WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

2023

Annual Report

About this report

This report covers WTO activities in 2022 and the early part of 2023. At the start of the report, Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala reflects on the current challenges facing world trade (as of June 2023) and the role of the WTO in helping the world address these challenges.

Further information about the WTO's activities is available on the WTO website: **www.wto.org**

Who we are

The World Trade Organization deals with the global rules of trade between WTO members. Its main function is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible.

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared by the WTO Secretariat. It does not reflect the positions or opinions of WTO members and is without prejudice to members' rights and obligations under the WTO. Any errors are attributable to the WTO Secretariat.

Cover image: A fisherman collects his catch in Mozambique.

Annual Report 2023

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Introduction

The overall objective of the WTO is to help its members use trade as a means to raise living standards, create jobs and improve people's lives. The WTO operates the global system of trade rules and helps developing economies build their trade capacity. It also provides a forum for its members to negotiate trade agreements and to resolve the trade problems they face with each other.

Production of traditional hats at a factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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Message from Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

The past year was another tumultuous one for the world economy and for global trade. Even as the COVID-19 pandemic began to recede, the international community was tested by one crisis after another, from persistent inflation to climate shocks, food insecurity, and both civil and interstate conflict. Despite the shadow cast by rising geopolitical tensions, trade has proved itself to be a force for resilience and recovery. The value of global goods and services trade in 2022 was a record US$ 31.4 trillion.

Nevertheless, the risk of costly economic fragmentation is real and growing. WTO economists predict that global goods trade volumes will grow by only 1.7 per cent in 2023, before picking up speed to 3.2 per cent in 2024, barring new downside surprises.

The subdued trade growth mirrors slowing growth in gross domestic product (GDP). World Bank researchers believe growth potential is declining within advanced and developing economies alike, and have argued that one factor responsible is the slow but steady slowdown in global trade compared to economic output over the past decade. Against this backdrop of diminished economic prospects facing people around the world, the case for multilateral cooperation on trade to combat fragmentation and bolster growth and productivity is stronger than ever.

It is vital that the WTO builds on the success of MC12 so that it continues to fulfil its mandate of using trade as a means to improve living standards, create better jobs and promote sustainable development.

Such cooperation remains possible, as we saw in June 2022 at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12). All 164 of our members came together across geopolitical and substantive differences to deliver a series of ministerial decisions on fisheries subsidies, food security, pandemic response and e-commerce. They proved that the multilateral trading system can meaningfully contribute to solving global commons challenges. They showed the WTO is capable of acting swiftly to respond to pressing problems.

MC12 also saw a commitment to WTO reform, with members agreeing to undertake a comprehensive review of the WTO's core functions to ensure the institution remains fit for purpose. Ministers agreed in particular to address concerns about the WTO's dispute settlement system, with the aim of securing a fully functioning mechanism by 2024.

It is vital that the WTO builds on the success of MC12 so that it continues to fulfil its mandate of using trade as a means to improve living standards, create better jobs and promote sustainable development.

One key step in this direction is to ensure the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies reached at MC12 enters into force as soon as possible, which requires formal acceptance by two-thirds of members. The ground-breaking agreement – the WTO's first to place environmental sustainability at its core – will help curb an estimated US$ 22 billion per year in harmful subsidies. It will also contribute to reversing the decline in marine fish stocks that is putting at risk both the health of our oceans and the livelihoods of fishing communities around the world. And it comes accompanied by financial and technical assistance for developing and least-developed members to upgrade fisheries management capacity and implement the new disciplines.

The Agreement also provides for a second wave of negotiations on fisheries subsidies issues that could not be resolved at MC12, such as support related to overfishing and overcapacity. Finding solutions on these outstanding issues is high on the agenda for the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13), to be held in Abu Dhabi in February 2024.

As members look ahead to MC13, they have been actively discussing institutional reform and looking at dispute settlement as well as various ways to make existing committees and processes more effective. Large groups of members continue efforts to create shared rules in areas at the centre of the 21st century global economy, such as e-commerce

and investment facilitation, and to advance discussions on various environmental initiatives. Importantly, members also are exploring new ways to tackle longstanding issues, such as agricultural reform, a critical priority for many developing and developed economies on which negotiations have been stuck for far too long.

Food security remains an important challenge, despite the important progress made at MC12, where ministers agreed to smooth the flow of emergency food aid by shielding World Food Programme humanitarian purchases from export restrictions and pledged to keep food flowing across borders. According to a May 2023 report from a network of United Nations, regional and non-governmental agencies, 258 million people were in crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity in 2022 – up from 193 million in 2021. Hundreds of millions more are undernourished. Although WTO monitoring of export restrictions on food, animal feed and fertilizer have helped, high food prices and market volatility continue to contribute to immediate problems of affordability, while droughts, heatwaves and flooding undermine current production and warn of even worse climate-related supply problems ahead.

At the end of last year, WTO members established a work programme to help vulnerable economies improve their resilience to food insecurity. This too springs from what members agreed to at MC12. But much more needs to be done. Members must find ways of breaking the long impasse in agricultural negotiations so that the WTO rulebook for farm trade, most of which dates back to the 1990s, is reformed and updated to respond more effectively to global food security needs and challenges today and tomorrow, including climate change and sustainability. MC13 would be an ideal place to start.

As this Annual Report makes clear, the WTO has been working hard across a wide range of other areas to keep trade open and to help its members deal with global challenges, from the economic consequences of the war in Ukraine to ongoing impacts from the pandemic, natural disasters and the biggest collective action problem facing the planet, namely climate change.

We chose to devote last year's edition of our flagship publication – the World Trade Report – to the topic of international trade and climate change. That report underlines the many ways in which trade can help, and is helping, economies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. The key message, which we took to the UN climate conference – COP27 – in Sharm el-Sheikh in late 2022, is that when it comes to climate change, trade is part of the solution far more than it is part of the problem.

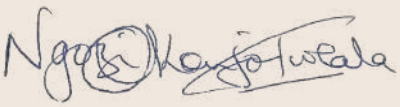
This year's Annual Report also describes how, far from the news headlines, members have continued to use WTO committees to

Bringing economies and communities from the margins of the global economy to the mainstream would make trade more inclusive and even more resilient. A strong WTO is a prerequisite for this process.

raise trade concerns and to find solutions to problems they are encountering. In addition, the report provides a snapshot of our continued work to provide training to government officials – over 5,500 in 2022 – to help them better understand WTO rules so they can help their economies to benefit from the economic opportunities created by the multilateral trading system.

The shocks of the past three years have exposed genuine vulnerabilities in how global supply chains operate. But I remain convinced that the most serious problems are a function of overconcentration rather than of trade as such. This means that the way to solve these problems is not to make everything at home – which would create vulnerabilities of its own – but to promote supply chains that are deeper, more diversified and more de-concentrated. Bringing economies and communities from the margins of the global economy to the mainstream would make trade more inclusive and even more resilient. A strong WTO is a prerequisite for this process, which we are calling "re-globalization".

MC13 will be an important opportunity for WTO members to show that last year's ministerial was not a one-off miracle on Lake Geneva. We can and must continue to strengthen this vital institution and ensure that multilateral cooperation on trade does its part to provide solutions to problems facing people, nations and the wider global commons.



DR. NGOZI OKONJO-IWEALA
DIRECTOR-GENERAL

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

12th Ministerial Conference

The 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), co-hosted by Kazakhstan, concluded successfully on 17 June 2022 in Geneva with the adoption of a series of important outcomes, including a landmark Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, decisions on a multilateral response to the food crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, and a multilaterally agreed outcome document.

MC12 took place in Geneva from 12 to 17 June amid a fragile recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and against the backdrop of war in Ukraine, which was causing humanitarian suffering and serious implications for global trade and vulnerable populations around the world.

At the same time, the WTO was facing significant challenges in its core functions, notably surrounding the dispute settlement system (see page 132).

Twice postponed because of the pandemic, MC12 presented a critical opportunity for ministers to take action, accomplish what needed to be done and provide much-needed political guidance to enable the WTO to be more responsive to the challenges faced by all its members.

> **This week, you have all contributed to making what seemed impossible come to fruition.**
>
> MC12 Chair Timur Suleimenov

In her opening speech to the conference, DG Okonjo-Iweala said: "Members will have a chance to show the world that the WTO can step up to the plate." Striking agreements in Geneva "will enhance the ability of all members to respond to people's aspirations at home – aspirations for food, for health, for security, for better jobs, higher living standards, and a sustainable environment on land, in the oceans and in our atmosphere," she said.

The DG noted that at a time when the multilateral system is seemingly fragile "this is the time to invest in it, not to retreat; this is the time to summon the much-needed political will to show that the WTO can be part of the solution to the multiple crises of the global commons we face."

Initially scheduled to end on 15 June, the ministerial gathering was extended by two days to allow more time for negotiations and reaching agreements. Eventually, after round-the-clock talks among delegations, the chair of MC12, Timur Suleimenov, First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kazakh President, brought down the gavel on 17 June on a series of important accords.

The "Geneva Package" includes a landmark agreement on fisheries subsidies, a multilateral response to COVID-19, as well as decisions on food security and WTO reform (see page 51).

In his closing remarks, the chair told members: "This week, you have all contributed to making what seemed impossible come to fruition. We have all engaged in frank and sometimes very difficult conversations. We may have not achieved everything that we set out for, but we have delivered, and this is something that all of us should be proud of."

12th WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
GENEVA 2022
CO-HOSTED BY KAZAKHSTAN

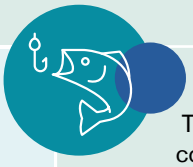
Fact box: Key elements of the "Geneva package"

Trade and health

WTO members adopted:

- a ministerial declaration recognizing the importance of the multilateral trading system in supporting the fight against COVID-19 and future pandemics
- a ministerial decision clarifying the right of members to override patents in certain circumstances and providing greater scope to diversify production of COVID-19 vaccines.

They also committed to explore whether to extend the decision to cover the production and supply of COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics (see page 62).



Fisheries subsidies

The Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies commits members to eliminate the most harmful fisheries subsidies that are fuelling depletion of fish stocks and depriving fishing communities of their livelihoods. It is the first WTO agreement to put a primarily environmental objective at its core (see page 55).

For the Agreement to enter into force, two-thirds of members have to deposit their "instruments of acceptance" at the WTO. Members have also started exploring how to approach the "second wave" of negotiations to further discipline harmful fisheries subsidies.

Food security

WTO members adopted:

- a ministerial declaration confirming the vital role of trade in improving global food security and committing members to improving the functioning of global markets for food and agriculture
- a decision exempting food purchased by the UN's World Food Programme for humanitarian purposes from any export prohibitions or restrictions (see page 52).

In November 2022, members established a work programme aimed at helping to address the food security concerns of least-developed countries and net food-importing economies in line with the MC12 mandate.

E-commerce

WTO members decided to maintain a moratorium on customs duties on e-commerce and to intensify discussions on the issue. The moratorium will remain in effect until MC13, due to be held in February 2024.

WTO reform

WTO members agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the WTO's functions to ensure the organization is capable of responding to the challenges facing the multilateral trading system. The goal is to submit possible reform proposals to MC13.

Ministers also agreed to talks on addressing concerns about the WTO's dispute settlement system, with the view to securing a fully functioning system by 2024.

Other topics

Ministers adopted a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Declaration committing WTO members to modernize the SPS Agreement, which regulates standards on food, animal and plant products. In November 2022, members agreed on the process for undertaking this work.

Ministers adopted a decision reaffirming their commitment to addressing the particular challenges faced by small economies.

They also decided to extend until MC13 a moratorium on so-called TRIPS "non-violation and situation" complaints, which deal with situations where a WTO member may argue that it has been deprived of an expected intellectual property benefit, even if no agreement has been violated.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Trade and health

WTO members achieved a multilaterally agreed response to the COVID-19 pandemic in June 2022 when the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) agreed on measures to diversify global production of COVID-19 vaccines and on ways to build resilience to future pandemics. The multilateral response reflects the exceptional nature of the crisis – in terms of loss of human life and the severe disruption to the global economy and world trade.

In their "Declaration on the WTO Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Preparedness for Future Pandemics", trade ministers called on relevant WTO bodies to continue or initiate work on lessons learned and challenges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The declaration draws attention to how the world experienced medical supply constraints and lack of equitable access to vaccines. It emphasizes the need for transparency and information sharing in such circumstances and the importance of intensifying cooperation with other international organizations. Areas of focus for future work will include export restrictions, food security, intellectual property, regulatory cooperation, services, tariff classification, technology transfer, trade facilitation and transparency. A yearly stocktaking exercise will take place in the General Council up to the end of 2024.

"We affirm the need to review and build on all the lessons learned and the challenges experienced … to build effective solutions in case of future pandemics," ministers declared.

In parallel, a Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement (see page 61), also adopted at MC12, provides a platform for members to work together to diversify vaccine production capacity. Members will have greater scope over the next five years to override the exclusive effect of patents through a targeted waiver that addresses specific problems identified during the pandemic, especially facilitating and streamlining COVID-19 vaccine exports.

WTO members achieved a multilaterally agreed response to the COVID-19 pandemic at MC12 in June 2022.

The outcomes "will make access to medical supplies and components more predictable in this pandemic, and in the next one," DG Okonjo-Iweala said. The TRIPS decision "will contribute to ongoing efforts to deconcentrate and diversify vaccine manufacturing capacity so that a crisis in one region does not leave others cut off," she added.

Members are debating whether to extend the TRIPS decision to cover the production and supply of COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics but no consensus has been reached (see page 62).

This decision opens the way for further multilateral technical support and cooperation between the WHO, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the WTO and others to make full and effective use of options open to members for pandemic response, including an array of emergency use measures.

The WHO, WIPO and the WTO were already cooperating in addressing COVID-19 through a trilateral collaboration framework. Following a meeting between WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WIPO Director General Daren Tang and DG Okonjo-Iweala in February 2022, a trilateral COVID-19 technical assistance platform was launched to help members and accession candidates meet their capacity-building needs to respond to the pandemic.

The three organizations also held a technical symposium in December, which highlighted that cooperation is a key factor in fostering innovation and equitable access to health

products. The symposium followed a series of jointly hosted technical workshops to increase the flow of information on the pandemic. The WTO's annual Trade and Public Health Workshop in December, focusing on pandemic preparedness and response, was organized in close cooperation with the WHO and WIPO.

Other areas of cooperation include the Multilateral Leaders' Task Force on COVID-19, led by the heads of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group, the WHO and the WTO (see page 154). At a meeting in March 2022, they discussed with chief executives of leading vaccine manufacturers how to ensure the rapid delivery of vaccines where most needed.

Separately, DG Okonjo-Iweala met several times with pharmaceutical chiefs to press for better access for all to COVID-19 vaccines and medicines. In November, she met with CEOs from companies engaged in the production of key COVID-19 therapeutics to review the challenges in expanding and diversifying their production. They also explored the potential role of trade policy tools, such as an extension of the MC12 TRIPS decision on COVID-19 vaccines to cover diagnostics and therapeutics, which is being discussed in the TRIPS Council.

Recognizing the need to address the COVID-19 crisis through timely, accurate information, the WTO created a dedicated page on its website. It provides up-to-the minute trade-related information, including measures taken by WTO members, data on the impact of the virus on exports and imports, and pandemic-related WTO studies and reports.

The WTO has also been monitoring COVID-19 related trade-restricting and facilitating measures imposed by the Group of 20 leading economies and the WTO membership through its trade monitoring reports (see page 127).

The MC12 outcomes will make access to medical supplies and components more predictable in this pandemic, and in the next one.

DG Okonjo-Iweala

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Trade and climate change

The year 2022 marked an important step forward in advancing the role of trade in tackling climate change. From ministers at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) highlighting the challenges posed by climate change to the WTO's active engagement at the UN Climate Summit in November 2022, the publication of WTO reports on climate change and members' ongoing discussions on the topic, the overall message made clear was that trade must be part of the solution.

As DG Okonjo-Iweala told "Climate Week NYC", a conference on climate change held in New York in September, trade and trade policy must act as catalysts for the transformation of how "we produce, consume and live" if humankind is to successfully overcome the impact of climate change. "So where is the hope? The hope is that, among policymakers, the realization that we can't go at it alone manifested itself at the WTO," the DG said, noting landmark agreements members forged at MC12 in June 2022 in areas including the environment, food security and health (see page 10).

MC12 outcomes

In the MC12 outcome document, WTO members for the first time recognized the "global environmental challenges including climate change and related natural disasters, loss of biodiversity and pollution" and noted "the importance of the contribution of the multilateral trading system to promote the UN 2030 Agenda" and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In a declaration on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues (see page 91), ministers spoke of the "growing importance of sustainable agricultural practices and production systems, including their contribution to addressing climate change and biodiversity conservation".

On the margins of MC12, the DG met with trade ministers from a diverse group of around 20 WTO members exploring the establishment of a coalition of trade ministers on climate issues. The discussion, organized by the European Union, Ecuador, Kenya and New Zealand, sought to enhance ministerial-level dialogue to bring climate change to the forefront of trade policy and explore how partner organizations can help support this effort.

UN climate summit

DG Okonjo-Iweala participated in high-level events with world leaders at COP27, which took place in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 6 to 18 November 2022.

At the WTO-led event, "Time to Act: Implementing Trade-Related Contributions to the Global Response to Climate Change", the DG stressed that an effective strategy for tackling global warming cannot succeed without governments considering the role of trade in meeting climate goals. Examples of such trade actions include opening up trade in environmental goods and services, improving cooperation on carbon measurement and verification, and leveraging Aid for Trade to help developing economies and least developed countries (LDCs) build climate-resilient capacity and infrastructure, she said.

DG Okonjo-Iweala participates with other leaders at a high-level event at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

Eliminating tariffs and reducing non-tariff measures on a subset of energy-related environmental goods could **boost exports by 5 per cent by 2030 while driving energy efficiency.**

Increased uptake of renewable energy technologies would **reduce global emissions by 0.6 per cent.**

Global shift to clean energy will generate as many as **30 million new jobs in clean energy and related sectors by 2030.**

International trade can play an essential role in climate adaptation, risk prevention, reduction and disaster preparedness.

Between 2013 and 2020, **Aid for Trade disbursements related to climate change action totalled US$ 96 billion,** with a larger share of the disbursements directed at climate mitigation.

Source: WTO World Trade Report 2022.

The World Trade Report, the WTO's annual flagship report, was released at the high-level event. "Climate Change and International Trade" presents critical data, analysis and recommendations on how international trade and greater cooperation can amplify global efforts to address climate change and put the planet on a sustainable trajectory.

In the run-up to COP27, the WTO Secretariat released seven information briefs on trade, climate and related issues in support of efforts to harness trade policy as part of the solution for effective and just climate action.

Other initiatives

In addition to engagement on climate change at the Committee on Trade and Environment (see page 118), there was discussion on trade-related climate measures at the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD), which currently have 74 co-sponsors, representing around 85 per cent of world trade (see page 71). At a stocktaking event in December 2022, the DG highlighted TESSD's important contribution in "searching for practical solutions and concrete actions to catalyse the trade and environment agenda."

> **It is clear to me that trade is part of the solution to the challenges we face, far more than it is part of the problem.**
>
> **DG Okonjo-Iweala**

The Fossil Fuel Subsidies Reform initiative (see page 71) also adopted a work programme and organized its first meeting in 2022. The 48 co-sponsors of the initiative seek "the rationalization and phase out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption". Several participants referred to the complex links between climate change and plastics during discussions in the Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (see page 70), which aims to support global efforts to reduce plastics pollution.

Citing the TESSD and the dialogue on plastics as examples, the DG said in February 2022: "It is clear to me that trade is part of the solution to the challenges we face, far more than it is part of the problem."

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Trade in a year of polycrisis

World trade expanded at a moderate pace in 2022, but this growth was constrained by several related factors, including the war in Ukraine, high food and energy prices, tighter monetary policies, supply chain disruptions and COVID-19. Trade growth in 2023 is expected to be subdued but a reduction in inflationary and supply chain pressures could raise prospects for trade and output.

Merchandise trade

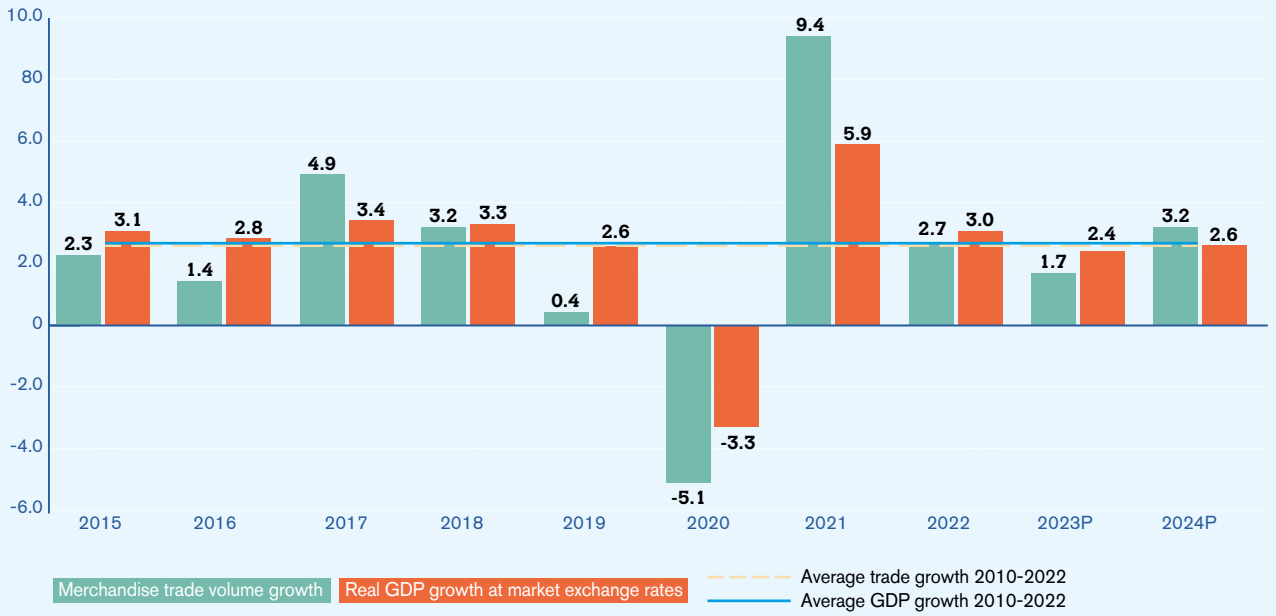
The volume of world merchandise trade grew 2.7 per cent in 2022, slightly weaker than WTO projections (see Figure 1). Trade and output growth for the year were dampened by several adverse economic factors, which collectively came to be regarded as a "polycrisis".

