Principles and Objectives for Negotiating the RCEP, for direction and assessing whether we are pursuing the balanced and commercially meaningful ambition it envisages. She mentioned that keeping this larger picture in view, India is constructively engaged in RCEP and hopes that the 19th RCEP Round in Hyderabad would find innovative ways to provide impetus to the negotiations.

During the 19th round, a set of key elements for significant outcomes, envisaged to be achieved by the end of 2017, were agreed. The Meeting also highlighted the need to have balanced discussions to progress negotiation across all areas, and to continue to deliver outcomes.

During the meeting, all RCEP Participating Countries (RPCs) agreed that a good RCEP agreement has immense potential to deliver on new economic opportunities including job creation that are much needed in today's world of uncertainty. The Meeting expressed shared commitment to work collectively and in a cooperative manner, to progress the negotiations in an accelerated way, and achieve a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial agreement that addresses and balances the aspirations and sensitivities of participating countries.

On the sidelines of RCEP, two Stakeholder events – with Business Stakeholders and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), were held to obtain feedback on the expectations and sensitivities of stakeholders from participating Countries. The CSO engagement was held with participation from over 28 international, regional and local CSOs. The RCEP Business Stakeholders' Consultations were jointly organized by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and the East Asia Business Council (EABC).

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