

Informal World Trade Organisation Ministerial Meeting Begins in New Delhi Today

Cultural Program for Ministers and Delegates attending Informal WTO Ministerial Meeting

Commerce and Industry Minister, Shri Suresh Prabhu, welcomed D.G. WTO, Mr. Roberto Azevedo, Ministers and delegates from around 50 countries to New Delhi for attending the Informal WTO Ministerial Meeting on 19-20 March, 2018.

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Author:

Pass marks reduced in CISCE Examinations for Class X & Class XII

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) has informed that it has reduced the pass marks for the Class X from 35% to 33% and for class XII from 40% to 35% from the Examination year 2018 onwards.

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Author:

GIAN launched to enable foreign faculty to teach specific courses in Higher Educational Institutions

The recruitment of faculty is a continuous process and the vacancies keep arising due to retirement, resignation and additional requirements on account of enhanced students' strength. The institutions publish a year round rolling advertisement to attract faculties.

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Author:

[Press release: Environment Agency says that a different approach is needed to tackle flooding over next 50 years](#)

- Country is better protected than ever against flooding
- Every £1 invested in flood schemes saves £10 in damages avoided
- During this century a new approach is needed to tackle flood risk in 21st Century

Over the next century a different approach is needed to protect the country from flooding, the Environment Agency's Chief Executive said in a keynote speech at the annual Flood and Coast Conference today (Tuesday 20 March).

As he revealed that every £1 invested in new flood schemes saves the economy £10 in damages avoided, Sir James Bevan said that despite huge advances in flood protection, what worked so well in the past will not be enough in the future. Rising sea levels and higher populations in built-up areas will mean new approaches are needed to combat increasing flood risk. Since 2015, new flood schemes completed by the Environment Agency have benefitted more than 100,000 homes but to continue building on this success new 21st century approaches are needed.

These include a call for greater business investment, quicker emergency response and increased use of natural flood schemes, in addition to 'hard' defences, in order to reduce the impact of flooding on communities around the country. He questioned how these challenges should be dealt with and suggest that more concrete – simply building our flood defences higher and higher – is not the answer.

As he laid out his thoughts on the future of flood protection, Sir James Bevan said that tough questions had to be asked about what to protect. He questioned whether there might be a case for considering future funding priorities.

He said that everyone has a part to play to reduce flood risk and that homeowners in flood risk areas should know the risks and what action they can take – and he praised communities and flood groups who have already taken great steps in this area.

Sir James Bevan said:

Almost every day in this country, when rivers and tides rise, rain falls and storms blow, thousands of people sleep safe and unaware that they are being protected by flood defences.

But what works so well now – and has done in the past – may not be enough in the future. Over the next fifty years if we are going to give the country the best possible protection against flooding, we are going to need a different approach.

The Environment Agency manages flood risk on over 36,000 km of river, 9,000km raised flood defences and over 22,000 flood structures – from the Thames Barrier to local pumping stations. Since 2016, it has upgraded its response capability with more than 6,500 staff trained and ready to help protect communities when floods threaten, 40km of temporary barriers, 250 mobile pumps, and 500,000 sandbags. Partnerships to help respond during incidents have also been strengthened – including with the army.

Government is investing £2.6 billion in flood and coastal erosion risk management projects between 2015 and 2021.

Now in its third year, the annual Flood and Coast Conference brings together experts from across the globe to share ideas and opportunities to work together to tackle the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. More on the conference here: <https://www.floodandcoast.com/>.

The Environment Agency is currently working in its next National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy which will address these challenging questions raised in Sir James Bevan's speech.

[A European interfund to finance the integrated development of rural regions](#)

Against the background of ongoing discussions about the EU's next financial framework, the European Committee of the Regions and the international organisation [Rurality-Environment-Development](#) (RED) met at a conference in Brussels on 19 March to talk about funding the integrated development of rural regions. They called on the European institutions to set up an interfund for rural development.

Pointing to the substantial development gap between rural and urban regions, **Guillaume Cros (FR/PES)**, vice-president of the Regional Council of Occitanie and Committee of the Regions rapporteur on the CAP post-2020, called on the EU to harmonise the operating rules of the Structural Funds through the

common strategic framework so as to facilitate the planning and management of rural development and encourage integrated and regional approaches.

Gérard Peltre , president of RED and of the European Countryside Movement, noted that it was crucial to recognise the diversity of rural regions and their importance in terms of achieving the EU's territorial cohesion objectives. However, recent figures showed a lack of funding for rural regions, which made it even more urgent to establish a functioning strategic and financial framework – a European Rural Agenda – to support the integrated development of rural regions. “We call for an interfund to be set up to promote the development of rural regions”, Mr Peltre announced.

Franz Bogovitch , MEP and vice-president of the [European Parliament Intergroup on Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas \(RUMRA\)](#) , observed that despite territorial cohesion being mentioned in the Lisbon Treaty, the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) could be used more effectively to reduce inequalities, for instance through an instrument funded under all EU policies.

In their statements and discussions the participants called for a new European political and the financial framework to support territorial cohesion measures that would help all regions while and also supporting integrated sustainable development of rural regions.

The speakers felt that such a framework should be established by implementing a European Rural Agenda and setting up an interfund for rural regions, as a practical response to the budgetary context and the need to optimise the use of funding across all EU policies. These instruments would also address the rural-urban imbalance and strengthen rural-agricultural cooperation. These proposals of the Rurality-Environment-Development and the European Countryside Movement have already been embraced by many European and national players.

Further information:

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