The largest of these crises was the outbreak of war between Russia and Ukraine in late February, which has caused immense human suffering and extensive destruction of productive capacity in Ukraine and led to the imposition of broad economic and trade sanctions against Russia.

In a report on the crisis issued in April 2022, the WTO noted that Russia and Ukraine were key suppliers of essential goods, notably food and energy. Russia and Ukraine together accounted for 25 per cent of global wheat trade in 2019, while Russia alone made up 9.4 per cent of trade in fuels, including a 20 per cent share in natural gas trade. Countries in the Middle East and Africa were most vulnerable to the conflict in terms of food supply, with many importing around half of their grain needs from Ukraine, Russia or both.

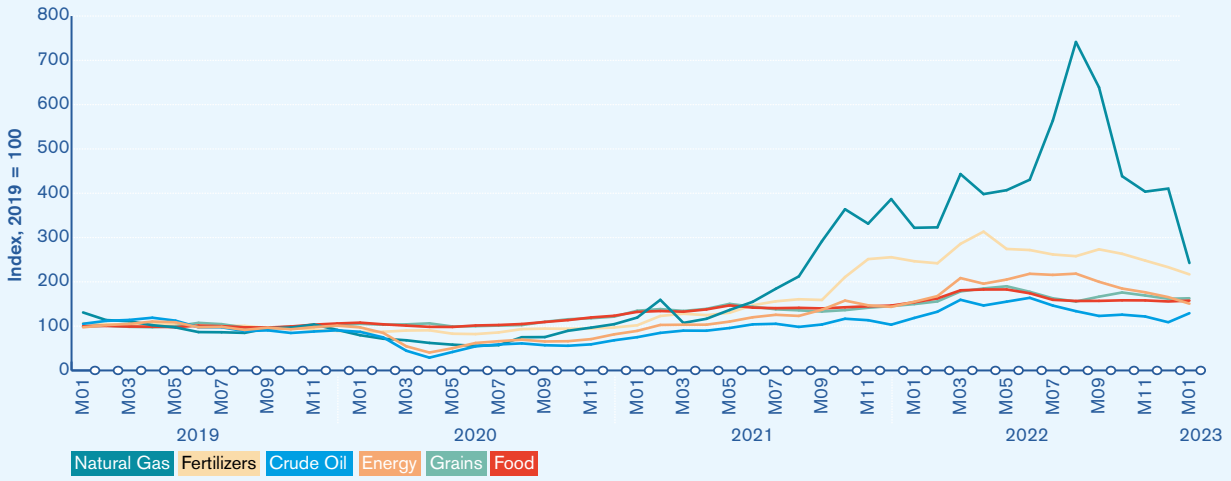
The volume of world merchandise trade grew 2.7 per cent in 2022.

Figure 1: World merchandise trade volume and GDP growth, 2015-2024



Note: 2023 and 2024 are projections.
Sources: WTO for merchandise trade volume and consensus estimates for GDP.

Figure 2: World average prices for primary commodities, January 2019 - December 2022
Index 2019=100 and US$ per million British thermal units (Btu)



Source: World Bank.

An updated WTO report issued on 23 February 2023 found that global trade remained resilient in 2022 and performed better than initially feared as economies most affected by the war found alternative sources of supply. Prices for goods affected by the war also rose less than expected. However, Ukrainian exports collapsed by 30 per cent in value terms. Russia's exports expanded by 15.6 per cent because of an increase in prices but its export volume appeared to have declined slightly.

Reduced supplies, or the threat of reduced supplies, of essential goods caused commodity prices to spike in 2022, with food prices rising 18 per cent year-on-year (65 per cent compared to 2019 – see Figure 2). Energy prices also jumped 58 per cent in 2022 (93 per cent compared to 2019), including a dramatic rise in natural gas. The curtailing of gas shipments between Russia and the European Union disproportionately affected energy prices in Europe, but efforts to find alternative sources of supply raised prices for liquified natural gas (LNG) elsewhere. Gas prices in North America, with its plentiful local production, remained low compared to the rest of the world.

Trade volume growth in 2022 was sustained by strong consumer demand in North America and Europe.

High energy prices fed into a rise in general inflation, which had already picked up following the pandemic, partly due to supply chain disruptions and partly as a result of expansionary fiscal and monetary policies in many economies, including the United States and the European Union. Central banks around the world began to raise interest rates in an effort to rein in inflation, but this could weigh on business and consumer spending in 2023 and beyond.

Measures to combat COVID-19 were relaxed in most economies over the course of 2022, but strict controls remained in some places, most notably China. Intermittent outbreaks of the virus disrupted production and shipping throughout the year, weighing on global trade volumes. China announced in early 2023 that its zero-COVID-19 policies were being wound down, boosting prospects for global trade flows and economic output.

Trade volume growth in 2022 was sustained by strong consumer demand in North America and Europe, with imports growing faster than world trade overall (6.0 per cent and 5.2 per cent, respectively). In contrast, imports of Asian economies contracted slightly, falling 0.4 per cent. On the export side, most regions recorded moderate growth. Exceptions included the Middle East, where exports were up 9.9 per cent, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (including certain former and associate members), where the volume of exports fell 4.9 per cent.

Merchandise trade in nominal US dollar terms grew much faster than trade in volume terms last year due to rising export and import prices. The value of world trade as measured by the average of exports and imports increased 12 per cent in 2022, bringing the value of world trade to US$ 25.3 trillion.

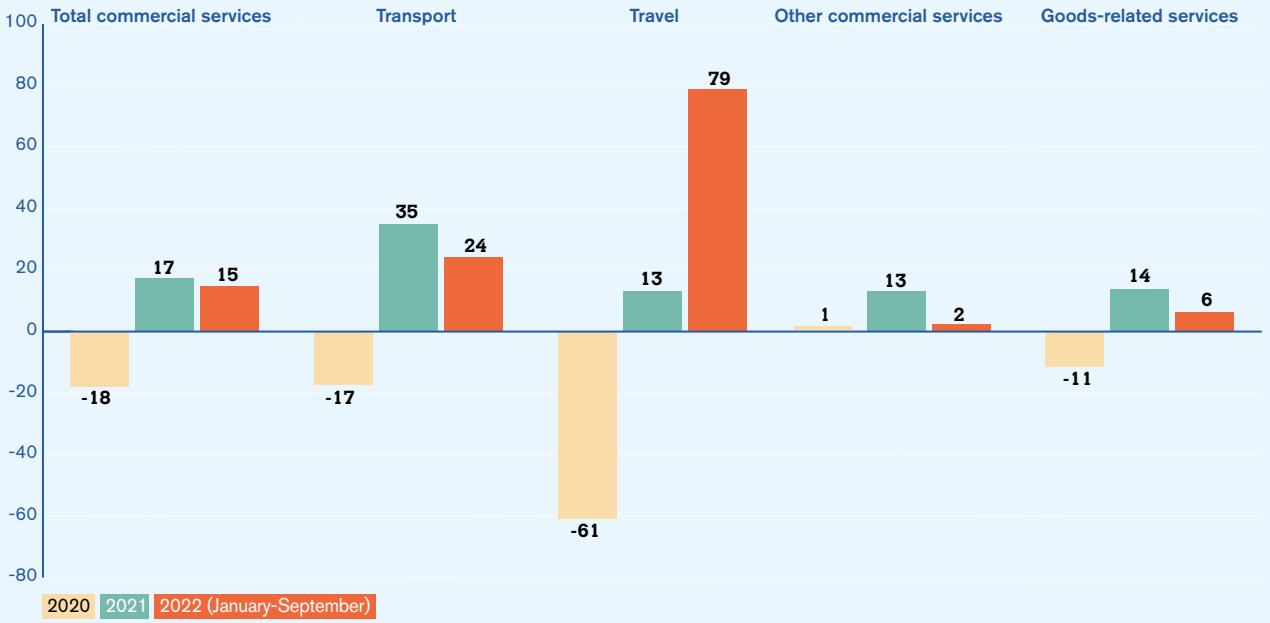
The value of trade in fuels and mining products was up around 59 per cent year-on-year, while trade in agricultural products rose 19 per cent, and manufactured goods trade increased by 21 per cent.

Services trade

Overall, commercial services trade recorded a 15 per cent increase in terms of US dollar values in 2022, led by a 79 per cent jump in spending on travel (see Figure 3), due to a lifting of COVID-19 travel restrictions. Growth of transport services also remained strong, rising 24 per cent year-on-year. Meanwhile, the categories of other commercial services (covering sectors ranging from construction to financial services) and goods-related services grew 2 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively, barely keeping pace with core inflation in leading economies.

Commercial services trade recorded a 15 per cent increase in terms of US dollar values in 2022.

Figure 3: Year-on-year growth in world commercial services trade, 2020-22
Percentage change in US$ values



Source: WTO-UNCTAD estimates in cooperation with the International Trade Centre (ITC).
Note: Data refer to average of exports and imports.

Shipping rates fell 75% in 2022.

Unlike in 2021, when the value of transport services was boosted by a rise in shipping rates, most growth in transport services in 2022 was probably due to a combination of increased volume and rising fuel costs being passed on to consumers because shipping rates fell 75 per cent.

Outlook for trade in 2023

WTO economists revised their trade forecast in October 2022, raising their estimate for world merchandise trade volume growth in 2022 to 3.5 per cent from 3.0 per cent in April, and sharply lowering their estimate for 2023 to 1.0 per cent from 3.4 per cent previously. These results were broadly confirmed by the WTO's new Global Trade Outlook and Statistics in April 2023, which found trade volume growth of 2.7 per cent for the whole of 2022 and projected a slightly improved but still below-average increase of 1.7 per cent for 2023. The weak outlook for 2023 presumed that high inflation and rising interest rates would sap global GDP growth and reduce demand for traded goods in leading economies.

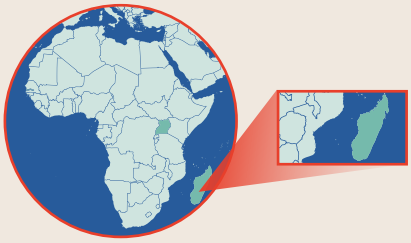
The WTO foresees below-average trade growth of 1.7% for 2023.

By December, commodity prices had receded from their recent peaks, although they remained high by historical standards. Purchasing managers' indices (PMIs), based on surveys of businesses around the world, also showed an uptick in export orders at the start of 2023, possibly signalling the beginning of a recovery phase in trade following a larger-than-expected decline in the fourth quarter of 2022. The PMIs also showed falling input and output prices, shorter delivery times and a recovery of inventories, suggesting easing of inflationary pressures and improved supply chain conditions. However, higher interest rates have revealed weaknesses in banking systems that could stoke financial volatility if left unchecked, which would in turn weigh on trade growth. Governments and regulators will need to be alert to these and other risks in 2023.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

World trade success stories

The following success stories show how trade and trade-related assistance can bring benefits to people across the globe, helping entrepreneurs improve their standard of living and creating new opportunities for local communities.



MADAGASCAR

New technology makes trade in plant products quicker and more efficient

Since July 2022, Nomenjanahary Saholy Ramiliarijaona, Head of Plant Protection at Madagascar's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, has been overseeing the country's use of ePhytos, electronic phytosanitary certificates that allow plant products to be traded more easily and efficiently across borders.

Initially, traders were a little worried because it was a new system and they had security concerns, she said. Through awareness raising and training, however, they gained confidence in the system, with more and more asking to be trained.

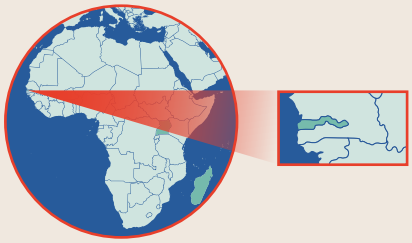
The state-of-the-art system, initiated by the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and used in more than 100 economies, leads to a lower likelihood of loss, damage and fraud compared with traditional paper certificates. It also saves time. "The most obvious change is the speed with which certificates are issued. Using ePhytos reduces processing time," Ms Nomenjanahary said.

"At the international level, compliance with international standards gives importing countries much more confidence in what we do. Using computers and other equipment enables our inspectors to work more efficiently. All in all, we've seen a real revolution in how we work."

The World Economic Forum, through the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, is financing the project, with the active participation of Madagascar's National Trade Facilitation Committee.

Source
Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF).

Isatou Foon (left), tour guide, and Fatou Juka Darboe, co-founder of Make3D Company in The Gambia.



THE GAMBIA

Young women use technology and tourism to transform their communities

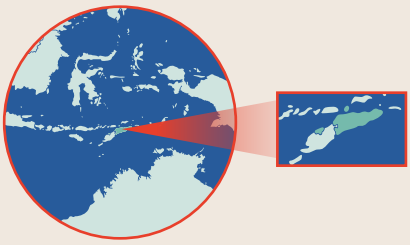
Fatou Juka Darboe is the co-founder and director of Make3D Company Limited, the first and only 3D printing company in The Gambia. Isatou Foon is a young tour guide from Janjanbureh, renowned for its historical and cultural heritage. What unites them is their passion to use trade to transform their communities.

Both young women have benefited from the "Youth Empowerment Project", an initiative of the International Trade Centre (ITC) funded by the European Union, which aims to unlock the potential of young people in The Gambia to support economic growth.

Make3D helps companies obtain customized items unavailable in The Gambia, ranging from branded antibacterial combs to bespoke lip balm containers. Juka's work also provides health solutions. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Make3D partnered with ITC and the UK's Medical Research Council to print face shields. It also produces medical and safety equipment, such as customized prosthetics.

Isatou describes her job as "helping visitors make awesome memories" while visiting her community. She aims to provide her guests with insights into the local culture through a range of sight-seeing activities. She also shares her knowledge with other communities to help create tourism products that improve the region's standard of living while preserving the local culture and environment.

Source
International Trade Centre (ITC).



TIMOR LESTE

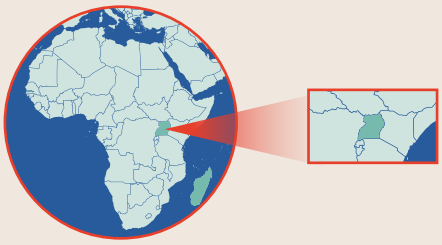
Coffee farmer fulfils dream of creating her own export business

Madalena Da Costa farms coffee, Timor-Leste's largest non-oil export, in Leolima, a remote village in the country's south west. With ambition and a dream of starting her own business, Madalena enrolled in the Women's School of Leadership, set up by Fairtrade Australia New Zealand, where she built key skills around business and leadership. Since graduating in September 2022, she has opened a small retail shop in her community and become a leader in a new community diversification project.

Due to her success at the school, she was sponsored to travel to the Melbourne International Coffee Expo, where she spoke about her experiences as a Fairtrade coffee farmer and the role of the Women's School of Leadership in empowering women. "The Women's School of Leadership has helped me understand how to run my business," she said.

Investments through Fairtrade have contributed towards the export of 16 containers of coffee and helped improve the supply of clean water, enabling more effective coffee production techniques in addition to clear health benefits. The project is part of the Enhanced Integrated Framework's (EIF) Empower-Women Power-Trade initiative.

Source
Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF).



UGANDA

Helping fruit and vegetable traders reach global markets

In Uganda, the fresh fruit and vegetable sector is an important source of export earnings. Some 60 per cent of all fresh fruit and vegetable exports go to the European Union. However, in 2014 and 2015, over 80 per cent of consignments were intercepted on phytosanitary grounds.

At the request of the Uganda Government, the STDF introduced a project to tackle the problem. Led by the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International, a non-profit organization, and with support from the Government and the Uganda Agribusiness Alliance, the project improved inspection and certification procedures, using a public-private partnership approach, to achieve better controls and traceability.

As a result, interceptions of products due to SPS concerns have declined. Interceptions relating to false codling moth on chillies, for example, have dropped by over 90 per cent since 2018, improving agricultural traders' access to foreign markets. Over 1,400 public and private sector stakeholders have improved their awareness of phytosanitary measures.

The project has also encouraged private sector development, contributing to a rise in the number of horticultural exporting companies. It has also catalysed additional EU assistance of US$ 8 million to help regulators and farmers tackle other challenges related to pesticide residues.

Source
Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF).

Our year

- The 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022 resulted in a series of important outcomes, including decisions on an emergency response to the food crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic and a ground-breaking agreement on curbing harmful fisheries subsidies.
- Following MC12, members focused on implementing outcomes and on how to approach areas such as agriculture, WTO reform and a second wave of negotiations on fisheries subsidies.
- DG Okonjo-Iweala urged members to find solutions wherever they can, especially in topics such as green technologies, services, digital commerce and inclusiveness.
- In December 2022, the General Council agreed that MC13 will be held in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) in February 2024.

Fishermen in Quang Ngai, Viet Nam.

Trade negotiations and discussions

Intensive negotiations in the run-up to the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022 culminated in a series of important outcomes at MC12. These included decisions on an emergency response to the food crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic and a ground-breaking agreement on curbing harmful fisheries subsidies, the first WTO agreement to have an environmental objective at its core.

To build on the success at MC12, DG Okonjo-Iweala convened retreats on fisheries subsidies and agriculture later in the year, providing opportunities for members to reflect on the way forward.

The retreat on fisheries subsidies focused on how to approach a second wave of negotiations while the agriculture retreat considered fresh approaches to the talks to try to overcome entrenched differences. At a meeting on WTO reform, members emphasized the importance of the reform process and the need in particular for a resolution of the issues surrounding the dispute settlement system.

In December, the General Council agreed that MC13 will be held in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) in the week of 26 February 2024 and that MC14 will be hosted by Cameroon at a date to be determined.

The DG underlined the need to ensure the benefits of trade are felt by all. She urged members to avoid divisive debates and to find solutions wherever they can, especially in areas such as green technologies, services, digital commerce and inclusiveness.

See pages 48-73.

MC12

produced a series of important outcomes in areas such as health, food security and fishing subsidies

MC13

United Arab Emirates will host MC13 in February 2024

Implementation of WTO agreements and trade monitoring

The General Council continued to be an important forum for WTO members to raise trade concerns, including on the WTO response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the war in Ukraine.

Following the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), the General Council began to review progress in implementing MC12 outcomes, in particular on WTO reform, the waiver decision on COVID-19 vaccines and work on e-commerce.

Together with the Director-General and the chairs of WTO councils and committees, the General Council Chair took steps to advance work on the reform process, including in areas such as dispute settlement, with the aim of achieving concrete milestones by MC13.

On e-commerce, key issues raised by members included the need to bridge the digital divide, the importance of an adequate legal and regulatory framework, and the benefits of sharing best practices.

The Agriculture Committee launched a work programme to address the food security concerns of vulnerable economies.

WTO members remained divided on whether to extend the MC12 decision on COVID-19 vaccines to diagnostics and therapeutics, with the General Council agreeing to extend the deadline for reaching a decision.

Following up on a declaration adopted at MC12, the Agriculture Committee launched a work programme to address the food security concerns of vulnerable economies.

The WTO's latest trade monitoring report revealed that members introduced trade restrictions at an increased pace between October 2021 and October 2022, in particular regarding exports, at a time of economic uncertainty exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the food security crisis. However, some of these export restrictions were in place for only a short period of time.

See pages 74-131.

Dispute settlement

WTO members filed in 2022 eight requests for consultations, the first stage in the dispute settlement process, compared with nine in 2021. By the end of 2022, a total of 615 disputes had been initiated under the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU) since the establishment of the WTO in 1995.

Nine panel reports were circulated in 2022. The Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) adopted two panel reports during this period. Two arbitration decisions and two arbitration awards were circulated during the year. As of the end of December 2022, panel proceedings were ongoing in 18 disputes.

Members continued to put forward proposals on launching the Appellate Body selection process. The latest proposal, circulated in September 2022 by Mexico on behalf of 127 members, was considered by the DSB at its meetings up to end-2022. However, in the absence of consensus, all seven positions on the Appellate Body remained vacant and no appeals could be heard.

One notification of appeal was filed in 2022 by Indonesia. As of 31 December 2022, appeals in 25 disputes were pending before the Appellate Body.

At the 12th Ministerial Conference in June 2022, ministers agreed to talks on addressing concerns with respect to the dispute settlement system, with a view to securing a fully functioning system by 2024.

See pages 132-135.

Dr Athaliah Molokomme chaired the Dispute Settlement Body in 2022.

Supporting development and building trade capacity

The Committee on Trade and Development discussed initiatives to boost developing economies' integration into the global trading system. The share of least-developed countries (LDCs) in global merchandise exports remained unchanged – at 0.93 per cent in 2021 – while their share in world commercial services exports declined to 0.49 per cent, from 0.53 per cent in 2020.

Disbursements under the WTO-led Aid for Trade initiative, which seeks to help developing economies and LDCs benefit from trade, rose to US$ 48.7 billion in 2020, up from US$ 47.2 billion in 2019. The Aid for Trade Global Review in July brought together over 1,000 participants, with the event focusing on how to help developing economies and LDCs build resilience to ensure sustainable development.

