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BMW sees emerging-market protectionism on the rise DETROIT, Jan 9 (Reuters) - Germany's BMW is seeing a trend of increasing protectionism in emerging economies that are trying to attract foreign investments and more local production at the expense of imports. "We are seeing in these markets the rise of protectionism," BMW group sales chief Ian Robertson said at the Detroit Car Show on Monday, citing countries like Brazil, Argentina, Turkey, Russia and India. "Gone are the days when you were classified as a local manufacturer with a minimum of localness. In the past, I've been to plants where literally all you did was put the wheels on the car," Robertson added. BMW, the world's largest maker of premium cars, plans to build its first car plant in Latin America and is currently choosing between two sites. The group is trying to "incrementally" expand production capacity in emerging markets like Russia and India, Robertson said on Monday.

WTO report to focus on trade hurdles; an issue pushed by India New Delhi, January 09, 2012 (PTI) The WTO will focus this year on non-tariff measures (NTMs) which are used by several countries to protect domestic producers, an issue consistently being raised by India in the multi-lateral trade meetings. "Non-tariff measures (i.e. policy measures, other than tariffs, that can potentially affect trade in goods) and services regulations are less transparent than tariffs. Some of them are in place for legitimate reasons....Others are mainly used to protect domestic producers," the WTO said in a statement posted on its website. The WTO said it has initiated a debate: 'Looking beyond international cooperation on tariffs' in the run-up to finalisation of trade report 2012. "...NTMs and services regulations raise particular challenges for international cooperation on trade," it said adding the topic has earned importance because it has variable effects on trade. It said some of the countries follow NTMs and services regulations which tend to be "rather opaque and documenting their evolution is difficult". As the Indian industry, particularly in the services sector, has been facing these non-transparent NTMs which masquerade as the legitimate policy concerns, the issue is of interest to India. According to the Reserve Bank of India, the country's services exports grew by two per cent year-on-year and aggregated to USD 11.46 billion in October. Copyright 2012

Guyanese foreign minister voices disappointment with WTO's Doha Round 9 January GEORGETOWN, Guyana, (CMC) - Guyana is preparing for its first review of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) signed with the European Union in 2008, as it continues to express disappointment with the progress being made within the WTO's Doha Round of negotiations. Foreign Affairs Minister Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett said Georgetown was disappointed that the Doha Round of negotiations was not so successful due to disagreements on tariff issues, agricultural subsidies, and implementation issues among others. She said that Guyana would continue to advocate that there should be no re-opening of the issues that have already been agreed on. Explaining that this is a Caribbean Community (CARICOM) position, the Minister pointed out that while Guyana will continue to advocate for that, the country will also remain very active in the Geneva process in order to defend, if necessary, the region's interest. Rodrigues-Birkett said that in terms of trade, Guyana's position is in sync with the CARICOM region and is working very closely with the Office of Trade Negotiations (OTN). Guyana has participated in a regional forum held in Barbados, in preparation for the third global review in July of 2011, to evaluate the progress of the WTO six-year old initiative to help developing countries with their trade capacity.

Afghan team in town to learn from Nepali experiences 8 January 2012 Republica KATHMANDU, Jan. 8 -- South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) organized an interaction program on Sunday for an official delegation from Afghanistan to share Nepal's experiences on accession to the WTO. According to a press release issued by SAWTEE, a 20-member delegation led by Deputy Minister for Commerce Mozammil Shinwari, comprising high-level government officials and representatives from the private sector, participated in the program. The delegation, which is in Nepal for a weeklong visit, will learn from Nepal's experiences in WTO accession and utilize the knowledge during their ongoing accession negotiations at the WTO. "Since Afghanistan and Nepal share a number of similarities in terms of geographic location, development status, and political transition, we chose to visit Nepal to learn from its experiences in WTO accession," said Deputy Minister Shinwari. Dr. Posh Raj Pandey, Executive Chairman of SAWTEE, said WTO membership is not an end in itself. It should be viewed as a means to help the country achieve its development objectives. Making a presentation titled Nepal's Accession to WTO: Nepal's Experiences, Pandey highlighted how Nepal achieved a balanced accession package by safeguarding Nepal's developmental interests. Dr. Ratnakar Adhikari, General Secretary of SAWTEE, highlighted the role played by the civil society in Nepal during the process of WTO accession particularly in the area of maintaining policy space to protect the interest of consumers, farmers and small and medium enterprises.

