

RCEP Round 24, Auckland

The 24th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) meeting and related round of negotiations was held from 18 to 27 October in Auckland, New Zealand. Working Groups on Trade in Goods and Trade in Services also met, including their respective Sub-Working Groups, as well as the Working Groups on Investment, Intellectual Property, Electronic Commerce and Legal and Institutional Issues.

The meeting was chaired by Indonesia, with New Zealand acting as Facilitator for ASEAN FTA partners, and was the final full round of 2018. Negotiators intensified negotiations particularly in market access, and discussed preparations for the 2nd RCEP Summit to be held on 14 November 2018.

Negotiators welcomed the technical conclusion of the Chapter on Dispute Settlement during Round 24, bringing the total number of concluded chapters to date to five, a significant milestone in the negotiations. The Chapter on Dispute Settlement will contribute towards business certainty and a rules-based trading system.

Three stakeholder engagement events were held on 22-23 October 2018, which enabled negotiators specialising in Intellectual Property, E-commerce, Investment, Rules of Origin, Non-Tariff Barriers, as well as Lead Negotiators, to engage directly in a public event with members of civil society and other stakeholders, including representatives of the business sector. Stakeholders were able to share their expectations and concerns with negotiators who answered questions and updated those present on the status of negotiations.

New Zealand maintains that any agreement should be consistent with standards set out in the Guiding Principles, for a modern comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial economic partnership, and one that fosters regional economic integration.