As of end-2022, projects worth US$ 90 million were supported by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), a multilateral partnership dedicated to assisting LDCs use trade as an engine for growth. The EIF has supported over 16,000 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in LDCs since 2010.

The Standards and Trade Development Facility, a global partnership helping developing economies meet international standards for food and plant trade, approved US$ 7 million for projects in 2022, up from US$ 3.6 million in 2021.

Approximately 5,500 government officials participated in training activities organized by the WTO to improve understanding about the multilateral trading system – a one-third increase on 2021.

In December, the WTO hosted the inaugural World Trade Congress on Gender to discuss women's empowerment through trade, bringing together over 80 speakers for the three-day event.

See pages 136-151.

US$ 48.7bn

Aid for Trade disbursements rose to US$ 48.7 billion in 2020

5,500

government officials participated in training activities organized by the WTO in 2022

www.wto.org/buildingtradecapacity

Outreach

The WTO played an active role at the COP27 Climate Summit in Egypt in November. “Trade is the missing part of the puzzle for more ambitious, more effective climate action,” DG Okonjo-Iweala said at the launch of the 2022 World Trade Report, which focused on climate change and international trade.

Alongside the heads of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group and World Food Programme, the DG called for an urgent response to the food security crisis, noting that 349 million people across 79 economies are acutely food insecure.

At a G20 summit in November, the DG warned against fragmenting the world trading system along geopolitical lines, telling G20 leaders “we need to strengthen trade cooperation, not weaken it”.

1,300

Approximately 1,300 people attended the 2022 Public Forum

The DG and FIFA President Gianni Infantino signed a memorandum of understanding on how international trade and football can stimulate economic growth and social inclusion.

The Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley, delivered the inaugural Presidential Lecture at the WTO, focusing on reinventing the global order to address the world’s most pressing challenges.

The 2022 Public Forum, under the theme “Ambition to action”, was attended by nearly 1,300 participants.

The DG received in Washington DC the National Foreign Trade Council Foundation’s prestigious World Trade Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to furthering open trade.

See pages 152-183.

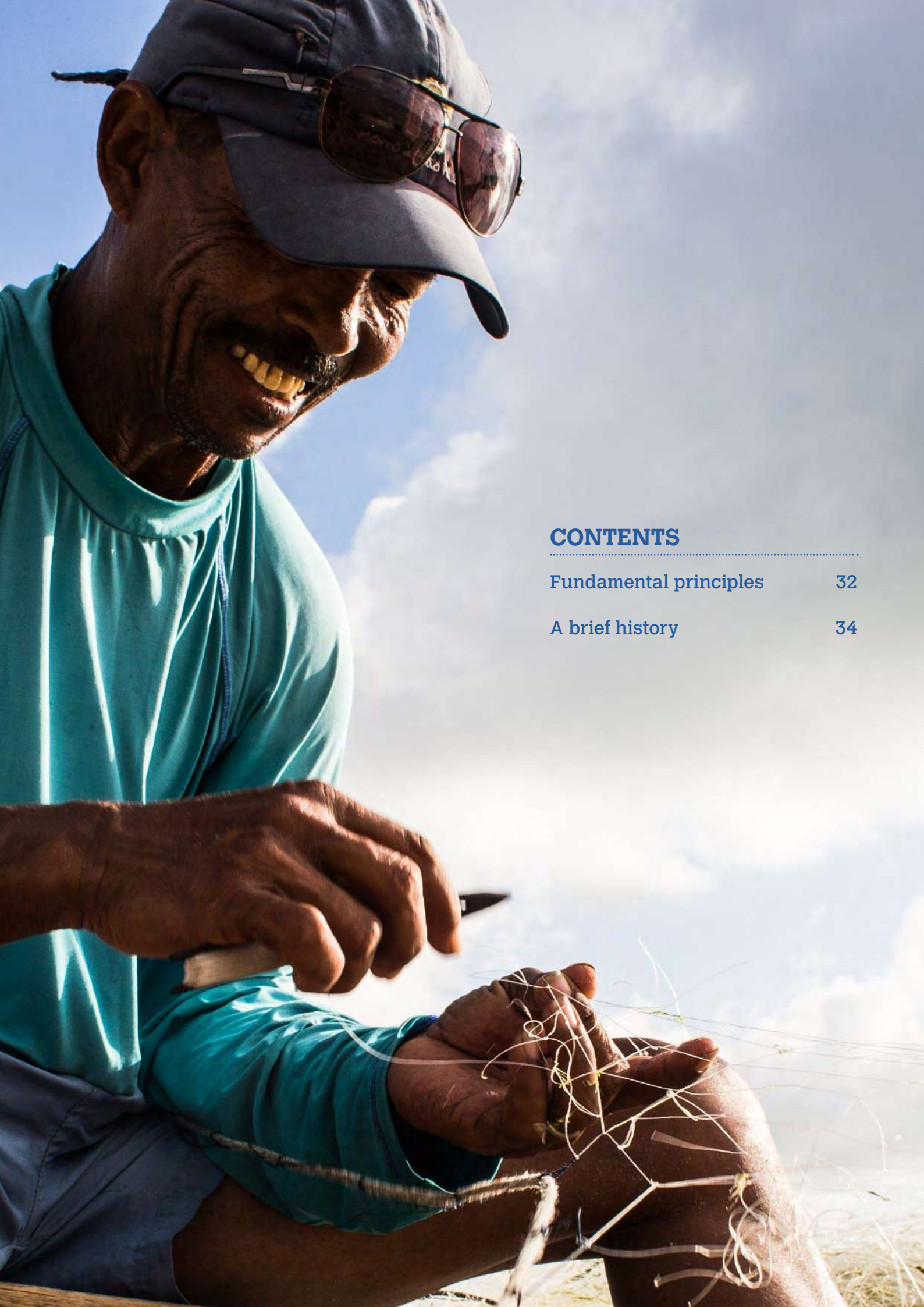
www.wto.org/forum

2

What we stand for

Simple, fundamental principles form the foundations of the multilateral trading system. These principles have lain at the core of all WTO activities since its creation in 1995.

A fisherman repairs his fishing net in Maceió, Brazil.



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What we stand for

Inclusive trade

The WTO seeks to build a more inclusive trading system that will allow more women and small businesses to participate in trade and to reap the economic benefits of global trading. The WTO also recognizes the importance of addressing the digital divide so that economies across the world can take advantage of the opportunities provided by the digital economy.

Improving people's lives

The fundamental goal of the WTO is to improve the welfare of people around the world. The WTO's founding Marrakesh Agreement recognizes that trade should be conducted with a view to raising standards of living, ensuring full employment and increasing real income while allowing for the optimal use of the world's resources.

Protection of the environment

Protection and preservation of the environment are fundamental goals of the WTO. The WTO agreements permit members to take measures to protect not only public, animal and plant health but also the environment. However, these measures must be applied in the same way to both local and foreign businesses.

Opening trade

The WTO seeks to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible. Lowering trade barriers is an obvious way to encourage trade; these barriers include customs duties – or tariffs – and measures such as import bans.

Predictability and transparency

Foreign companies, investors and governments should be confident that trade barriers will not be raised arbitrarily. With stability and predictability provided by WTO rules, investment is encouraged, jobs are created and consumers can fully enjoy the benefits of competition – such as increased choice and lower prices.

Fair competition

"Unfair" practices, such as export subsidies and dumping products at below normal value to gain market share, are discouraged. WTO rules try to establish what is fair or unfair and how governments can respond, in particular by charging additional import duties calculated to compensate for damage caused by unfair trade.

Non-discrimination

Under WTO rules, a WTO member should not discriminate between its trading partners, and should not discriminate between its own and foreign products, services or citizens.

Support for less developed economies

Over three-quarters of WTO members are developing economies or in transition to market economies. The WTO agreements give them transition periods to adjust to WTO provisions and, in the case of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, provide for practical support for implementation of the Agreement.

Partnerships

The WTO maintains regular dialogue with civil society, labour unions, universities, the business community and other intergovernmental organizations to enhance cooperation and build partnerships. The WTO's Trade Dialogues initiative and the annual Public Forum provide a platform for civil society, business groups and others to discuss the latest developments in world trade and to propose ways of enhancing the multilateral trading system.

World Trade Organization

A brief history

The WTO began life on 1 January 1995, succeeding the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which had regulated world trade since 1948. Over the past 28 years, the WTO has made an important contribution to the strength and stability of the global economy, helping to boost trade growth, improve people's lives and support the integration of developing economies into the trading system. The following timeline looks back at some of the WTO's major achievements.

2018

January
WTO and UN Environment launch new dialogue on using trade to support **green growth**.

2019

October
WTO hosts inaugural **World Cotton Day** to highlight central role of cotton in developing economies.

2020

November
WTO marks its 25th anniversary.

2021

February
Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala becomes the first African and first woman to become Director-General.

December
Negotiations on **services domestic regulation** conclude successfully, with increased market access for service providers.

2022

June
12th Ministerial Conference results in an unprecedented package of decisions, including a landmark Fisheries Subsidies Agreement.

December
First **World Trade Congress** on **Gender** takes place at the WTO.

January

Amendment to the **TRIPS Agreement** enters into force, easing access to medicines.

December

10th Ministerial Conference results in **"Nairobi Package"**, including abolition of agricultural export subsidies and expansion of **Information Technology Agreement**.

December

9th Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia, sees conclusion of negotiations on landmark Trade Facilitation Agreement.

2017

2015

2014

2013

2012

February

Trade Facilitation Agreement enters into force.

December

11th Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, sees launch of new areas of negotiations.

April

Revised Government Procurement Agreement enters into force, adding new markets.

November

Historic signing ends 20 years of **EU-Latin American banana dispute**, the longest-running dispute in WTO history.

2011

December

Expansion of Agreement on Government Procurement agreed at **8th Ministerial Conference** in Geneva.

2010

WTO CHAIRS PROGRAMME

January

WTO Chairs Programme launched to support trade-related work of universities in developing economies.

2009

September

First WTO Open Day in Geneva.

November

7th Ministerial Conference in Geneva takes stock of WTO's contribution to growth.

2007

November

First Global Review of Aid for Trade takes place in Geneva.

2006

September

First WTO Public Forum takes place in Geneva.

1995

January

The WTO is born on **1 January**.

1996

December

WTO holds first Ministerial Conference in Singapore.

1997

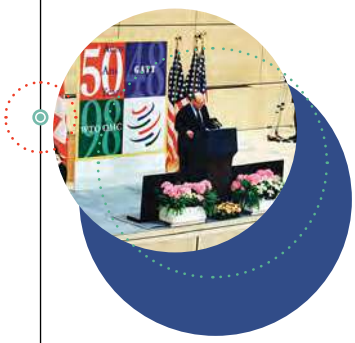
July

Information Technology Agreement enters into force, slashing tariffs on IT goods

1998

May

2nd Ministerial Conference in Geneva marks 50 years of the GATT.



1999

November

3rd Ministerial Conference in Seattle, United States, ends with breakdown in negotiations amid public protests.

DG Moore reaffirms WTO commitment to **poverty alleviation**.

2001

November

4th Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, sees launch of new round of trade negotiations known as the Doha Development Agenda.

2003

September

5th Ministerial Conference in Cancún, Mexico, welcomes Cambodia and Nepal as first least-developed countries to join WTO since its establishment.

2005

December

6th Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, China, sees launch of Aid for Trade initiative.

3

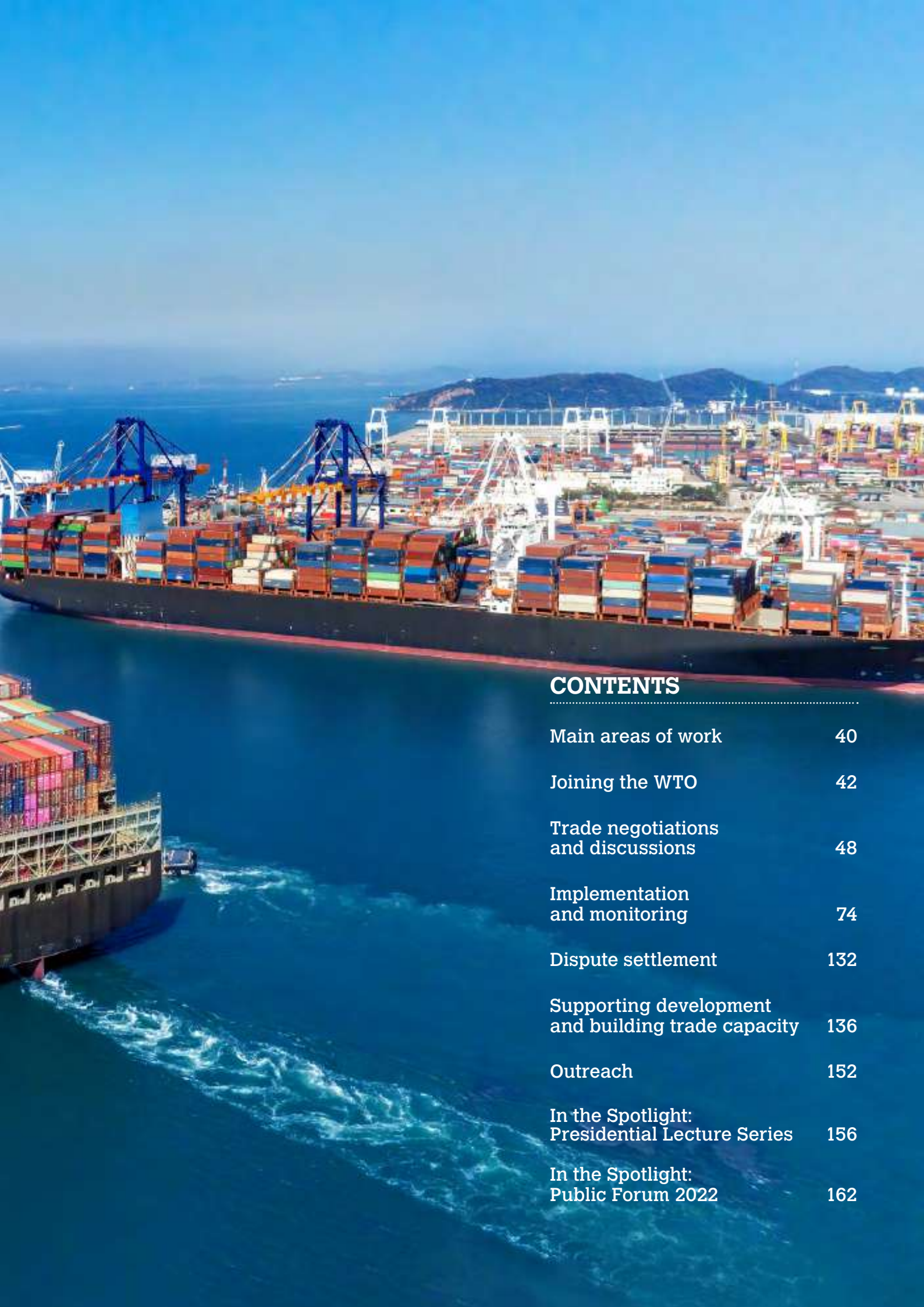
What we do

The WTO operates the global system of trade rules, guaranteeing WTO member governments important trade rights.

It provides a forum for its members to lower trade barriers through negotiations and oversees a system for resolving the trade problems they face with each other. It also helps developing economies improve their capacity to trade.

The overall objective of the WTO is to help its members use trade as a means to raise living standards, create jobs and improve people's lives.

Container ships at Laem Chabang Port, Thailand.



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What we do

Trade negotiations

The WTO agreements – covering goods, services and intellectual property – are not static; they are altered from time to time and new agreements can be added to the package. Changes to the rules of trade require the agreement of WTO members, who must reach consensus through negotiations. Recent agreements include the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement adopted by WTO members at the 12th Ministerial Conference in June 2022 (see page 48).

Implementation and monitoring

WTO agreements require governments to make their trade policies transparent by notifying the WTO about laws in force and measures adopted. Various WTO councils and committees seek to ensure these requirements are being followed and that WTO agreements are being properly implemented. All WTO members must undergo periodic scrutiny of their trade policies and practices, while trade monitoring reports regularly review trade developments for the WTO membership as a whole (see page 74).

Dispute settlement

The WTO's procedures for resolving trade disputes are vital for enforcing the rules and for ensuring trade flows smoothly. WTO members bring disputes to the WTO if they think their rights under the agreements are being infringed. Rulings by specially appointed independent experts are based on interpretations of the agreements and individual members' commitments (see page 132).

Building trade capacity

WTO agreements contain special provisions for developing economies, including longer time periods to implement agreements and commitments, and support to help them build their trade capacity. The WTO organizes hundreds of training activities for developing economies annually. The Aid for Trade initiative aims to help developing economies improve the skills and infrastructure needed to expand their participation in global trade (see page 136).

Outreach

The WTO maintains regular dialogue with non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, other international organizations, the business sector, universities and the general public on various aspects of the WTO, with the aim of enhancing cooperation and increasing awareness of WTO activities (see page 152).

Joining the WTO

- **WTO members agreed that Comoros is progressing well towards accession. Many members said it was important that Comoros joined by the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference, set for February 2024.**
- **Timor-Leste has taken decisive steps towards concluding its accession negotiations, WTO members agreed. Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs Joaquim Amaral underlined that membership is a strategic priority.**
- **President Shavkat Mirziyoyev declared Uzbekistan's intention to conclude accession negotiations in 2023.**

Background

The WTO is open to states or customs territories with full autonomy over their external commercial relations. To join, a government has to bring its economic and trade policies in line with WTO rules and principles and negotiate with WTO members the guaranteed minimum levels of access to its domestic markets for goods and services. The accession process promotes the integration of new members into the global economy. It begins when WTO members accept an application and establish a working party. It concludes when WTO members and the acceding government accept negotiated terms of accession.

Accession of Comoros moves to final stages

At the eighth Working Party meeting held in January 2023, members agreed that Comoros is progressing well towards WTO accession. Many members said it is important that Comoros joins by the 13th Ministerial Conference, set for February 2024. The Government of Comoros said it is committed to making the necessary effort and to working towards achieving this goal.

Working Party Chair, Ambassador Omar Zniber of Morocco, had reported to the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022 that the successful conclusion of bilateral market access negotiations with all interested members had marked an important milestone in this process.

On the draft Report of the Working Party – a key element of the final accession package passed on to the Ministerial Conference or the General Council for approval – the Chair noted at the Working Party meeting that many chapters were at an advanced stage. Work needs to focus on the elaboration of agreed language for the commitments and the integration of issue-specific action plans, he said.

"My wish for the new year is to help our Comorian friends conclude their accession. I am sure that this objective is within reach," Ambassador Zniber said. He urged the WTO Secretariat, WTO members and the broader international community of bilateral and multilateral development partners to intensify their support for the country's efforts.

Timor-Leste aims to join WTO in 2023

At the fourth meeting of the Working Party, held on 30 September, WTO members noted the decisive steps taken by Timor-Leste towards concluding WTO accession negotiations.

164
WTO members, accounting for 98% of world trade

25
countries are negotiating WTO membership

Workers pick ylang ylang flowers for distillation into aromatic oil in Hayoho, Comoros. The Government of Comoros is committed to joining the WTO by the 13th Ministerial Conference in February 2024.

A farmer works in a rice field near Loihuno, Timor-Leste. Decisive steps have been taken by Timor-Leste towards concluding WTO accession negotiations.

Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs and accession chief negotiator Joaquim Amaral underlined that WTO membership is a strategic priority for Timor-Leste together with membership of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. He reiterated the country's commitment to maintaining momentum in the negotiations and reaching the goal of WTO accession in 2023.

During MC12, Timor-Leste announced the finalization of bilateral market access negotiations with Australia and New Zealand and its decision to join the Joint Initiative on Services Domestic Regulation (see page 69), making it the first least-developed country (LDC) and acceding government to do so. Since then, Timor-Leste has signed two more bilateral market access agreements, with the Philippines and Canada, and advanced negotiations with six other members. It also announced its decision to join the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) and the ITA Expansion Agreement (see page 102).

At the September Working Party meeting, the Chair – Ambassador Rui Macieira of Portugal – said his objective is to finalize the

remaining issues before the next meeting of the Working Party so that elements of a draft accession package, representing the results of both the multilateral and bilateral negotiations, could start to emerge.

Uzbekistan reaffirms commitment to intensify accession efforts

In a recorded statement to the fifth Working Party meeting in June 2022, Sardor Umurzakov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade, stressed WTO accession is a priority of the country's development strategy for 2022-26.

In March 2022, WTO Deputy Director-General Xiangchen Zhang spoke at the Tashkent International Investment Forum where he underlined "WTO members are … keen to see progress and welcome Uzbekistan as a fully-fledged member of the Organization".

In December, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev declared Uzbekistan's intention to conclude accession negotiations in 2023. In line with this objective, the Uzbek Government presented an ambitious roadmap to prepare for a new phase of accelerated negotiations.

Uzbekistan submitted a full set of accession documentation in preparation for the 6th Working Party meeting.

Equatorial Guinea submits foreign trade memorandum

In December, the Minister of Trade and Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises handed over the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime of Equatorial Guinea to DG

Blacksmiths forging tools in Bukhara, Uzbekistan. WTO accession is a priority of the country's development strategy for 2022-26.

Okonjo-Iweala. The memorandum is the first step in the negotiating process, providing the basis for WTO members to start examining Equatorial Guinea's foreign trade regulations.

Equatorial Guinea applied for WTO accession in 2007 and the Working Party on the accession of Equatorial Guinea was established in February 2008.

New accession

At a meeting of the General Council in February 2022, WTO members agreed to establish the Working Party on the Accession of Turkmenistan. It is the last former Soviet republic to apply for membership.