Emerging markets chafing at Beijing's irksome trade policies KEN KUWAHARA, Staff writer 9 January 2012 Nikkei Weekly Other WTO members say China's not fully playing to agreed-on import-export rules KEN KUWAHARA GUANGZHOU - In December, China marked the 10th anniversary of its 2001 entry to the WTO, capping a decade of rapid economic growth spurred by exports and foreign direct investment. China's exports and imports are now twice as big as Japan's by value. But China's explosive trade growth has also increased friction with other emerging markets, and the country faces an unrelenting barrage of criticism over its currency policies and poor track record with intellectual property protection. Dumping grounds Foshan, a city in the southern province of Guangdong, is a key ceramics hub, accounting for 70% of China's exports of building tiles. But one official from the China Ceramic Industrial Association recently expressed concern about a recent series of anti-dumping measures against Chinese tile products. In September, the European Commission decided to impose anti-dumping measures constituting an additional tariff increase of up to 69.7% on Chinese tile products. South Korea, Argentina and Peru quickly followed by introducing similar measures or launching investigations

into China's alleged dumping of construction tiles. From 2000 to 2010, the value of China's exports grew 6.3 times, while foreign direct investment into the country rose 2.6 times. Chinese exports have grown an average of 21.3% per year, far surpassing the global average of 9.5%. The expansion of "Made in China" products has also benefited foreign firms with investments in the country. However, a sense of caution is growing among China's trading partners. Since China joined the WTO, more than 600 safeguard probes have been conducted into Chinese products, including anti-dumping measures. Chinese products accounted for 47% of all safeguard probes or anti-dumping measures launched in 2010, according to the Chinese government. Recently, trade friction has intensified between China and other emerging markets. Brazil, for example, announced in September that it would raise its tariffs on air conditioners, bicycles and other products, which are imported mainly from China, to 35%, from the 15-20% range. India is also said to be considering a higher tariff for Chinese power systems. Currency concerns Over the last 10 years, Chinese exports to Central and South American markets have risen 12.8 times in terms of value, while its exports to African nations have grown 11.9 times. Its exports to Southeast Asian markets, meanwhile, have jumped eightfold. China is growing increasingly concerned that the global economic slowdown will drive the rise of protectionist sentiment throughout the world. "China will fight back against protectionist measures," said China's Commerce Minister Chen Deming, at a Nov. 28 meeting with foreign business officials.

Europe steelmakers file complaints against China 9 January 2012 Agence France Presse European steel-makers have filed an anti-subsidy complaint against cut-rate China imports blamed for undermining the EU industry, the European Steel Association (Eurofer) said Monday. The complaint put to the European Commission on Friday is Eurofer's second recent move against Chinese steel imports after it called for an anti-dumping inquiry in November against organic coated steel from China, which is used in cars and construction. The latest complaint is against "massive subsidisation" through preferential loans, grants, tax breaks and cheap supplies across the entire spectrum of the industry -- investment, production, sales and exports.

DGAD probing dumping of type of bonded wood, fibre boards New Delhi, January 09, 2012 (PTI) The government has initiated a probe into alleged dumping of certain types of organic substance-bonded wood and fibre boards by China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka with a view to protect domestic players from cheap shipments through the levy of anti-dumping duty. Countries initiate anti-dumping probes to check if the domestic industry has been hurt by a surge in cheap imports. As a counter-measure, they impose duties as permitted under the multilateral WTO regime. The Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) has initiated the probe into alleged dumping of "resin or other organic substances-bonded wood or ligneous fibre boards of thickness below 6mm, except insulation boards, laminated fibre boards... originating in or exported from China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka," a notification by the Commerce Ministry said.

