



GROUP 20



TOPIC A: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND INNOVATIVE GROWTH

Witnessing the blooming tide of science and technology development around the globe, G20 economies have begun to realize the significance of innovative growth to achieve comparative advantages. While innovative capacity is largely dependent on private and public input in developing research capacity, it is also closely related to legislative measures including protection of intellectual property rights (IPR). On one hand, protection of IPR helps sustain the inventive incentives by granting the IPR holders the like-property rights to their intellect. On the other hand, international innovative growth requires "openness" of scientific information, which, in other words, refers to freer exchange of scientific information and technology transfer. Further complexities of IPR protection lie in international trade and competition. On one hand, IPR represent the "negative rights" which monopolize ideas and technologies and obstruct competition and even innovation. On the other hand, it seems that IPR regulations help regulate the market and thus contributes to a more stable economic environment to further incentivize innovations. Public health industry remains significant in the IPR regime since IPR protection gets intertwined with public interest and innovative incentives. The international agreements and enforcement of IPR have to take into account three dimensions of the problem: the innovation incentives for diseases less common in countries with strong innovation capacity (the availability of pharmaceuticals for less developing countries), the protection of IPR of pharmaceutical corporations and the affordability of pharmaceuticals. To reconcile the seeming contradiction between IPR protection and innovation requires thorough examination of how the existing IPR regime has led to these controversies.

I choose this topic primarily because of the recent conflicts between China and US on protection of IPR in the major high-tech fields. As more and more developing countries have gained a place to compete in the international economic system, the international trade order has substantially changed, casting doubt on the previously established IPR regime. One of the most studied examples is China, whose success is often associated with sole focus on manufacturing, lack of substantial IPR protection and inadequate innovations. Despite the fact that China is supposed to undertake TRIPS-related commitments which specifies countries' responsibility of protecting IPR, enforcement of the agreement is not as ideal as expected. China has been accused several times for violating the TRIPS agreement, and conflict between China and US is centered around the issue of "technology transfer," particularly in the fields of advanced technology. The conflict between China and US is representative of the conflicts between the established IPR regime with the evolving world order. I hope that through your own research, you can get a basic idea of how the international community has come up with the current IPR regime, what problems have surfaced during the course of enforcement (especially with regard to innovation and advanced technology), what adjustments and adaptations have been made to tackle these challenges and why they have succeeded or failed.

TOPIC B: SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Since the 2011 French Presidency of G20, sustainable agricultural development has remained a focus of G20 agendas. Each year, agriculture ministers gathered together to discuss issues from food security and availability, water management and soil degradation as well as ways to balance the international agricultural trade system. As Argentine Agriculture Minister Luis Miguel Etchevehere has said, "G20 countries make up 60% of agricultural land worldwide and are responsible for nearly 80% of global trade in food and agricultural products." Thus, G20 economies are critical in establishing a sustainable agricultural future. Despite the fact that G20, WTO and other international institutions and organizations have drafted and enforced several agreements on sustainable agricultural development, multivalent problems remained for many developing countries including lack of access and rights to food in developing countries and LDCs, high price volatility, inefficiency to manage resources including water and soil. Current challenges are primarily categorized into 2 groups: establishing a "sustainable food future" and standardizing the international agricultural trade system. The former challenge requires global policy collaborations in water, climate and soil management and the latter requires a careful public policy design in global tariff and pricing system. These challenges are partly due to the rapid globalization of agriculture and the incompatible development in productivity and global policies which adds to the complexity to the agricultural system.

I choose this topic because global hunger is becoming an increasingly disturbing issue, and it directly affects the nutrition, health and lives of people, especially in developing countries. Since the "price crisis" in 2008, problems underlying the rapid globalization of agricultural system have surfaced and have been regarded primarily as the problems of policies. G20 Argentina this year has also listed "a sustainable food future" as one of its three priorities of agenda, reiterating the importance of agriculture and food to human beings around the globe. Moreover, there have been a number of international agreements or action plans (including G20's own action plan) in place that should have solved the problems of food deficiency as well as agricultural market malfunction. However, these agreements seem to have posed new problems rather than solve the existing problems: for example, the "tariffication" pillar in Agreements on Agriculture has hindered the process of gaining rights to food in developing countries by undermining their competitive capabilities in market access. Throughout the process of researching for this topic, I would highly encourage you to thoroughly examine these international agreements (include but are not limited to the ones we have discussed in the topic synopsis): figuring out what problems they try to solve, whether they have solved it or not and what new problems arise during their enforcement. Moreover, it is also important to focus on G20 as an organization of vital economies around the globe: it is important to figure out how to solve the problem through economic policies and how should G20 cooperate with other international institutions including FAO and WTO.