Technical assistance and outreach

A High-level Regional Dialogue for Arab Accessions took place in February 2022. The session focused on how to assist Arab acceding governments advance closer to WTO membership. Participants stressed the many challenges beyond trade faced by several Arab countries still outside the WTO.

In early February 2023, the 11th China Round Table on WTO Accessions was held in Lao PDR under the theme "WTO Accessions and Trade Integration: Stories from the Asia-Pacific". Discussions covered the contributions of Asia-Pacific economies to the multilateral trading system, exploring LDC accession and post-accession best practices. A high-level session launched a study titled "Lao PDR: a Retrospective on 10 Years of WTO Membership".

In May 2022, the WTO issued a paper exploring the impact of WTO accession on LDCs and best practices for accessions based on the experience of nine members. The study – Accessions of LDCs to the WTO – summarizes the commitments undertaken and looks at the challenges and opportunities of WTO membership for LDCs.

During 2022, the Secretariat delivered in collaboration with other partners about 60 training activities to acceding governments. To formalize the Secretariat's coordinating role, a new Coordination Group on Accessions-related Technical Assistance was launched in July at the 2022 Aid for Trade Global Review (see page 141). The Group will serve as a forum for development partners and acceding governments to exchange information on WTO accession-specific needs and assistance.

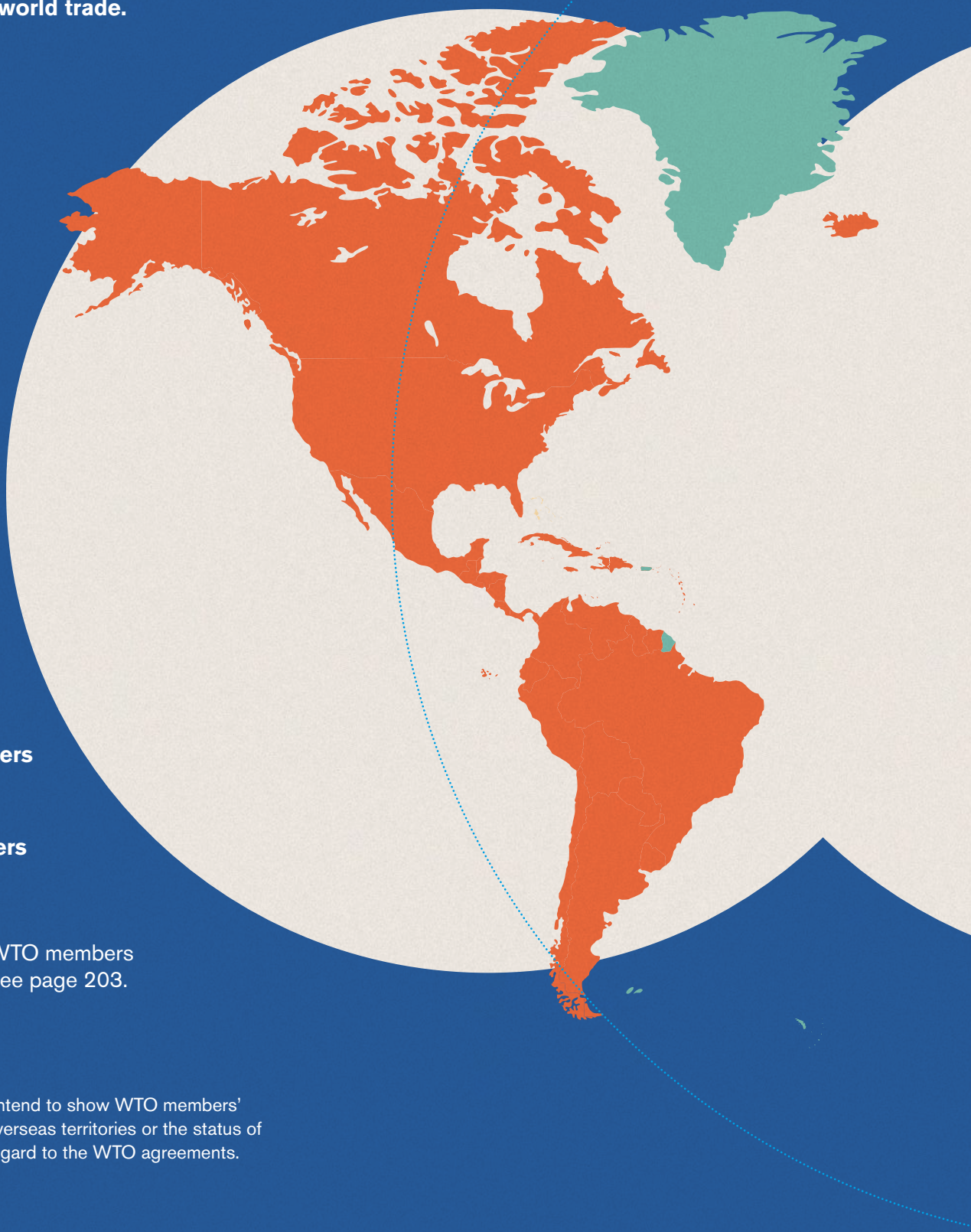
The Secretariat also organized technical assistance roundtables for the accessions of Comoros, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in 2022.

For a full list of WTO members and observers, see page 203.

Textile factory workers in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. The country is the last former Soviet republic to apply for WTO membership.

A global membership

The WTO's 164 members represent 98 per cent of world trade.



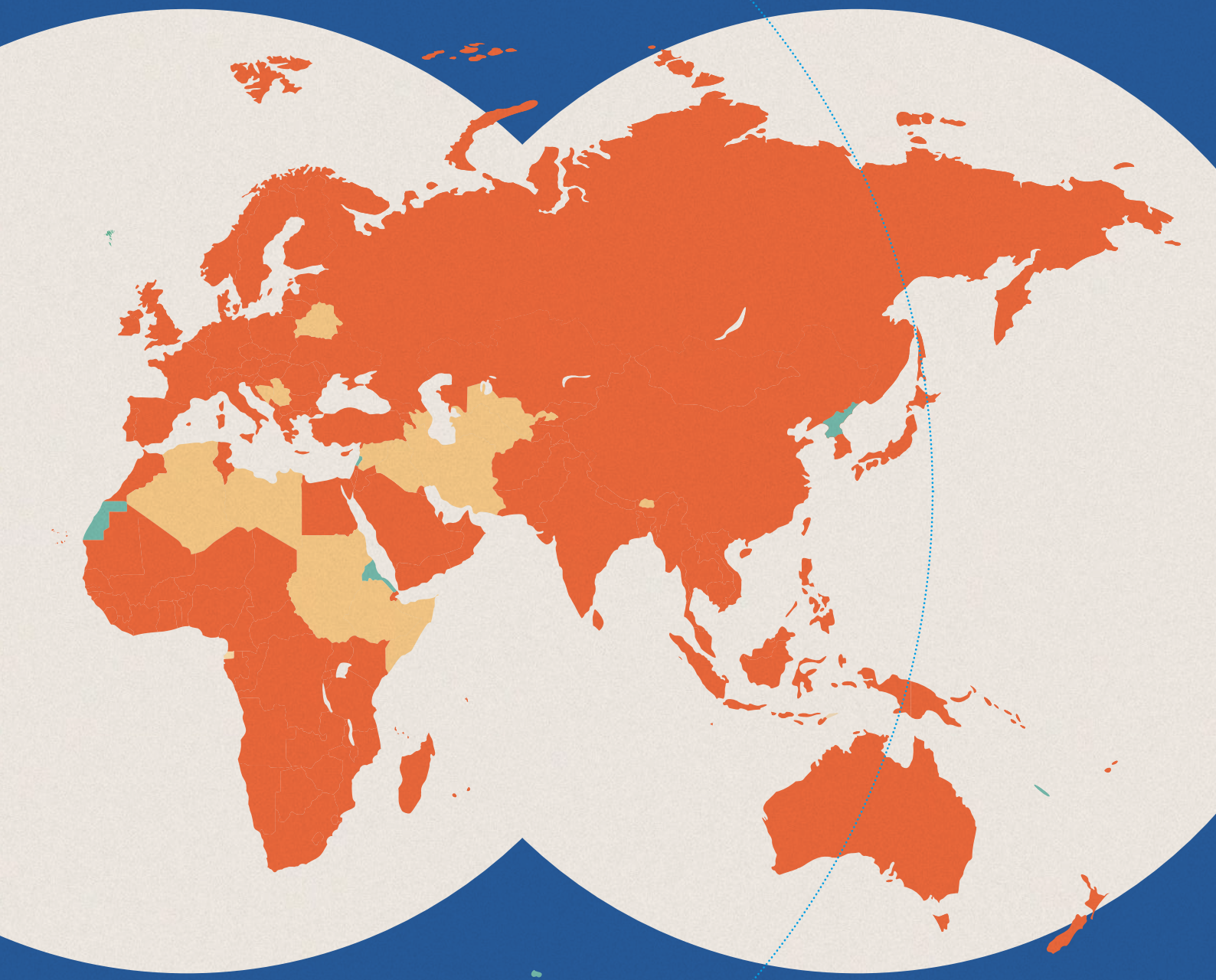
WTO members

Observers

Non-members

For a full list of WTO members and observers, see page 203.

The map does not intend to show WTO members' non-metropolitan/overseas territories or the status of such territories in regard to the WTO agreements.



Trade negotiations and discussions

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Trade negotiations and discussions in 2022

- Negotiating efforts in 2022 concluded successfully at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), with outcomes on emergency responses to the food crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic and an agreement on fisheries subsidies, among other topics.
- Ensuring the benefits of trade are felt by all and that all WTO members are well integrated into the multilateral trading system were among the key messages of DG Okonjo-Iweala to negotiators.
- While advocating a pragmatic step-by-step approach on WTO reform, the DG stressed the importance of setting a meaningful agenda as key to achieving effective and responsive reforms.

Background

Trade negotiations take place under the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) and its subsidiary bodies, which are councils and committees meeting in special session or other bodies especially created for negotiations. The TNC supervises the overall conduct of negotiations.

DG Okonjo-Iweala chairs a meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee in November 2022.

Negotiations in 2022 focused on reaching outcomes at MC12 in critical areas, especially on emergency responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the food crisis and on fisheries subsidies.

In the lead-up to MC12, DG Okonjo-Iweala, as Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) Chair, urged WTO members to intensify negotiations on fisheries subsidies (see page 55), agriculture (see page 52), special and differential treatment for developing economies (see page 60) and services (see page 59) among other topics. She also drew attention to the call for the WTO to help address the food crisis (see page 88) and the pandemic (see page 12). Negotiating efforts resulted in an unprecedented success at MC12 in June 2022, with outcomes in emergency responses to the food crisis and the pandemic and in fisheries subsidies, among other areas (see page 10).

To build on the success at MC12, the DG convened retreats on fisheries subsidies and agriculture later in the year, providing opportunities for members to reflect on the way forward.

On fisheries subsidies, the retreat focused on how to approach a second wave of negotiations on enhancing disciplines on fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, with appropriate special and differential treatment for developing and least-developed country (LDC) members. The DG called on members to deposit with the WTO their instruments of acceptance for the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies so that it can swiftly enter into force. To facilitate implementation, the Agreement provides for a dedicated funding mechanism to support developing economies and LDCs.

The agriculture retreat considered fresh approaches to agriculture negotiations to try to overcome entrenched differences that have prevented the WTO from making sufficient progress in delivering on its longstanding agriculture reform mandate.

Ensuring that the benefits of trade are felt by all and that all members are well integrated into the multilateral trading system were key messages from the DG in 2022. She asked members to avoid divisive debates and to focus on addressing developmental challenges and finding solutions wherever they can, including for LDCs. She also urged members to discuss how to advance in areas such as green technologies, services, digital commerce and inclusiveness.

Emergency response – food crisis

Faced with an international food crisis exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, members emphasized the need to address food insecurity and an increase in global hunger.

The DG worked closely with the then chair of the agriculture negotiations, Ambassador Gloria Abraham Peralta of Costa Rica, in the lead-up to MC12 to find ways to address the challenges facing the agriculture sector and to enhance productivity on a sustainable basis. This resulted in ministers adopting at MC12 the Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity (see page 53) and the Ministerial Decision on the World Food Programme (see page 53).

Since MC12, the DG has engaged in the follow-up to these outcomes, including in her discussions with world leaders.

Emergency response – COVID-19 pandemic

The DG worked closely with the chair of the Council on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), Ambassador Lansana Gberie of Sierra Leone, and the facilitator on the WTO Response to the Pandemic, Ambassador Dacio Castillo of Honduras, in the lead-up to MC12. Discussions resulted in ministers adopting at MC12 the Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement (see page 61) and the Ministerial Declaration on the WTO Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Preparedness for Future Pandemics (see page 12).

In addition, the DG regularly updated members on the WTO's efforts on trade policy monitoring, supply chain issues, working with manufacturers and other international organizations to increase vaccine production and investment, particularly in developing economies, and on issues related to intellectual property and the transfer of technology (see page 121).

MC12 Chair Timur Suleimenov gavels the successful conclusion of the conference.

Members attend a thematic session on WTO reform at MC12.

WTO reform

WTO members continued to emphasize the importance of WTO reform, stressing the need to build on the MC12 ministerial instruction to "work towards necessary reform of the WTO". In particular, many repeated their urgent call for a resolution of the issues surrounding the dispute settlement system (see page 132).

Throughout the year, the DG underlined the need for WTO reform and for the organization to continue to provide a framework for peaceful, competitive, economic engagement for all members. She also stressed the need to make the benefits of trade felt by people across the globe and to build further trust in the multilateral trading system. Advocating a pragmatic step-by-step approach on the reform process, she stressed the importance of setting a meaningful agenda as key to effective and responsive reforms. She also acknowledged the efforts led by the General Council chair, including the meeting on WTO reform he organized in November (see page 77).

Updates on joint initiatives and other work

At heads of delegation meetings during the year, updates were provided by the coordinators of the joint initiatives (see page 65) on e-commerce (see page 65), domestic regulation in services (see page 69), investment facilitation for development (see page 66), and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (see page 67). The co-convenors and coordinators stressed that their processes remained transparent and inclusive, with meetings open to all members, and proposals and reports made available to all members.

Members also received updates on three trade and environment initiatives (see page 70) and on the initiative on trade and gender (see page 72).

A rice farmer at work in Lao PDR.

Agriculture

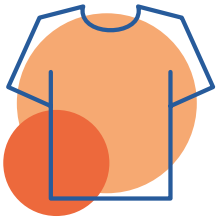
- **Negotiations intensified considerably in the first half of 2022, as the then-Committee Chair – Ambassador Gloria Abraham Peralta – and DG Okonjo-Iweala held extensive consultations aimed at securing outcomes in agriculture at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022.**
- **At MC12, ministers agreed a significant emergency package on food security that demonstrated members' collective commitment to addressing this issue in a meaningful manner.**
- **In October 2022, an agricultural retreat was held, with the objective of building on the negotiating momentum of the food security package and extending it to other areas of agriculture negotiations.**
- **Ambassador Alparslan Acarsoy of Türkiye was named in January 2023 as the new Chair of the Committee on Agriculture in special session.**

Supported by the direct involvement of DG Okonjo-Iweala, the special session of the Committee on Agriculture, chaired by Ambassador Gloria Abraham Peralta (Costa Rica), intensified discussions and consultations in spring 2022, with a view to achieving outcomes in agriculture at MC12.

The outbreak of war in Ukraine in February 2022, coupled with the continuing

Background

The broad objective of the agriculture negotiations is to reduce distortions in agricultural trade caused notably by high tariffs and domestic support measures as well as export subsidies and equivalent measures and export restrictions. The negotiations take place in the WTO Committee on Agriculture, meeting in special session. They are to take account of the needs of developing economies.



Cotton-4

Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali make up the Cotton-4 countries

consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly impacted on the negotiations, both on process and substance. WTO members moved swiftly to discuss an emergency package to respond to the looming food security crisis exacerbated by the war.

Based on various consultations with members, Ms Abraham Peralta and the DG issued on 8 June three draft texts, including a draft ministerial declaration on trade and food security and a draft ministerial decision on exempting World Food Programme (WFP) food purchases from export prohibitions or restrictions. The third text was a new version of the Chair's draft negotiation text on agricultural reform, the first such negotiating text in over a decade.

The negotiation text covered themes central to agriculture negotiations: domestic support (subsidies), access to agricultural markets, export competition, food export restrictions and prohibitions, cotton, food bought at administered prices under public food stockholding programmes, and a proposed "special safeguard mechanism". The mechanism would allow developing economies temporarily to raise tariffs in the event of sudden import surges or price falls. The text also covered the cross-cutting issue of enhancing transparency.

The work of the Chair, the DG and WTO members led to an emergency package to address food insecurity being adopted at MC12, containing two major outcomes demonstrating members' commitment to addressing food insecurity in a meaningful manner.

The first outcome was a ministerial decision exempting WFP food purchases for humanitarian purposes from export restrictions. The exemption does not prevent members adopting measures to ensure their own domestic food security. The decision was welcomed by the WFP and is expected to bring critical relief to people in need.

The second outcome was a ministerial declaration on the emergency response to food insecurity. It reaffirms members' determination to make progress towards a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system, to ensure food security and improved nutrition, and to promote sustainable agriculture and food systems, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, while taking into account the interests of small-scale food producers in developing economies.

The declaration also stresses that trade – along with domestic production – plays a vital role in improving global food security. It expresses members' commitment to take necessary steps to facilitate trade and improve the functioning and long-term resilience of global markets for food and agriculture, including fertilizers. It underscores the importance of ensuring that emergency measures introduced to address food security concerns minimize trade distortions.

The declaration also encourages members with available surplus stocks to release them on international markets. It acknowledges the specific needs of least-developed countries (LDCs) and net food-importing developing countries (NFIDCs), calling for a dedicated work programme in the Committee on Agriculture (see page 86).

However, no accord was reached at MC12 on the wider agriculture negotiations. Members could not agree on how to organize work post-MC12, notably due to unbridgeable differences on domestic support and how to proceed with talks on food bought at administered prices under governments' public stockholding programmes for food security purposes.

Cotton

At a partners' conference on cotton in July, organized jointly with UNCTAD and the ITC, the DG urged donor agencies to mobilize resources in support of cotton projects in LDCs, including the Cotton-4 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali).

The heads of the three agencies initiated a "Call for Action", which commits signatories to seeking solutions aimed at enabling the Cotton-4 to improve competitiveness, achieve higher yields and greener production, and add value to fibre and cotton by-products.

Two workshops were held in 2022, the first looking into supply chain disruptions affecting cotton exports from LDCs and the second into fertilizer markets, fertilization practices and cotton production in Africa.

At the WTO's World Cotton Days on 8-9 November, the Cotton-4 reiterated the importance of cotton in their countries' economic and social development, flagging its contribution to food security, job creation, income generation and social inclusion. They urged members to increase their engagement in agriculture negotiations. They also called for an open, transparent, inclusive and balanced outcome at MC13, including on cotton, in line with the commitment made in 2005 to address cotton ambitiously, expeditiously and specifically.

Discussions post-MC12

In July, Ms Abraham Peralta stood down as Chair when her mandate in Geneva ended. "MC12 was a great success for the WTO. It demonstrated the ability of the WTO to deliver results for people across the world," she said. At the same time, the absence of an outcome in the agriculture negotiations accentuates the fact that "considerable work remains to be done," she added.

Following MC12, members engaged in a period of reflection on how to take forward the negotiations and on how to build on the negotiating momentum gained on food security. This was the purpose of an agriculture retreat convened by the DG for the whole membership in October 2022.

WTO rules governing farm trade have not kept pace with the challenges to global food markets and need to be updated, DG Okonjo-Iweala told participants. The retreat included two sessions where leading experts on farm trade and food security addressed the challenges facing the agricultural sector and possible policy responses.

In late January 2023, Ambassador Alparslan Acarsoy of Türkiye was named as the new Chair of the Committee on Agriculture in special session. "MC13 is just a year from now and we are today at a crucial crossroad. Let us be clear, we were not able to deliver in the agricultural negotiations in the previous two ministerial conferences and reaching a successful outcome at MC13 is therefore more critical than ever," the Chair said.

Cotton harvesting in Maharashtra, India.

A fisherman displays his catch in Bali, Indonesia.

Fisheries subsidies, other WTO rules

- **WTO ministers adopted at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) a landmark Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies to curb harmful subsidies, only the second multilateral accord reached at the WTO.**
- **The Negotiating Group on Rules was mandated to continue negotiations on outstanding issues, with a view to making recommendations on additional provisions to MC13, set for February 2024.**
- **The WTO Secretariat conducted outreach activities to help members identify challenges and opportunities and to set their priorities for the second wave of negotiations.**
- **In November, the WTO Fisheries Funding Mechanism was established to support technical assistance and capacity building for developing and least developed country (LDC) members' implementation of the Agreement.**

At MC12 in June 2022, trade ministers adopted a binding multilateral Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, the second multilateral agreement reached at the WTO after the Trade Facilitation Agreement in 2013.

The Agreement extends WTO rules on subsidies to discipline those that harm the sustainability of fisheries – the first WTO

Background

The mandate of the WTO Negotiating Group on Rules covers anti-dumping, subsidies and countervailing measures, and fisheries subsidies. The UN Sustainable Development Goals call for agreement in the WTO on eliminating subsidies to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and to prohibit certain subsidies that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity, with special and differential treatment for developing economies.

At MC12, trade ministers adopted a binding multilateral Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies. The Agreement will make a major contribution to global efforts to preserve oceans and reverse the devastating decline in fish stocks.

agreement with environmental sustainability at its core. The Agreement will make a major contribution to global efforts to preserve oceans and reverse the devastating decline in fish stocks that threatens the marine environment and communities dependent on fishing for food and livelihoods.