China cuts product oil tariff to boost imports Huang Xiaolan 9 January 2012 Xinhua China Oil, Gas & Petrochemicals Earlier in December, China's Ministry of Finance (MOF) announced a tariff cut on more than 730 kinds of imported goods including product oil, effective from January 1, 2012. The average tariff would be lowered to 4.4 percent, less than half the rate for the most favored nations under WTO rules, the MOF said in a statement on its website on December 15, without offering further details. The announcement was made after the annual central economic work conference, which set the economic policy guidelines for the coming year. The state-owned oil giants, PetroChina and Sinopec, are likely to be the biggest winners from the tariff cut, while private oil firms and refineries are barred from the benefit due to a lack of product oil importing permits.

China auto duties not a problem for GM: official 9 January 2012 Agence France Presse China's punitive anti-dumping duties imposed on luxury cars from abroad have had little impact on General Motors' business there, a top GM executive said Monday. Although three of GM's top models are subject to the duties, only a small volume is affected, said Tim Lee, GM's head of Asia-Pacific operations. "It's a miniscule volume for us in China," he told reporters at the Detroit auto show. He put the potential impact at less than 0.5 percent of the total volume of sales of GM's Cadillac Escalade, Cadillac CTS and Buick Enclave, the three cars affected by the duties. China declared the duties, which also hit imports from Chrysler, BMW, Mercedes-Benz US International, American Honda Motor and Ford Motor, in December, in what was seen as a tit-for-tat action after Washington moved to have China investigated for dumping solar panels into the United States.

China Import Growth Slide Deepens Global Growth Risk: Economy By Bloomberg News Jan. 10 (Bloomberg) -- China's import growth fell to a two-year low in December, underscoring a slowdown in the fastest-growing major economy that deepens risks for the global outlook. Imports rose 11.8 percent from a year before, less than all 21 estimates in a Bloomberg News survey of economists, a government report showed today in Beijing. The moderation caused the trade surplus to increase to \$16.5 billion in the month, as exports advanced 13.4 percent in December. Signs of domestic demand moderation bolstered forecasts for monetary easing -- spurring a gain in local stocks -- as Europe veers toward a recession and the International Monetary Fund prepares a "substantial" cut to its global growth forecast. The widening surplus may give U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner ammunition to renew pressure for a stronger yuan on a visit to Beijing today. "China will be asked to step up and shoulder more responsibility, together with the U.S., to ensure the world does not fall into a recession again," said Liu Li-Gang, an economist in Hong Kong at Australia & New Zealand Banking Group Ltd. who previously worked at the World Bank. "If the yuan were to depreciate this year, China's exchange-rate policy will be accused of a 'beggar thy neighbor policy.'"

Euro exchange rate decline to help exports: Van Rompuy COPENHAGEN, January 9, 2012 (AFP) - EU president Herman Van Rompuy said Monday the recent decline in the euro exchange rate could boost eurozone exports and thereby help avoid a deep recession. "New trade opportunities and new markets are to be exploited to stimulate foreign demand and export," he said, noting that "recent exchange rate developments for the euro will help." Van Rompuy was speaking to reporters in Copenhagen following a meeting with Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt, kicking off Denmark's turn at the rotating European Union presidency which it took over on January 1. The euro dropped Monday to \$1.2666 in Asia, its lowest level since September 2010.

Internet body says name expansion won't hurt United Nations By Patrick Worsnip NEW YORK, Jan 9 (Reuters) - Internet domain name regulators on Monday played down fears by the United Nations and other international bodies that a planned expansion of possible Website addresses could cause them problems, saying safeguards were in place. The world body, the International Monetary Fund and 26 other organizations last month wrote to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN, asking it to stop addresses like ".un" or ".imf" from being seized by "cybersquatters." Cybersquatters register addresses that appear to belong to others, sometimes in the hope of selling them to those who have a more logical claim to them. (END)