By curbing subsidies to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the Agreement creates a powerful tool in the global fight against such fishing. Second, by prohibiting subsidies to fishing on overfished stocks, it puts important protections in place where fisheries management measures have proved ineffective. And third, by prohibiting subsidies to fishing on the unregulated high seas, the Agreement provides protection where fisheries management measures cannot be enforced.

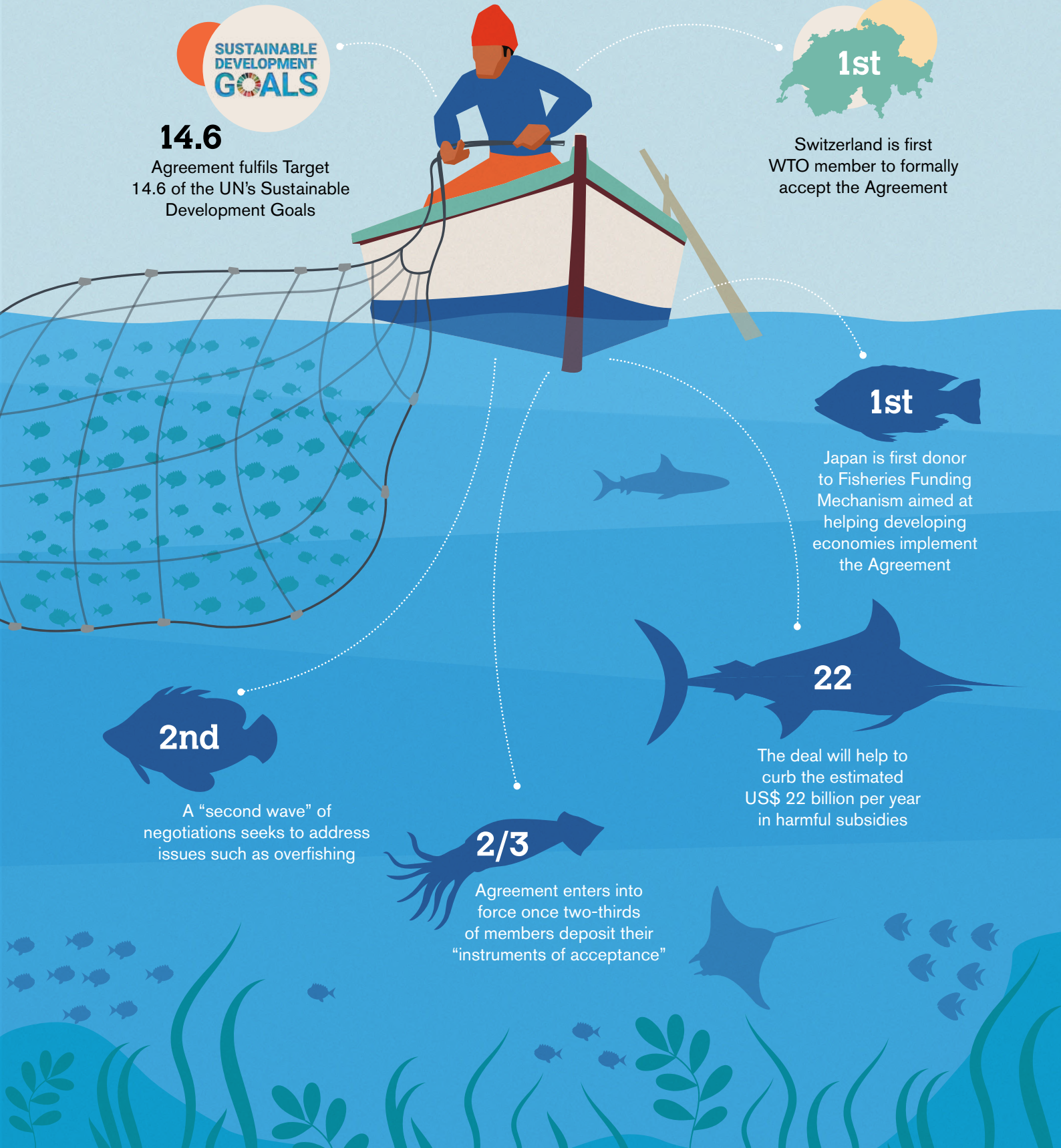
The Agreement followed lengthy and intensive work in the Negotiating Group on Rules under the Chair – Ambassador Santiago Wills of Colombia – in line with a negotiating mandate issued at the WTO's 11th Ministerial Conference. The mandate incorporated language of Target 14.6 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It instructed negotiators to continue negotiating with a view to adopting effective disciplines to eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing and to prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, with special and differential treatment integral to the negotiations.

Under the ministerial decision adopting the Agreement, the Negotiating Group was also mandated to conduct a "second wave" of negotiations, with a view to making recommendations to MC13 on additional provisions for a comprehensive agreement on fisheries subsidies, including further disciplines on certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing. Ministers also recognized that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and LDC members should be an integral part of these negotiations.

After MC12, the WTO Secretariat organized several outreach events, including at the Global Review of Aid for Trade (see page 142) and the Public Forum (see page 162). At the Global Review, the Director-General launched the WTO Secretariat report "Implementing the

WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies

A major step forward for the sustainability of global fish stocks



Workers at a seafood processing plant in Luannan, China.

Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies: Challenges and Opportunities for WTO Developing and Least-Developed Members", noting that the new Agreement creates an opportunity to redirect the US$ 22 billion spent per year in harmful fisheries subsidies towards financing sustainable fishing.

In October, members held a retreat near Geneva to brainstorm on the second wave of negotiations. Members committed to concluding the second wave by MC13 and to focusing largely on overcapacity and overfishing and special and differential treatment. Members also requested a knowledge-building phase at the start of the second wave in the form of technical workshops. The first of two workshops was held in November to discuss the evolution of the fisheries subsidies negotiations and implementation of the Agreement. A second workshop on fish stocks and fisheries subsidies data was held in January 2023.

In November, the WTO Fisheries Funding Mechanism was established, as called for by the Agreement to provide developing economies and LDCs with targeted technical assistance and capacity building directed at implementing the Agreement. The Fund will be operated by the WTO in cooperation with other international organizations, namely the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

Several members have announced pledges to the Fund totalling several million Swiss francs. In February 2023, Japan became the first member to make a donation, contributing just under 90 million yen (approximately CHF 763,000).

From 17-19 November, the WTO Secretariat held its first regional event on fisheries subsidies, for Pacific Island WTO members. The event in Nadi, Fiji, commenced with a two-day workshop to discuss implementation of the new disciplines and the second wave of negotiations. It ended with a ministerial roundtable with the DG on "MC12 Outcomes, the Future of Multilateralism and the Priorities for the Pacific towards MC13".

The Pacific Islands members issued a joint statement highlighting their priorities for fisheries subsidies and calling on WTO members to ratify and implement the Agreement as soon as possible. Similar regional events were held in Trinidad and Tobago for the Caribbean and Oman for the Arab region in January and February 2023 respectively.

In January 2023, Switzerland became the first WTO member to formally submit its acceptance of the Fisheries Agreement. Singapore became the second on 10 February 2023. Acceptances from two-thirds of WTO members are needed for the Agreement to come into effect.

In January 2023, Ambassador Einar Gunnarsson of Iceland was elected as Chair of the Negotiating Group on Rules. In February, he outlined a work programme for the fisheries subsidies negotiations, with a view to meeting the MC12 mandate to conclude the second wave of negotiations by MC13.

90m

Japan's contribution in yen to the WTO Fisheries Funding Mechanism

Market access for non-agricultural products

- **The Negotiating Group on Market Access did not receive any papers or proposals in 2022 and did not meet during the year.**

Background

Non-agricultural products are products not covered by the Agreement on Agriculture. These range from manufactured goods to fuels and fisheries. The negotiations aim to reduce or, as appropriate, eliminate tariffs as well as non-tariff barriers, particularly on goods of export interest to developing economies. The negotiations are conducted in the Negotiating Group on Market Access.

Services

- **Ahead of the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), discussions in the Council for Trade in Services special session focused on agreeing a text on services for inclusion in the MC12 outcome document.**
- **The text, which ministers accepted, underscored the vital role of trade in services in the global economy and highlighted the need to facilitate the increasing participation of developing economies in global services trade.**

In preparations beginning in 2021 for the Ministerial Conference, various members expressed interest in seeing work of the special session and trade in services addressed in the ministerial outcome document, with various groups putting forward text proposals.

In 2022, members continued discussions to converge on a common text. Prior to the Ministerial Conference, the Chair of the Special Session, Ambassador Zhanar Aitzhanova from Kazakhstan, submitted wording for ministers' consideration.

The text, which formed part of the MC12 outcome document, underscores the vital role of trade in services in the global economy. Ministers stressed the importance of recovery for services most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and of strengthening such services. They also highlighted the need to facilitate the increasing participation of developing economies in global services trade, including by paying particular attention to sectors and modes of supply of export interest to them.

Background

The General Agreement on Trade in Services mandates WTO members to progressively open up trade in services. The negotiations are overseen by the Council for Trade in Services, meeting in special session.

Preparation of vanilla pods near Sambava, Madagascar.

Trade and development

- **Reaffirming at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) that special and differential treatment (S&D) for developing economies is an integral part of WTO agreements, ministers instructed WTO members to continue work on improving its application and to report on progress to the General Council before MC13.**

- **Ambassador Kadra Ahmed Hassan (Djibouti) convened a formal meeting of the Committee on Trade and Development special session in September for an exchange of views on the way forward.**

At MC12, ministers reaffirmed the provisions of special and differential treatment (S&D) for developing economies and least-developed countries (LDCs) as an integral part of the WTO and its agreements. They added that S&D in WTO agreements should be precise, effective and operational. They called for work to continue in the Committee on Trade and Development special sessions and other relevant bodies on improving the application of S&D and to report on progress to the General Council before MC13.

Background

Special and differential treatment (S&D) refers to the special treatment, or flexibility, granted to developing economies in WTO agreements, such as longer implementation periods. Many WTO agreements contain provisions that give developing economies special rights and allow developed economies to treat them more favourably than other WTO members. Differences among WTO members include the definition of who exactly should benefit from S&D. The special session of the Committee on Trade and Development is mandated to review all S&D provisions, with a view to making them more precise, effective and operational.

The Chair of the special session, Ambassador Kadra Ahmed Hassan (Djibouti), convened a formal meeting in September to allow an exchange of views on the way forward after MC12. Ahead of the meeting, the G90 group of developing economies circulated a document which called for, among other things, a resumption of negotiating work and regular engagement. The G90 also indicated that it would submit a formal proposal on how work could be organized and structured.

Work in the Committee has focused on ten Agreement-specific proposals put forward by the G90. The proposals aim at improving the effectiveness of S&D provisions, over 100 in all, contained in WTO agreements and decisions, including on transfer of technology, technical barriers to trade and accessions of LDCs.

A number of WTO members expressed support for the G90 document. It was also suggested that the ten Agreement-specific proposals remained a good basis for advancing discussions. However, other members indicated that a new conversation was needed and that further discussion in special session on the same ten proposals would not yield results.

The Chair observed that these positions were very similar to those expressed before MC12. Nevertheless, she said she was pleased at the readiness expressed by many members to fulfil the ministerial instruction. She expressed her hope that this readiness would provide a good starting point for work in the post-MC12 period.

"I would like to believe that success at MC12 and instructions given by ministers there will open up possibilities to advance our work," Ambassador Hassan said. "If members collaborate the same way they did at MC12, we stand a chance to finally conclude these negotiations."

Following the special session, the Chair held informal discussions with some members. In these discussions, she called on delegations to work together in a spirit of collaboration and with the objective of finding solutions.

10

Agreement-specific proposals have been put forward by the G90 group of developing economies

Trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) and public health

- **Ministers adopted at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) a decision on a targeted TRIPS waiver, giving WTO members greater scope to diversify production of COVID-19 vaccines and to override the exclusive effect of patents.**
- **DG Okonjo-Iweala said the decision "will contribute to ongoing efforts to deconcentrate and diversify vaccine manufacturing capacity".**
- **WTO members remained divided on whether to extend the decision to diagnostics and therapeutics.**

At MC12, trade ministers adopted a Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement, which provides specific practical tools to overcome potential IP barriers for diversifying COVID-19 vaccine production and achieving the objective of equitable access. It complements the Ministerial Declaration on the WTO Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Preparedness for Future Pandemics (see page 12).

The TRIPS decision on COVID-19 vaccines, which is effective for five years, has its roots in two proposals by WTO members. One was submitted by India and South Africa in October 2020 and called for a waiver of certain international obligations contained in the TRIPS Agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19. It was subsequently co-sponsored by 63 other members.

The second proposal, from the European Union and circulated in June 2021, focused on clarifying existing options under the TRIPS Agreement for governments to override patent rights in the public interest.

The ministerial decision confirms and clarifies the right of members to override patent rights

through direct government authorization. It provides for a targeted TRIPS waiver to streamline urgent production of COVID-19 vaccines for export and to facilitate the development of more geographically diverse production chains. It also simplifies procedures in light of the pandemic and clarifies that protection of clinical trial data need not impede the government-authorized production and supply of COVID-19 vaccines.

At the closing session of MC12 on 17 June, DG Okonjo-Iweala said the decision "will contribute to ongoing efforts to deconcentrate and diversify vaccine manufacturing capacity so that a crisis in one region does not leave others cut off".

The decision stipulates that members should decide by 17 December 2022 whether to extend coverage beyond COVID-19 vaccines to diagnostics and therapeutics. Under the leadership of the Chair, Ambassador Lansana Gberie (Sierra Leone), members have considered this question in depth in the TRIPS Council.

In July, the co-sponsors of South Africa and India's original 2020 TRIPS waiver proposal submitted an indicative timeline for discussions and outlined evidence in support of an extension to diagnostics and therapeutics. In December, they proposed that the General Council extend the decision "mutatis mutandis" to diagnostics and therapeutics.

> **"The decision will contribute to ongoing efforts to deconcentrate and diversify vaccine manufacturing capacity"**
> **DG Okonjo-Iweala**

Some members supported the proposal; others preferred to continue fact-finding and evidence-based discussions on whether there are IP-related barriers to accessing these products. Switzerland, Mexico and Chinese Taipei circulated written contributions to support evidence-based discussions.

Members have expressed the goal of providing timely and secure access to high-quality, safe, efficacious and affordable medical technologies for all. However, disagreement persists on whether IP rights constitute a barrier to access and whether an extension of the decision is necessary or appropriate. Some members continue to conduct domestic consultations and to gather evidence.

Given these differences, the TRIPS Council recommended to extend the deadline for deciding on whether to extend the decision to COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics. On 20 December, the General Council agreed to this proposal.

Trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS): geographical indications

- **The Chair, Ambassador Alfredo Suescum (Panama), consulted in November with the most active members in the negotiations.**

The Chair of the negotiations, Ambassador Alfredo Suescum (Panama), undertook consultations in November with the WTO members that had been most active in the negotiations on creating a multilateral register of geographical indications (GIs) for wines and spirits to facilitate the protection of GIs.

He invited WTO members to share their thoughts on how the work of the special session could proceed in fulfilling its mandate. In his subsequent report to the Trade Negotiations Committee, the Chair said no new ideas had been put forward to advance the discussions and that delegations felt that there was no urgency to restart substantive work.

Members' longstanding positions remain unchanged. They continue to disagree on the legal effects a prospective register should have, and whether it should create obligations for all WTO members or only those choosing to participate in it. They are also divided on, among other issues, product coverage and whether, as the negotiating mandate says, the register should be confined to wines and spirits or whether it could also apply to other products, such as food and agricultural products.

Background

Negotiations on a multilateral system for notifying and registering geographical indications (GIs) for wines and spirits are carried out in the special session of the TRIPS Council. The purpose of the register is to facilitate the protection of GIs for wines and spirits. These are indications (including place names or other terms or signs associated with a place) used to identify products whose place of origin contributes to their special qualities, reputation or other characteristics.

Members are negotiating the creation of a register of geographical indications for wines and spirits.

Dispute Settlement Understanding

- **The Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) did not meet in special session in 2022.**

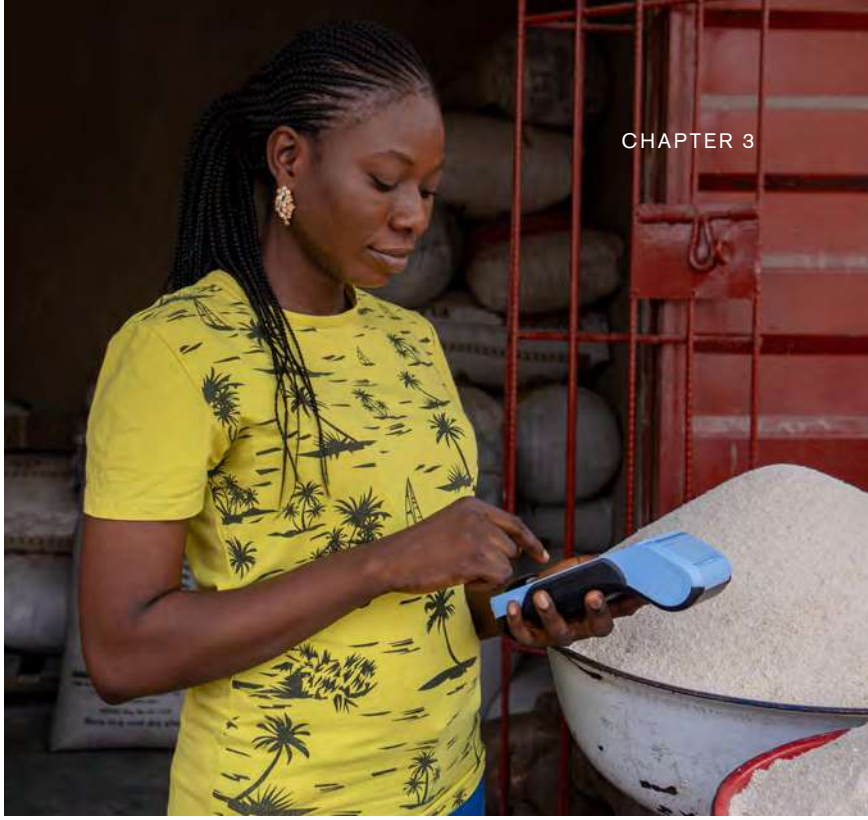
The DSB last met in special session in November 2019. At that time, members expressed concern that resuming intensive work in the special sessions might not be fruitful as participants were focused on more pressing issues, including discussions in other WTO bodies on the functioning of the dispute settlement system.

In his report to the Trade Negotiations Committee in November 2021, the Chair of the special session, Ambassador Kokou Yackoley Johnson (Togo), reiterated that he continued to be guided by members and remained available to hear any views they may have about the work within the special session. In the absence of indications from delegations that the work should resume, the negotiating group did not meet in 2022.

Separately, in light of the mandate by the 12th Ministerial Conference "to conduct discussions with the view to having a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all Members by 2024", members have been pursuing discussions on dispute settlement reform in various informal formats since summer 2022.

Background

At the 2001 Doha Ministerial Conference, WTO members agreed to negotiate to improve and clarify the Dispute Settlement Understanding – the rules and procedures governing the settlement of WTO disputes. These negotiations, which take place in special sessions of the Dispute Settlement Body, have seen little activity since 2019. Separately, at the 12th Ministerial Conference in June 2022, members noted concerns and challenges regarding the dispute settlement system and committed "to conduct discussions with the view to having a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all Members by 2024".



Joint initiatives

Background

Groups of WTO members announced at the 11th Ministerial Conference in December 2017 initiatives to advance talks on e-commerce, investment facilitation for development, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and domestic regulation in services trade. Groups of members have also launched three environmental initiatives – on trade and environmental sustainability, plastics pollution and environmentally sustainable plastics trade, and fossil fuel subsidies reform. An additional group of members is seeking to intensify efforts to increase women's participation in global trade. The groups are open to all WTO members.

Joint statement initiative on e-commerce

- **The three co-convenors of the Joint Statement on Electronic Commerce issued a ministerial statement on the margins of the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022 acknowledging progress made in the negotiations on new rules on trade-related aspects of e-commerce.**
- **A revised and streamlined negotiating text reflecting progress was circulated in December 2022.**
- **An e-commerce capacity-building framework was launched to offer technical assistance, training and capacity building to support developing and least-developed economies' participation in the e-commerce negotiations.**

On the margins of MC12, the co-convenors of the Joint Statement on Electronic Commerce – Australia, Japan and Singapore – issued a ministerial statement acknowledging progress made in the negotiations on possible new rules on trade-related aspects of electronic commerce and underlining the importance of developing these global regulations. Together with Switzerland, they also launched the e-commerce capacity-building framework to offer a wide range of technical assistance, training and capacity building to support developing economies' and least-developed countries' participation in the negotiations and to harness the opportunities of digital trade.

The negotiations are organized under six broad themes: enabling e-commerce; openness and e-commerce; trust and e-commerce; cross-cutting issues, such as transparency, domestic regulation and cooperation; telecommunications; and market access. Negotiations continue in plenary meetings and in small drafting groups to refine various texts proposals.

Participants have achieved convergence in the articles on e-signatures and e-authentication, e-contracts, consumer protection, paperless trading, open government data, unsolicited commercial electronic messages (spam) and transparency. In addition, in 2022, substantive progress was made in the areas of open internet access, cybersecurity and electronic transactions frameworks.

Building on this progress, negotiations continue on several other articles, such as

electronic invoicing, privacy, and information and communications technology (ICT) products that use cryptography. Participants also started discussions on horizontal issues, such as scope and general provisions, as well as on development issues, where participants have considered a submission on implementation periods for developing and least-developed countries.

A revised and streamlined negotiating text reflecting the progress made was circulated in December 2022. The revised text is the basis for further negotiations in 2023.

In January 2023, DG Okonjo-Iweala attended an informal meeting of the initiative organized by ministers from the co-convenors of e-commerce negotiations on the margins of the annual World Economic Forum (WEF) gathering in Davos. The meeting focused on how to accelerate the pace of work under the initiative to conclude negotiations by December 2023. In a statement, the co-convenors reaffirmed participants' commitment to establishing a set of high-standard rules to govern the global digital economy while making sure the initiative remains balanced, inclusive and meaningful to consumers and businesses alike.

"You can be proud of the progress made and the results you have achieved," the DG said. "Further progress in areas under negotiation promises to bring more stability and predictability to this vast area of international trade. This can be of benefit to all: women, entrepreneurs, remote countries and marginalized groups."

At MC11 in December 2017, a like-minded group of members issued a joint statement to initiate exploratory work towards future WTO negotiations on trade-related aspects of e-commerce. Currently, the number of participants stands at 87, accounting for over 90 per cent of global trade. Participation is open to all WTO members.

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Investment facilitation for development

- **In 2022, the Joint Initiative on Investment Facilitation for Development made substantial progress, achieving the milestone of a very well advanced single negotiating text.**
- **In December 2022, over 110 WTO members supported the statement by the co-coordinators, which outlines the next steps for the Joint Initiative in 2023 – namely to finalize the text negotiations by mid-2023, take up work on needs assessment, and intensify outreach efforts towards other WTO members.**
- **DG Okonjo-Iweala called the draft "a major step towards finalizing an Agreement".**

Participants in the Joint Initiative on Investment Facilitation for Development engaged in intense negotiations throughout 2022, with the aim of achieving a single negotiating text as clean as possible by the end of the year.

The question of how to integrate a future agreement in the WTO legal structure was also discussed.

The goal of the Joint Initiative is a multilateral agreement – open to all WTO members – that will facilitate investment flows and ensure a more transparent, efficient and investment-friendly business climate.

Launched by 70 signatories to a ministerial statement in 2017, the initiative had 112 participants from developed, developing and least-developed economy members by the time the group issued a renewed joint statement in December 2021. The negotiating process is open to all WTO members, and much emphasis is put on outreach efforts.

Over ten negotiating rounds were held in 2022 in various configurations, followed by a plenary "transparency" meeting open to all WTO members while small discussion groups gathered to discuss and advance on key issues. In December 2022, participants agreed on the text of a single negotiating document, which they called the "Draft IFD Agreement".

The draft text consolidates updates made to a so-called "Easter text" – the document used as the basis for the negotiations in 2022. Areas of substantial advances captured in the draft agreement include most-favoured nation (MFN) treatment, scope and definitions, and provisions on "home state measures", "supplier development programmes" and "responsible business conduct".

In December, the co-coordinators of the discussions, Ambassador Sofía Boza of Chile and Ambassador Jung Sung Park of the Republic of Korea, issued a statement, with the approval of participants, declaring their aim to finalize the text negotiations by mid-2023.

Over 110 members participate in the Joint Initiative on Investment Facilitation for Development.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

- **The Informal Working Group on Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) launched the Trade4MSMEs network, a partnership of international organizations aimed at improving MSMEs' participation in world trade.**
- **The Group continued to implement the December 2020 package of six recommendations and declarations designed to help MSMEs trade.**
- **The achievements of the Working Group were highlighted by Group coordinator Ambassador José-Luis Cancela at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12). "The Group has showed that the WTO and we — the governments — care about small businesses," he said.**

The Informal Working Group on MSMEs launched the Trade4MSMEs network in June 2022, a partnership of 17 international organizations and regional development banks. It aims at improving the capacity of MSMEs to participate in world trade and to promote collaboration among members of the network.

The network will regularly update the Trade4MSMEs website, a platform that helps small companies find trade-related information and improve their ability to trade internationally. The platform, launched in December 2021, also helps policymakers design measures tailored to the needs of small companies. The website is now available in French and Spanish. Development of its resources is ongoing, with 12 new guides released at the 2022 Public Forum (see page 162).

The Group continued to implement its package of six recommendations and declarations, endorsed in December 2020, to help MSMEs trade more internationally. One recommendation calls on WTO members to provide, on a voluntary basis, information on policies related to MSMEs during their trade policy reviews (TPRs). In 2022, two members

Traditional pottery work in Bikaner, India.

The Trade4MSMEs network aims at improving the capacity of MSMEs to participate in world trade and promoting collaboration among network members.

included MSME sections in their TPRs, and the WTO Secretariat updated the database of MSME references in TPRs.

A total of 42 Group members provided information to the Global Trade Helpdesk, a joint online resource of the ITC, UNCTAD and the WTO that aims to simplify market research for companies.

The achievements of the Working Group were highlighted in a report launched by the Group coordinator, Ambassador José-Luis Cancela of Uruguay, during MC12. The report outlines progress since the Group was created in 2017 and sets out a roadmap for helping more small businesses benefit from international trade. "Through these achievements, the Group has showed that the WTO and we — the governments — care about small businesses, about our economies and about our people," Ambassador Cancela said.

The Group, together with the ITC and the International Chamber of Commerce, held its second Small Business Champions competition with the theme, "Helping small businesses transition to a sustainable economy". It was open to chambers of commerce, industry associations, non-governmental organizations and small businesses.

The two winners, announced in September, were the *Réseau Professionnel Accompagnements Valeurs Expertises Conseils* (Benin) and the Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (TCIA). The Benin project aims to help 600 MSMEs undertake industrial decarbonization practices. TCIA's initiative aims to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by MSMEs regarding decarbonization.

On MSMEs Day on 27 June 2022, the MSME Group Secretariat issued research notes on MSMEs and trade looking into topics such as MSME participation in international trade and climate change.

Membership of the Working Group, launched at MC11 by 88 WTO members, has increased to 98, representing all levels of development and all regions of the world. Members account for nearly 90 per cent of world exports. The Group is open to all WTO members.

98

Membership of the Working Group has increased to 98, accounting for nearly 90% of world exports

Domestic regulation of trade in services

- **Fifty-nine participants in the Joint Initiative on Services Domestic Regulation submitted their improved schedules of commitments for certification – the final step required to give these commitments legal effect.**
- **"The launch of certification procedures for such a large number of participants is a real success," said Jaime Coghi Arias of Costa Rica, the coordinator of the initiative.**

Following the successful conclusion of negotiations in December 2021 on a set of disciplines aimed at cutting trade costs for service providers, participants in the Joint Initiative on Services Domestic Regulation submitted to the WTO on 20 December their improved schedules of commitments for certification. This is the final step required to give these commitments legal effect.

Improved schedules of services commitments under the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) were submitted by 61 participants, accounting for 89 per cent of world services trade. The remaining eight participants will aim to start their respective certification procedures as soon as possible.

"The launch of certification procedures for such a large number of participants is a real success," said Jaime Coghi Arias of Costa Rica, the coordinator of the initiative. "It moves us one step closer to giving legal effect to a set of disciplines that will increase transparency and predictability in the regulation of services trade and remove red tape for our business communities. This will in particular help micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and women entrepreneurs."

The negotiations on services domestic regulation concluded in December 2021 with a declaration by 69 WTO members noting agreement on new disciplines aimed at cutting administrative costs for service providers. The objective is to mitigate unintended trade-restrictive effects of measures relating to licensing requirements and procedures, qualification requirements and procedures, and technical standards. By encouraging good regulatory practices, these disciplines seek to make the regulatory environment more conducive to business and lower trade costs for services suppliers seeking to access foreign markets.

The agreement, which should produce huge cost savings for businesses, is the first set of rules on services agreed at the WTO in 25 years. According to research by the WTO and the OECD, the pact will save businesses, especially small businesses, US$ 150 billion a year globally. Work in the initiative is organized outside the WTO Working Party on Domestic Regulation, which is mandated to develop any necessary disciplines to ensure that members' domestic regulations do not constitute unnecessary barriers to trade in services.

US$ 150 bn

The amount the agreement is projected to save businesses a year globally.

Trade and environment initiatives

- **Work in three WTO environmental initiatives – the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD), the Dialogue on Plastics Pollution (DPP) and Fossil Fuel Subsidies Reform (FFSR) – made good progress in 2022.**
- **The initiatives – open to all members – complement work of the Committee on Trade and Environment and other relevant WTO bodies, with their participants sharing the objective of making trade part of the solution to addressing global environmental challenges.**

Dialogue on plastics pollution and environmentally sustainable plastics trade

Talks within the DPP made significant strides in 2022 and work will intensify in 2023, co-sponsors said at a stocktaking meeting in December. The aim is to achieve concrete results in support of efforts to curb plastics pollution no later than the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13), set for February 2024.

The dialogue, launched at WTO Trade and Environment Week in November 2020, aims to enhance existing discussions within the Committee on Trade and Environment and other fora on plastics pollution. Open to all members, it had 75 co-sponsors at the end of 2022, up from 67 the year before, accounting for some 75 per cent of global plastics trade.

Members advanced in three technical workstreams a work plan adopted in February 2022 – cross-cutting issues (e.g. transparency, technical assistance, international cooperation), promoting trade to reduce and tackle plastic pollution, and reduction and circularity for plastics.

On the sidelines of MC12 in June 2022, the coordinators of the Dialogue – Australia, Barbados, China, Ecuador, Fiji and Morocco – issued a ministerial statement on tangible next steps. They also took note of the launch by the United Nations Environment Assembly of negotiations on a global agreement by 2024 to end plastic pollution. The statement outlined steps towards strengthening cooperation and advancing technical discussions and trade-related capacity-building.

In December, the WTO organized a workshop in cooperation with UNCTAD, focusing on promotion of effective and environmentally sustainable substitutes and alternatives to plastics.

76

WTO members are participating in the Plastics Dialogue

Trade and environmental sustainability

In a stocktaking event in December, members reviewed progress made in the implementation of the TESSD ministerial statement of December 2021 and signalled priorities for work ahead of MC13.

In her opening remarks, DG Okonjo-Iweala described TESSD as "a trailblazer at the WTO" as participants are "breaking down silos and cooperating across traditional structures and fields of expertise to find solutions to global problems". She urged members "to move from ambition and discussion to action and to create a menu of options and pathways for expanding sustainable trade, investment and innovation in support of global environmental objectives."

In a work plan adopted in February 2022, co-sponsors agreed to create four informal working groups on (i) trade-related climate measures; (ii) environmental goods and services; (iii) circular economy - circularity; and (iv) subsidies. The working groups allow for more in-depth discussions between plenary meetings, helping members to make progress towards tangible outcomes. Across all groups, members discussed challenges and opportunities for developing economies and ways in which trade can be mutually supportive of sustainable development objectives.

Ambassadors Nadia Theodore (Canada) and Ronald Saborío (Costa Rica) coordinate the discussions, which are open to all members. At the end of 2022, TESSD had 74 co sponsors from all regions and at all levels of development, representing around 85 per cent of global trade.

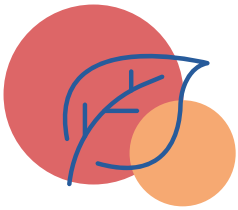
Fossil fuel subsidies reform

WTO members seeking to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies explored ways to increase transparency and fulfil long-term sustainability objectives at a meeting in October, the first under a 2022-23 work plan.

Forty-five members signed a ministerial statement in December 2021 on fossil fuel subsidies that recognizes that inefficient fossil fuel subsidies encourage wasteful consumption, disadvantage renewable energy and depress investment in energy efficiency.

The initiative, which builds on a 2017 WTO ministerial statement urging "ambitious and effective disciplines on inefficient fossil fuel subsidies", emphasizes the WTO can play a central role in the reduction of trade and investment distortions caused by fossil fuel subsidies through effective disciplines. Proponents acknowledge that reform must take account of the specific needs and conditions of developing economies and minimize the possible adverse impacts on their development.

Many members expressed interest in examining how to increase the transparency of fossil fuel subsidy programmes, noting this will be a first vital step towards closing information gaps and achieving reforms. Members also noted the WTO was well placed to be a central actor in this work. The co-sponsors, whose numbers rose to 48 as of February 2023, intend to hold at least three meetings, culminating in the discussion of next steps for further work at the WTO by MC13.



74

WTO members are taking part in the initiative on trade and environmental sustainability.

48

The initiative on fossil fuel subsidies reform has 48 WTO members as co-sponsors

Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender

- **The 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) outcome document recognizes "women's economic empowerment", the first declaration in support of trade and gender equality by the full WTO membership.**
- **The Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender accelerated work post-MC12, with a series of workshops on gender and trade issues.**

Ministers recognized the importance of "women's economic empowerment" in the outcome document issued at the end of MC12. This marked the first formal declaration of support for trade and gender equality by the full WTO membership.

The reference to women and trade was proposed ahead of MC12 by the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender, which was launched in September 2020 by a group of members to intensify WTO efforts to increase women's role in global trade.

In a statement issued at MC12, the three chairs of the Working Group declared: "Strong evidence-based data demonstrates that gender equality and women's economic empowerment can support and contribute to economic growth … Gender equality and women's economic empowerment are therefore essential to support sustainable peace and development."

At a meeting of the Group in December, the co-chairs – Ambassador Einar Gunnarsson of Iceland, Ambassador Ana Patricia Benedetti Zelaya of El Salvador and Ambassador Athaliah Molokomme of Botswana – said that the mandate of the Group was strengthened by MC12. It "means that gender issues are now considered as part of the WTO's work as a whole," Ambassador Gunnarsson declared.

The co-chairs said that the Group's technical work had accelerated post-MC12. In 2023,

efforts should be dedicated to developing a long-term work programme containing concrete actions and deadlines, they added.

In October, the co-chairs organized a workshop on "Gender Equality and the Private Sector" to enhance members' knowledge of women's entrepreneurship and to better integrate gender issues into WTO work, members' trade policies and trade agreements. The workshop presented new research on women's entrepreneurship and trade, outlining policy solutions to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women entrepreneurs.

The workshop highlighted the importance of including businesses run by women in supply chains and the need to improve digital trade facilitation. Women entrepreneurs said that gender-specific trade and development programmes and capacity building are key, especially in the area of public procurement. They also said that accessing trade finance, especially in sectors considered to be high-risk, is a challenge.

In November, Canada organized a workshop that highlighted new methods of gathering data on women in trade and the importance of such data for developing effective trade policies. The WTO can be a useful forum for members to identify tools to improve data collection, the workshop heard.

In October and November, the European Union organized, together with the ITC, Ecuador, Chile and the United States, a series of workshops on developing a "gender-lens" focused on government procurement, e-commerce, trade facilitation and investment facilitation.

More than 120 members are part of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender.

Seamstresses at work in a textile factory in Zimbabwe.

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General Council

- **Preparation for the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) and the WTO response to the COVID-19 pandemic were major focuses of work in the General Council.**
- **The General Council agreed that MC13 will be held in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) in the week of 26 February 2024 and that MC14 will be hosted by Cameroon.**
- **The General Council began to review progress in implementing MC12 outcomes, in particular the mandate given by ministers on WTO reform, the waiver decision on vaccines under the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the decision on the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce.**

Background

The General Council is entrusted with carrying out the functions of the WTO and taking actions necessary to this effect between ministerial conferences in addition to carrying out the specific tasks assigned to it by the Agreement Establishing the WTO. As part of its oversight function, the General Council conducts a year-end review of WTO activities on the basis of annual reports from its subsidiary bodies.

Didier Chambovey chairs a meeting of the General Council in 2022.

Discussions in 2022

The General Council was extremely active in 2022. With more than 20 plenary meetings in formal and informal sessions, chaired by Ambassador Didier Chambovey from Switzerland, the General Council continued to be an important forum for WTO members to discuss topical and substantive matters in a wide range of areas, most notably with respect to preparations for MC12 in June 2022 and to the WTO response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members' proposals were presented on topics such as trade-related challenges for least-developed countries (LDCs) and LDC graduation (see page 138), action to support the multilateral trading system for a successful MC12 (see page 10) and the legal status of the joint initiatives (see page 65). Members also discussed a proposed sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) declaration for MC12, strengthening the WTO to ensure development and inclusivity, and a joint statement on open and predictable trade in agricultural and food products.

Other topics for discussion included transparency and strengthening notification requirements, trade-restrictive practices of certain members, and LDCs' views on WTO reform. Members also continued to use the General Council as a forum for raising specific trade concerns, including on the consequences of the war in Ukraine.

Throughout the year, the General Council Chair conducted intensive consultations with members. In November, he convened an informal meeting on WTO reform (see below) and appointed Ambassador Usha Dwarka-Canabady (Mauritius) as facilitator on the E-commerce Work Programme and moratorium (see page 80). The Chair also conducted consultations on the appointment of officers to WTO councils and committees.

In February 2022, the General Council agreed to establish a Working Party on the Accession of Turkmenistan. In March, it adopted a decision on the "underfill" mechanism in the Bali ministerial decision on tariff rate quotas (see page 87). In December, the General Council agreed that MC13 will be held in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) in the week of 26 February 2024 and that MC14 will be hosted by Cameroon at a date to be determined. It also agreed to postpone any decision on whether to extend a conditional waiver granted by ministers at MC12 for COVID-19 vaccine patents to COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics (see below).

MC13

Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) will host MC13 in February 2024

A meeting of the General Council.

MC12

In the second half of the year, the General Council began to follow up on MC12 outcomes, in particular on WTO reform

12th Ministerial Conference

At the start of the year, the General Council agreed that the postponed MC12 would take place from 12 to 15 June 2022 in Geneva (see page 10). The Chair conducted intensive consultations on the organization and format of the conference. He also resumed consultations to finalize an outcome document, begun in 2021 under his predecessor, Ambassador Dacio Castillo (Honduras). Delegations worked on a two-part document: the first containing ministerial guidance on various areas of WTO work; the second referencing separate decisions and declarations for which work continued in their respective tracks.

The resulting outcome document was adopted at MC12. It covers substantive areas, such as strengthening the multilateral trading system, special and differential treatment (S&D) for developing economies, WTO reform, dispute settlement, LDC graduation, and accessions. It also includes a range of LDC-related issues, services trade, cooperation with other international organizations, women's economic empowerment (see page 72), the role of small businesses and global environmental challenges.

In the second half of the year, the General Council began to follow-up on MC12 outcomes, in particular on WTO reform, the waiver decision on vaccines under the TRIPS Agreement and the decision on the Work Programme on E-commerce. Updates were also provided on efforts by relevant WTO bodies to address the emergency response to food insecurity and the pandemic response (see page 12).

The General Council also continued to regularly review progress in implementing decisions taken by ministers at previous ministerial conferences. This included progress in implementing the 2015 Nairobi decision on agricultural export subsidies (see page 90), decisions on the LDC services waiver and LDC preferential rules of origin (see page 104), implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (see page 111) and Aid for Trade (see page 141).

WTO reform

Discussions on WTO reform took place in several WTO councils and committees on issues such as dispute settlement, development and trade negotiations.

In the lead-up to MC12, the General Council Chair facilitated members' work towards the first multilateral acknowledgment of, and commitment to, WTO reform.

"We commit to work towards necessary reform of the WTO. While reaffirming the foundational principles of the WTO, we envision reforms to improve all its functions," ministers said in the MC12 outcome document. Acknowledging the challenges and concerns surrounding the dispute settlement system, including the Appellate Body, ministers committed "to conduct discussions with the view to having a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all members by 2024."

The Chair sought members' views on how to move work forward after MC12. Members' responses reflected their commitment to ensuring a successful WTO reform process but it was clear that reform meant different things to different members.

The General Council Chair is coordinating the reform work in a member-driven, open, transparent and inclusive way that addresses the interests of all members.

Drawing from members' feedback, the Chair organized an informal meeting on WTO reform in November. This provided an opportunity for members to have a frank and open exchange about the reform process and the direction for this work.

The Chair subsequently suggested that each subsidiary body look at what it has achieved and explore ways to improve its daily functioning and better deliver on its mandate. On dispute settlement – confirmed as a priority by almost all delegations – the Chair said he would continue to monitor the situation to find the best way forward.

On development, including LDC issues, the Chair said that constraints faced by developing economies and, in particular LDCs, could be taken up in the various discussions in the reform process.

Together with the Director-General and the chairs of WTO councils, committees and negotiating groups, the General Council Chair is coordinating the reform work in a member-driven, open, transparent and inclusive way that addresses the interests of all members. His objective is to ensure the work is advanced in a gradual and meaningful manner, with the aim of achieving concrete milestones by MC13.

2024

Ministers committed to having a well-functioning dispute settlement system by 2024

DG Okonjo-Iweala addresses the General Council in October 2022.

WTO response to the pandemic

The process of providing a credible and meaningful response to the COVID-19 pandemic and preparing members for future pandemics continued in 2022 under the auspices of the General Council. Ahead of MC12, members transformed the texts of various members' proposals into a draft ministerial declaration, which was presented to ministers at the June conference.

This resulted in the "Ministerial Declaration on the WTO Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Preparedness for Future Pandemics" (see page 12), adopted on 17 June. In the declaration, ministers said: "We underscore the importance of understanding how WTO rules have supported members during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their role in future pandemics. We affirm the need to review and build on all the lessons learned and the challenges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, to build effective solutions in case of future pandemics."

In 2022, the General Council also heard regular reports from the Chair of the TRIPS Council, Ambassador Gberie (Sierra Leone), and discussed the proposal for a waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19, which was then adopted at MC12.

The ministerial decision foresaw that no later than six months from its adoption, members would decide on its extension to cover diagnostics and therapeutics. At its meeting in December, the General Council extended the deadline for such a decision and agreed to look again at the specific duration of such an extension at its next meeting.

Other reports

The General Council considered regular reports on the Work Programme on Small Economies (see page 140), a report on the development assistance aspects of cotton (see page 53) and the annual review of the special compulsory licensing system (see page 115).

A health worker prepares a COVID-19 vaccine dose at a vaccination camp in Gujarat, India.

Waivers under Article IX of the WTO Agreement

In 2022, the General Council granted five waivers from obligations under the WTO Agreement, as set out in Table 1. In addition, the 12th Ministerial Conference adopted a Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement, which provides for a targeted TRIPS waiver (see page 61).

It also reviewed the following multi-year waivers:

- LDC members – Obligations under Article 70.8 and Article 70.9 of the TRIPS Agreement with respect to pharmaceutical products, granted on 30 November 2015 until 1 January 2033 (WT/L/971)
- Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for Rough Diamonds, granted on 26 July 2018 through 31 December 2024 (WT/L/1039)
- Canada – CARIBCAN, granted on 28 July 2015 until 31 December 2023 (WT/L/958, WT/L/1146)
- European Union – Application of autonomous preferential treatment to the Western Balkans – granted on 28 July 2021 until 31 December 2026 (WT/LL/1114, WT/L/1147)

- Preferential treatment in favour of services and service suppliers of LDCs, granted on 17 December 2011 until 31 December 2030 (WT/L/847, WT/L/982)
- Preferential tariff treatment for LDCs, granted on 16 October 2019 until 30 June 2029 (WT/L/1069)
- Cuba – Article XV:6 – Extension of waiver, granted on 23 November 2021 until 31 December 2026 (WT/L/1128, WT/L/1157)
- United States – African Growth and Opportunity Act, granted on 30 November 2015 until 30 September 2025 (WT/L/970, WT/L/1153)
- United States – Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, granted on 16 October 2019 until 30 September 2025 (WT/L/1070, WT/L/1154)
- United States – Former trust territory of the Pacific Islands, granted on 7 December 2016 until 31 December 2026 (WT/L/1000, WT/L/1155)
- United States – Trade preferences granted to Nepal, granted on 7 December 2016 until 31 December 2025 (WT/L/1001, WT/L/1156)

Other issues

As part of its oversight function, the General Council conducted a year-end review of WTO activities on the basis of annual reports from its subsidiary bodies. The General Council also regularly considered reports from the Budget Committee and its related recommendations.

Table 1: Waivers under Article IX (decision-making) of the WTO Agreement

In 2022, the General Council granted the following waivers from obligations under the WTO agreements.

Member [1]	Type	Decision	Date of adoption	Expiry date
China	Introduction of Harmonized System 2002 Changes into WTO Schedules of Tariff Concessions	WT/L/1160	20 December 2022	31 December 2023
Argentina; Brazil; China; Dominican Republic; European Union; and Malaysia.	Introduction of Harmonized System 2007 Changes into WTO Schedules of Tariff Concessions	WT/L/1161	20 December 2022	31 December 2023
Argentina; Australia; Brazil; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; European Union; Guatemala; India; Kazakhstan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; Philippines; Russian Federation; Singapore; Switzerland; Thailand; and United States.	Introduction of Harmonized System 2012 Changes into WTO Schedules of Tariff Concessions	WT/L/1162	20 December 2022	31 December 2023
Argentina; Australia; Brazil; Canada; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; European Union; Guatemala; Hong Kong, China; India; Kazakhstan; Republic of Korea; Macao, China; Montenegro; New Zealand; Norway; Pakistan; Paraguay; Philippines; Russian Federation; Switzerland; Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu; Thailand; United States; and Uruguay.	Introduction of Harmonized System 2017 Changes into WTO Schedules of Tariff Concessions	WT/L/1163	20 December 2022	31 December 2023
Australia; Canada; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; European Union; Guatemala; Hong Kong, China; India; Korea, Republic of; Macao, China; Norway; Paraguay; Philippines; Russian Federation; Switzerland; Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu; Thailand; and United States.	Introduction of Harmonized System 2022 Changes into WTO Schedules of Tariff Concessions	WT/L/1164 and Add.1	20 December 2022	31 December 2023

The 12th Ministerial Conference adopted the following waiver decision:

Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement (WT/MIN(22)/30), which provides for a targeted TRIPS waiver (see page 61).

[1] This table lists the initial beneficiaries of HS waivers. However, other beneficiaries may be added to the list.

Work Programme on E-commerce

- **Ministers decided at the 12th Ministerial Conference in June to reinvigorate work under the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce and intensify discussions on the moratorium on customs duties.**
- **After June, the General Council Chair conducted consultations on the way forward and subsequently appointed a facilitator, Ambassador Usha Dwarka-Canabady of Mauritius, to help advance the discussions under the Work Programme and on the moratorium.**

In 2022, discussions on the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce and the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions continued in the General Council and relevant bodies.

In the first half of the year, work in the General Council continued to be based on two draft ministerial decisions submitted by WTO members. One called for the continuation of the Work Programme and the extension of the moratorium until the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13), set for February 2024. The other stressed concern with the "deep digital and technological divide afflicting" developing economies and least-developed countries (LDCs), noting the need to address this. It called for the reinvigoration and continuation of the Work Programme until MC13.

The chair of the General Council, Didier Chambovey (Switzerland), held consultations with members to identify progress towards possible convergence ahead of MC12 in June 2022. However, delegations could not reach consensus on a single draft decision for ministers' consideration. Therefore, the chair suggested that the two draft decisions be sent to ministers for their consideration.

Following extensive consultations, ministers decided to reinvigorate the work under the Work Programme and intensify discussions on the moratorium – including on its scope, definition and impact – and extend the moratorium until MC13 or March 2024, at the latest.

The chair conducted consultations on the way forward and subsequently appointed a facilitator, Ambassador Usha Dwarka-Canabady of Mauritius, to help advance the discussions under the Work Programme and on the moratorium.

The facilitator held a first dedicated discussion followed by small group consultations with members to discuss the way forward and identify cross-cutting issues of interest to members. Members converged on the need to continue work in dedicated discussions with a focus on the development dimension.

At the General Council meeting in December 2022, the facilitator reported on her consultations and shared some thoughts on the work ahead based on members' views. The issues raised included the need to bridge the digital divide, the importance of an adequate legal and regulatory framework, the relevance of cooperating with other stakeholders and the importance of sharing experiences and best practices.

Some members also presented submissions to advance the discussions. These included a submission on ideas to reinvigorate the Work Programme, a submission on consumer protection in e-commerce and a submission on sharing perspectives on customs duties on electronic transmissions.

At MC12, ministers decided to reinvigorate work under the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce and intensify discussions on the moratorium on customs duties.

The digital economy: an expanding sector

E-commerce is vital to boosting trade growth and business opportunities

Global value in 2022

US$ 3.82 trillion

4x

increase in value of global exports of digitally delivered services since 2005.

Average yearly global increase in digitally delivered services exports, 2005-22

8.1% Digitally delivered services

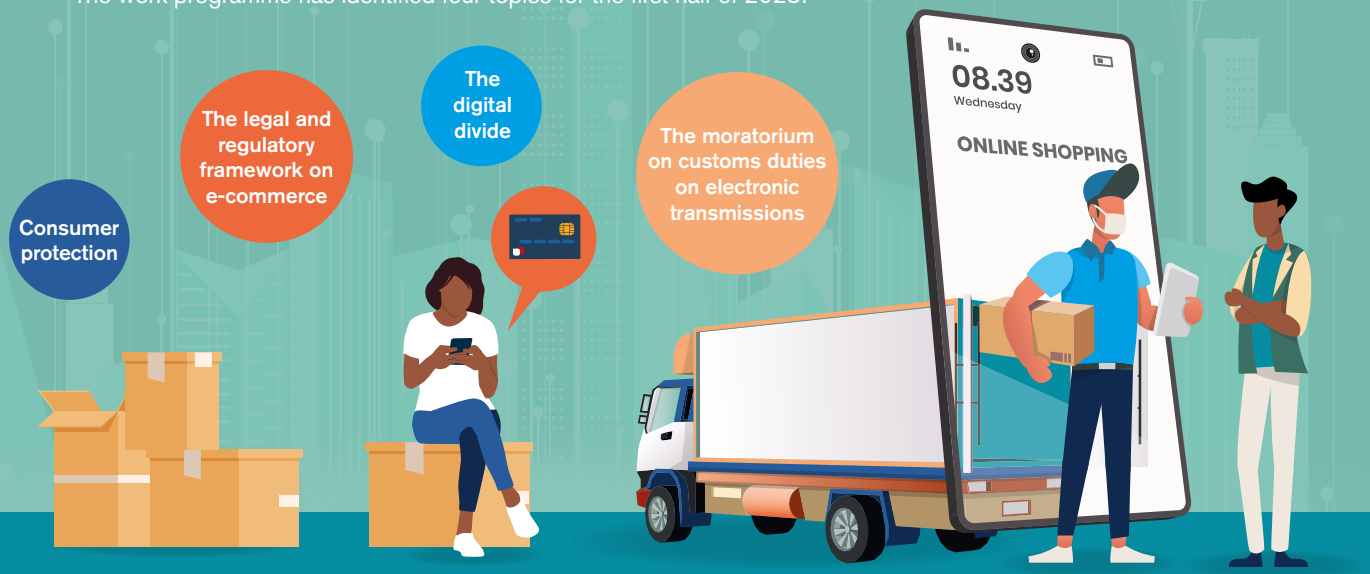
5.6% Goods

4.2% Other services exports

Trade ministers took two decisions on e-commerce at MC12:

1. **To extend the ban on imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions. The "moratorium" will remain in place until MC13, to be held in February 2024.**

2. **To reinvigorate work under the Work Programme on E-commerce, which tasks four WTO bodies with examining trade issues related to e-commerce.**
The work programme has identified four topics for the first half of 2023:



Joint initiative on e-commerce

88
WTO members participating in the Joint Initiative on e-commerce.

Accounting for **90%+** of global trade.

Participants committed to establishing high-standard rules to govern digital trade.
The aim is to conclude negotiations by end-2023.

The initiative is open to all WTO members.

Sources: WTO Global Trade Outlook and Statistics; UNCTADStat.

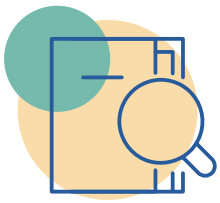
Trade in Goods Council

- **A record 23 new trade concerns were raised by WTO members in the Council for Trade in Goods, up from the previous high of 20 in 2021.**
- **The Council initiated discussions on follow-up to the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) relating to e-commerce, WTO reform and the WTO response to the pandemic.**
- **The Council agreed to a decision on the derestriction of Uruguay Round negotiating materials, agreed to five waivers regarding changes to the Harmonized System and considered four requests concerning members' negotiating rights under GATT 1994.**

The Council for Trade in Goods (CTG) saw an increasing number of trade concerns raised by WTO members, reaching a peak of 45 at its November meeting. The number of trade concerns raised has more than doubled since 2019 (see Figure 1).

A record 23 new trade concerns were raised in 2022, three more than the 20 raised in 2021, the previous high (see Table 2).

Many of the concerns discussed dealt with environmental measures; others related to high level political tensions among members. Members continued discussing long standing issues, such as the European Union's renegotiation of tariff rate quota commitments (see page 87) as a consequence of the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union and the equivalent negotiations by the United Kingdom in its schedule of concessions.



23

trade concerns raised in 2022 – three more than in 2021

MC12 implementation

In October, the Chair, Mr Etienne Oudot de Dainville (France), reported on his consultations on three areas of work post-MC12: (i) the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce; (ii) the Ministerial Declaration on the Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Preparedness for Future Pandemics; and (iii) WTO reform (see page 76).

Following a request by members, the CTG Chair requested the chairs of the Council's 14 subsidiary bodies to prepare two reports, under their own responsibility and with the assistance of the Secretariat, on activities undertaken in their committees in response to the pandemic and on the current functioning of their committees, including actions taken to improve them. A total of 25 reports were circulated by the end of the year for members' review.

Background

The Council for Trade in Goods is responsible for overseeing the implementation of all WTO agreements concerning trade in goods. It reports to the WTO General Council. The Goods Council has 12 subsidiary committees dealing with specific subjects, such as agriculture, market access, subsidies, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, import licensing, customs valuation and trade facilitation. The ITA Committee and the Working Party on State Trading Enterprises also report to the Goods Council.

Figure 1: Trade concerns raised at the CTG, 2019-22

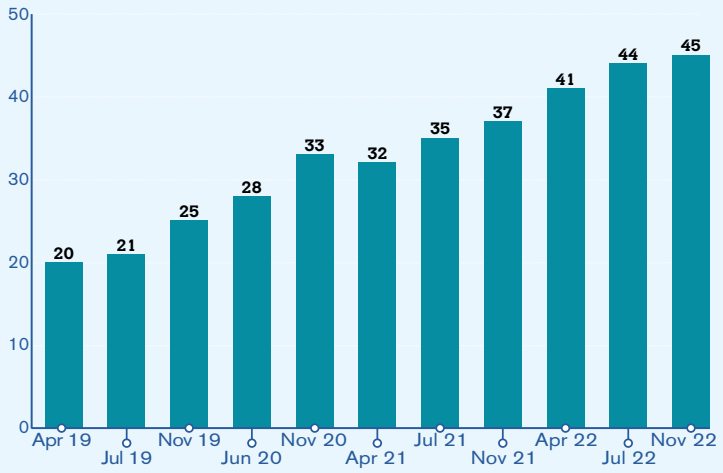


Table 2: New trade concerns raised in the CTG in 2022

No.	Meeting	Subject	Member(s) raising the concern
1	April	Australia, Canada, European Union, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States – Unilateral trade-restrictive measures against Russia	Russian Federation
2		Ecuador – Import restrictions on grapes and onions	Peru
3		European Union – Belgium's draft law introducing additional security measures for the provision of mobile 5G services	China
4		European Union – Countervailing duties on stainless steel cold-rolled flat products	Indonesia
5		Nepal – Import ban on energy drinks	Thailand
6		Nigeria – Restrictive policies on agricultural products	Brazil
7		Panama – Undue delays and export restrictions on agricultural and hydrobiological products	Peru
8		Philippines – Special safeguard on instant coffee	Indonesia
9		Plurinational State of Bolivia – Export restrictions on agricultural and hydrobiological products	Peru
10		United Kingdom – Environmental Act: forestry commodities	Indonesia
11		United States – Discriminatory quantitative restriction on steel and/or aluminium imports	China
12	July	Australia – Investigation and review of anti-dumping duties on A4 copy paper	Indonesia
13		Egypt – Halal certification requirements for imported food and beverage products	Canada and the United States
14		Pakistan – Import restrictions on foodstuffs and consumer goods	
15	November	China – Draft recommended national standard (GB/T) for office devices (information security technology security specification for office devices)	Japan
16		China – Draft revision of Chinese Government Procurement Law	Japan
17		Egypt – Mandatory use of a letter of credit as payment condition for imports	European Union
18		European Union – Draft Commission regulation amending annexes 2 and 5 to regulation EC No. 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards to MRLs for clothianidin and thiamethoxam in or on certain products	United States
19		Philippines – Investigation of safeguard duty on high-density polyethylene products	Indonesia
20		United States – A series of disruptive policy measures on the global semiconductor industry chain and supply chain	China
21		United States – The Russian Federation's market economy status in anti-dumping proceedings	Russian Federation
22		United States – Trade-distorting and discriminatory subsidies measures of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022	China
23		Viet Nam – Anti-circumvention duty on sugar	Indonesia

Extension of waivers and other decisions

The Council approved four collective extension requests for waivers in connection with Harmonized System (HS) changes for 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017 (see page 86) along with a new collective waiver request to take account of HS 2022 changes. It recommended that the draft decisions be forwarded to the General Council for adoption.

The Council also approved requests by Armenia and the Kyrgyz Republic to extend by a further 12 months members' negotiating rights under Article XXVIII of the GATT 1994 as well as similar requests by the European Union and the United Kingdom to extend members' negotiating rights in their respective renegotiating procedures by a further six months.

Graduated LDCs

The Council considered a proposal by the LDC Group to allow "graduated" LDCs to continue having the right to provide export subsidies if they meet the terms of Article 27 of the Subsidies and Countervailing Measures Agreement (i.e. having a GNP per capita of less than US$ 1,000 per month in constant 1990 US dollars).

A country is considered to have graduated when its economy grows beyond certain limits set by the United Nations. LDCs get special treatment in the WTO, in particular with regard to enhanced market access opportunities and policy flexibilities (see page 138).

The LDC Group considered this exception necessary to correct a technical error in the drafting of the provision. Additional information was requested by other members, including on the calculation of GNP for all members based on the agreed methodology and in constant 1990 US dollars.

Market access

- **WTO members exchanged information and experiences on their trade policy measures regarding COVID-related goods.**
- **A WTO Secretariat report showed 98 COVID-related measures that prohibit or restrict exports had been introduced – the figure stood at 77 in 2021. On trade-easing measures, 182 had been introduced, up from 165 previously.**
- **The Committee on Market Access discussed 37 trade concerns, ten more than in 2021, and almost twice as many as 2020.**
- **Twenty-five members submitted notifications on quantitative restrictions, including export restrictions on products essential to combating COVID-19.**

98

COVID-19 measures prohibiting or restricting exports were introduced

Trade concerns

The number of concerns raised in the Committee continued to increase in 2022, reaching a record 37, up from 27 in 2021, and almost twice as many as in 2020. They covered a broad range of trade policy

Background

The Committee on Market Access supervises the implementation of tariff and non-tariff measures not covered by any other WTO body. In addition, it seeks to ensure that WTO members' schedules of concessions are up to date, including changes required to reflect amendments to the Harmonized System (HS). The HS allows economies to classify traded goods on a common basis. Without this technical work at the Committee, it would be difficult to compare members' tariff obligations with the tariffs they apply in practice.

measures, including environmental measures, measures adopted in response to the war in Ukraine, applied tariffs allegedly in excess of WTO commitments, discriminatory taxation, import quotas and non-tariff measures on a wide range of products. Many concerns had been raised previously but 19 were new.

All trade concerns discussed are included in the WTO's New Trade Concerns database, a public platform containing information on trade concerns raised in the market access, technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary committees.

COVID-19

WTO members engaged in five experience-sharing sessions on trade policy measures they adopted in response to COVID-19. They also heard views from a variety of external stakeholders. Topics included the definition of essential goods to combat the pandemic, their classification within the Harmonized System of the World Customs Organization (WCO), how members monitored and measured trade in COVID-19 essential goods, sharing of members' practices on measures aimed at easing trade in COVID-19 goods, and how to improve transparency in export restrictions.

In a follow-up to the discussions, the Committee wrote to the Harmonized System Committee (HSC) of the WCO, which approves the customs classification of goods in international trade, to raise awareness of key challenges faced by WTO members with the classification of COVID-19 essential goods. The letter from the Committee suggests improvements to the HS classification of certain critical medical goods, such as face masks and mobile clinics, which are currently being negotiated in the review of the 2027 version of the Harmonized System.

Transparency

The Secretariat continued to monitor transparency in members' trade-related measures during the pandemic, analysing export restrictions and trade-easing measures. Its report issued in late 2022 showed that, as of 12 October, 98 measures that prohibit or restrict exports had been introduced and about 25 per cent continued to be in force. It found 182 trade-easing measures had been introduced, with more than 70 per cent of them eliminating, suspending or waiving tariffs or other taxes, such as value added taxes.

Quantitative restrictions

The Committee received quantitative restrictions notifications from 25 members in 2022, with some containing information on export restrictions introduced as a result of the pandemic. QR notifications generally include information on prohibitions and other restrictions that do not take the form of a tariff, tax, fee or charge and that are allowed only in specific circumstances.

In 2022, the QR Database contained information on 1,828 measures notified by 84 members, including export prohibitions and restrictions relating to COVID-19, with detailed information on the affected products, the intended duration of the measures and their WTO justification.

37

trade concerns were raised in the committee in 2022, a record number

Integrated Database

The WTO's Integrated Database, the main source of tariff and import data, began automatically receiving data from interested members. In 2022, three members (Canada, Mauritius and Uruguay) submitted data in line with the 2019 IDB Decision. This procedure significantly simplifies data notification both for members and the Secretariat.

Harmonized System

The Committee works to ensure that members' schedules of concessions reflect the latest amendments to the WCO's Harmonized System (HS), which classifies traded goods on a common basis. This technical work at the WTO seeks to ensure that WTO schedules are up to date, facilitating the comparison of applied tariff regimes with WTO obligations.

The latest version – HS2022 – includes 233 sets of changes recognizing new product categories and addressing environmental and social issues, including health and safety, and the fight against illicit trade and terrorism. The Committee adopted a new HS2022 waiver, which allows members to continue having their WTO schedules of concessions in a previous version of the HS despite them already using HS2022 for their applied tariffs.

The HS96, HS2002 and HS2007 "transposition exercises" – amendments are typically referred to by the year in which they enter into force – have been nearly concluded for all members. The Committee made good progress on the HS2012 transposition, with the schedules of 105 members updated. In addition, 77 schedules were transposed to HS2017 and certified.

The WCO and the WTO held a joint workshop in October at which participants discussed the impact of the periodical updates to the HS on schedules of concessions, the legal instruments recording tariffs and other commitments by WTO members with respect to trade in goods.

Agriculture

- **The Committee on Agriculture launched a work programme to address the food security concerns of least-developed countries (LDCs) and net food-importing developing countries (NFIDCs), following up on a declaration at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12).**
- **WTO members reached a breakthrough agreement on "underfill" of tariff rate quotas (TRQs) for agricultural imports, settling unfinished business from the 2013 Ministerial Conference.**
- **The Committee received 386 notifications about agricultural measures in 2022, the second highest ever, and a sign of members' continued commitment to increasing transparency.**
- **An event in March 2022 marked the 100th session of the Committee. DG Okonjo-Iweala praised its achievements, saying it had played a crucial role in improving how agricultural markets function.**

Background

The Agreement on Agriculture aims to reform trade and make WTO members' policies more market oriented. The rules and commitments apply to market access, domestic support and export competition as well as export restrictions and prohibitions. The Committee on Agriculture oversees the implementation of the Agreement. The Committee also monitors follow-up to a Marrakesh ministerial decision regarding LDCs and NFIDCs, which sets out objectives on the provision of food aid and other assistance.

Food security

In November, the Committee launched a work programme to address the food security concerns of LDCs and NFIDCs, following up on the Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity issued at MC12. It established four thematic areas for work – access to international food markets, financing food imports, agricultural and production resilience of LDCs and NFIDCs, and horizontal or cross-cutting issues aimed at fostering collaboration.

At its first meeting in December, the working group finalized a questionnaire on the needs and food security challenges of LDCs and NFIDCs so that discussions could be evidence based. Addressing an Agri-Food Business Day event in December, DDG Anabel González urged WTO members to be ambitious in the working group discussions because "this is a topic that is critically important for many of these countries and for the world at large".

100th session

At a special event in March 2022 to mark the 100th session of the Committee, DG Okonjo-Iweala praised the achievements of the Committee over the past 27 years and highlighted its important role in overseeing implementation of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture. "The Committee has played a crucial role in improving how markets function, strengthening transparency, and enhancing the predictability and stability of global trade in food and farm goods," she said.

Breakthrough accord on TRQs

WTO members reached an important agreement in March 2022 to address continued "underfill" of TRQs for agricultural imports. TRQs allow imports inside a quota to be charged lower duties but if quotas are not used up, exporters lose potential sales.

The agreement resolves unfinished business from a ministerial decision at the 2013 Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia, on notification of members' unfilled quotas. In cases where fill rates of a TRQ are below 65 per cent for two consecutive years, or the fill rate is not notified, the importing WTO member may be required to demonstrate that market circumstances rather than quota administration are contributing to the underfill.

The Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Marcos Da Rosa Uranga (Uruguay), hailed the hard-won success. It "not only contributes to the fulfilment of a longstanding ministerial mandate … but also instils confidence in the capacity of members to collectively agree on decisions by consensus," he said. As mandated by the Bali conference, members also approved a tracking register, run by the WTO Secretariat, to record and track underfill of TRQs.

Notifications

The number of annual notifications rose to 386 in 2022, from 321 the year before, the second highest annual total after 439 in 2019 – a sign of members' continuing commitment to increased transparency (see Figure 2).

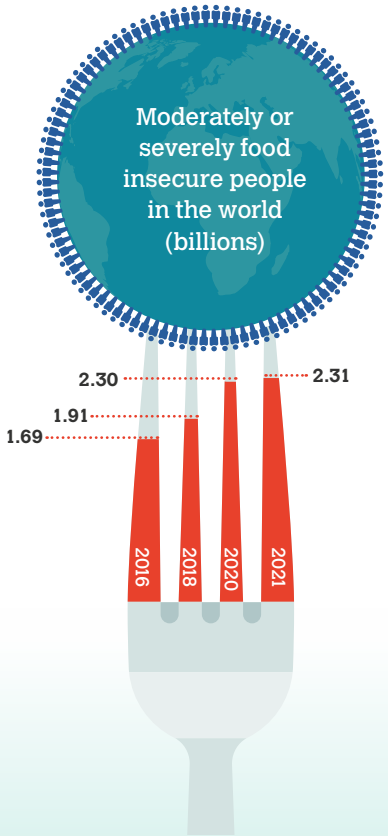
Members also made efforts to get up to date with notifications, including by clearing backlogs from multiple years. Mongolia and Côte d'Ivoire submitted outstanding domestic support notifications for 13 and six years respectively while various

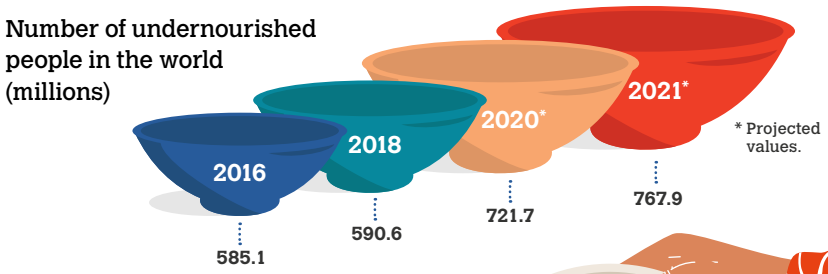
Coffee harvesting in Thailand.

Food security: a growing problem

Trade has a crucial role to play in supporting global food security

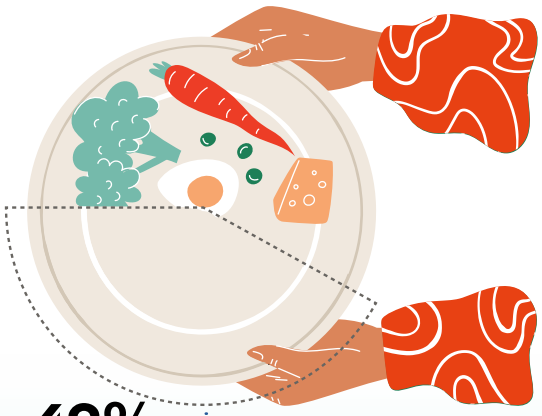
Disruptions to global trade, record prices and market volatility mean the world is facing a growing food crisis.





73.6 million

more people faced severe food insecurity in 2021 than in 2020.



42%

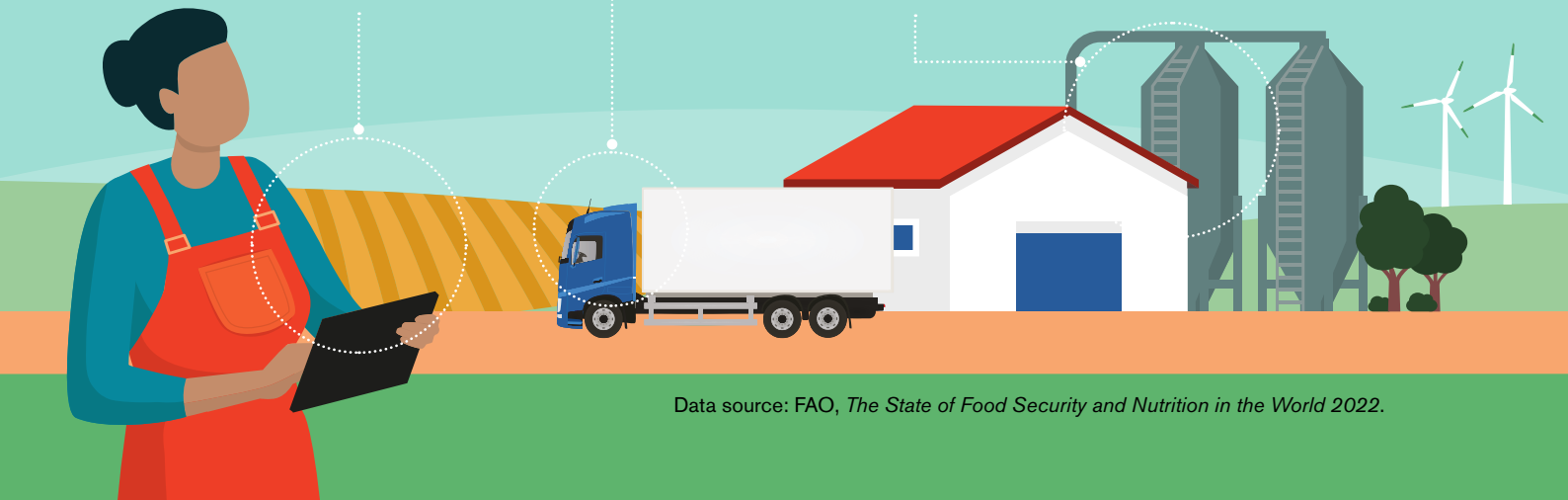
of the global population – almost 3.1 billion people – could not afford a healthy diet in 2020.

In response, trade ministers took two decisions at MC12:

1. A declaration confirming the vital role of trade in improving global food security and committing members to improving global food markets.
2. A decision exempting World Food Programme humanitarian food purchases from export prohibitions or restrictions.

A WTO work programme was established in November 2022 to help vulnerable economies increase resilience to food insecurity, covering four areas:

- access to international food markets
- financing food imports
- agricultural and production resilience of vulnerable economies
- cross-cutting issues aimed at fostering collaboration



Data source: FAO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022.*

other members presented export subsidy notifications covering multiple outstanding years, including Kenya (23 years), Djibouti (14 years), Tonga (nine years) and Pakistan (eight years).

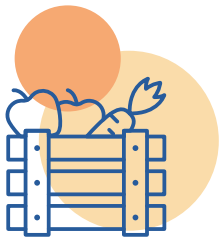
Compliance with notification obligations, particularly for domestic support and export subsidies, was subject to specific scrutiny by members. Thirty-three per cent of domestic support notifications (925) and 30 per cent of export subsidy notifications (934) remained outstanding as of 31 December 2022. Seventeen questions were raised concerning pending notifications from Botswana, Canada, China, Egypt, the European Union, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Morocco, South Africa, Türkiye and Uruguay.

The Committee also discussed 216 specific implementation matters concerning members' agricultural policies under Article 18.6 of the Agreement on Agriculture, which allows members to raise questions on any matters relevant to the implementation of commitments.

A total of 473 questions were raised in the Committee in the two areas. Agricultural policy developments in developing economies have drawn the most questions over recent years. Domestic support remained the main area of interest to members.

COVID-19 and agriculture

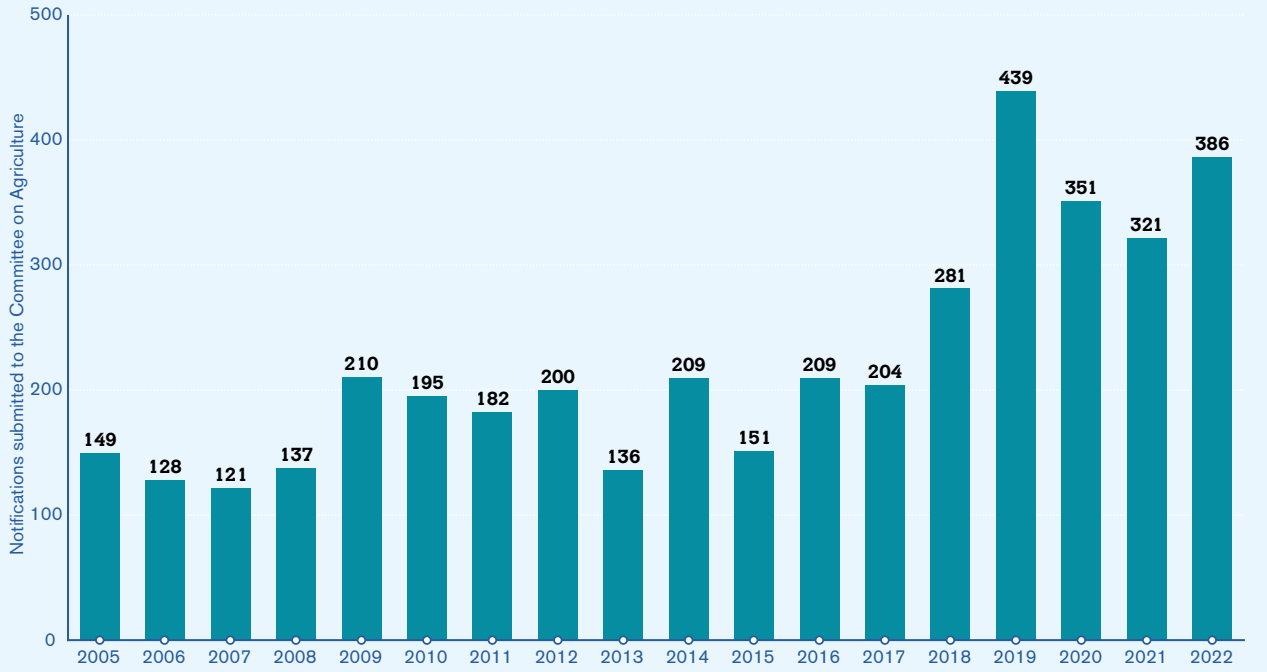
The Committee continued to discuss "COVID-19 and Agriculture" and looked at how to implement an MC12 declaration on the response to the pandemic, with ministers underscoring the importance of global food security in resilience building. The Committee heard seven contributions by observer international organizations, including the FAO, the International Grains Council and the World Food Programme. The FAO highlighted that nearly one in three people, around 2.31 billion people, was moderately or severely food insecure in 2021 – meaning they did not have secure access to sufficient food for their daily needs – 350 million more than in 2019, before COVID-19.



386

notifications about agricultural measures were submitted in 2022

Figure 2: Agriculture notifications submitted by WTO members, 2005 to 2022



Export competition

The Committee held the annual discussion on the 2015 Nairobi Ministerial Decision on Export Competition, which eliminated all agricultural export subsidies and other export measures with equivalent effect. Venezuela continued to be the only member yet to submit its modified schedule incorporating the Nairobi Decision.

Transparency tools

The WTO Secretariat informed the Committee of enhancements to the online agriculture information management system (AG-IMS), including an option to "co sponsor" questions and automatic reminders to members with outstanding responses to questions.

Technical assistance activities

The WTO Secretariat delivered an in-person agriculture notification workshop in September in Geneva. Other technical assistance activities included workshops in Mauritius and Ghana.

Outreach and information exchange

The Secretariat continued its Trade Dialogues on Food, holding sessions on topics such as illicit trade in food and food fraud, allowing a range of experts to debate the most topical issues in food and agricultural trade.

The WTO held its first Agri-Food Business Day in December in collaboration with the International Agri-Food Network. The event helped deepen members' understanding of the food crisis and its impact on global agricultural value chains.

Sanitary and phytosanitary measures

- **As a follow-up to the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Committee began a work programme, with five thematic groups, to address new opportunities and challenges in implementing the SPS Agreement.**
- **The Committee extended the mandate of the Working Group on Approval Procedures, which looks at challenges surrounding approval procedures that affect international trade, such as timing and undue delays, until March 2023.**
- **Members notified a record-breaking 2,172 planned, new or changed SPS regulations, compared to 1,825 the previous year and the earlier record of 2,122 in 2020, indicating an increasing commitment to transparency.**

Background

The Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures establishes the rights and obligations of WTO members regarding measures taken to ensure food safety, protect human health from plant or animal-spread diseases, protect plant and animal health from pests and diseases, or prevent other damage from pests. Governments must ensure that their SPS measures are necessary for health protection and based on scientific principles.

Work programme to implement SPS Declaration

As part of the MC12 package of outcomes, ministers adopted an SPS declaration on responding to challenges that may significantly impact international trade in food, animals and plants. Recognizing the evolution of the global agricultural landscape since the adoption of the SPS Agreement in 1995, the declaration instructs the SPS Committee to carry out a work programme to enhance implementation of the SPS Agreement in light of new opportunities and emerging challenges.

The SPS Committee launched the work programme in June 2022 and set up five thematic groups, each with a specific focus and led by either one or two members (see Figure 3). A dedicated webpage helps members track meetings and written inputs for each group.

Open to all members and observers, the work programme consists of new efforts to identify opportunities and challenges in the implementation of the SPS Agreement and the mechanisms available to address them. These opportunities and challenges include population growth, climate change, innovation, new technologies, pest/disease pressures and persisting obstacles to trade.

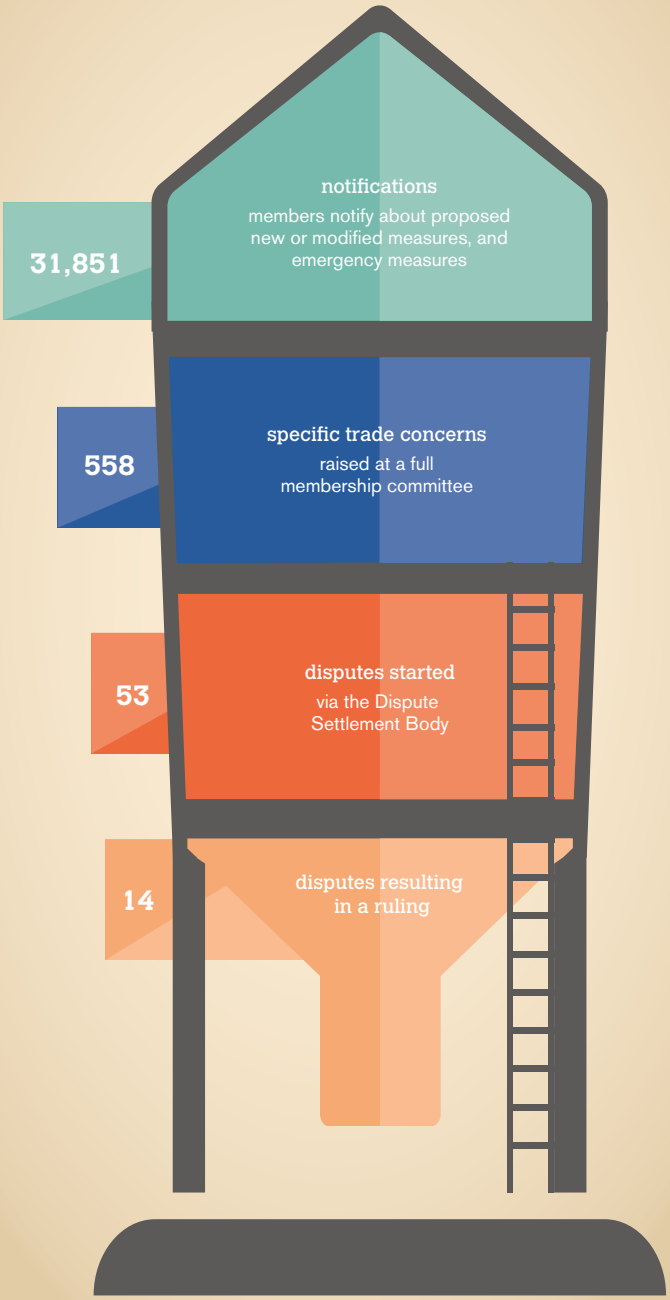
The SPS Committee is due to report on its key findings and action undertaken under the work programme – with appropriate recommendations – to MC13, scheduled for February 2024.

Other thematic work

The SPS Committee Working Group on Approval Procedures, co-led by Canada and Paraguay, continued its work. After having developed a common understanding of "approval procedures", the Working Group discussed key challenges, such as undue delays and lack of transparency, and the principles of approval procedures. The Group also prepared a collection of existing tools and best practices to enhance implementation of the SPS Agreement. The mandate of the Working Group was extended until March 2023 to finalize outcome documents, including possible recommendations.

Box 1: SPS measures relating to food safety, animal health and plant health

Few concerns end in disputes: 1995-2022*



*until 31 December 2022.

Figure 3: Thematic groups to implement the SPS Declaration

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Focus: How to facilitate global food security and more sustainable food systems.	**Focus:** How to support basing SPS measures on scientific evidence and principles.	**Focus:** How to enhance safe international trade in food, animals and plants and products thereof through the adaptation of SPS measures to regional conditions.	**Focus:** How to encourage cooperation with observer organizations that support the work of the SPS Committee and the international standard-setting bodies.	**Focus:** How to increase participation of and support for the special needs of developing and least-developed country members in the development and application of SPS measures.
Co-stewards: Brazil and Norway	**Steward:** South Africa	**Steward:** Chile	**Steward:** United Kingdom	**Co-stewards:** Australia and Ecuador

The SPS Committee held three thematic sessions in 2022. The first dealt with approaches used by members to address issues associated with pesticide maximum residue limits (MRLs). It was an opportunity to share experiences and best practices on topics such as harmonization with standards established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and losses due to rejected consignments.

The second session was on remote audit and verification, which several members began using during the COVID-19 pandemic. The session provided insights into the ongoing work of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) as well as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Global Food Safety Initiative. Discussions also focused on use of remote assessment methods, such as remote audit in regulatory practice relating to the food supply chain, how they may assist members with their obligations under the SPS Agreement, and the scope for future implementation.

The third session focused on international standards and best practices in pest risk identification, assessment and management. The session provided an opportunity for members to increase their awareness of standards developed under the International Plant Protection Convention. Members discussed best practices and challenges associated with issues such as identification of pests of phytosanitary concern, performance of pest risk analyses, risk mitigation measures and phytosanitary certification.

Specific trade concerns

The SPS Committee considered 26 new specific trade concerns and 43 previously raised concerns (compared to 27 new and 50 previously raised concerns in 2021). Ten of the new concerns were discussed more than once in 2022. Issues included undue delays in approval procedures, actions related to COVID-19 that affect trade, restrictions related to animal diseases, and pesticide-related policies and MRLs.

The SPS Committee received its first request for the "good offices of the Chair", an ad hoc Committee procedure introduced in 2014 to assist with the resolution of trade concerns. The request was eventually rejected because the relevant import requirements had in the meantime been published.

The Secretariat contacted several members to seek information regarding the status of specific trade concerns and whether concerns had been resolved, partially resolved, or not resolved. About 57 per cent of all concerns raised in the SPS Committee since 1995 have been reported as resolved or partially resolved.

57

About 57% of all concerns raised in the SPS Committee have been reported as resolved or partially resolved

Notifications

The SPS Agreement requires notification of draft regulations that are not "substantially the same" as an international standard. Other WTO members should be given sufficient time to submit comments on the notified draft regulation. Notifications are an important demonstration of members' commitment to transparency in their SPS measures.

In 2022, members notified a record 2,172 planned, new or changed SPS regulations, compared to 1,825 the year before and a previous high of 2,122 in 2020. Of these, 1,714 were regular notifications (up from 1,453 in 2021) and 458 were emergency notifications (up from 372 in 2021). Developing economies (including least-developed countries) submitted 65 per cent of SPS notifications (see Figure 4).

New ePing platform

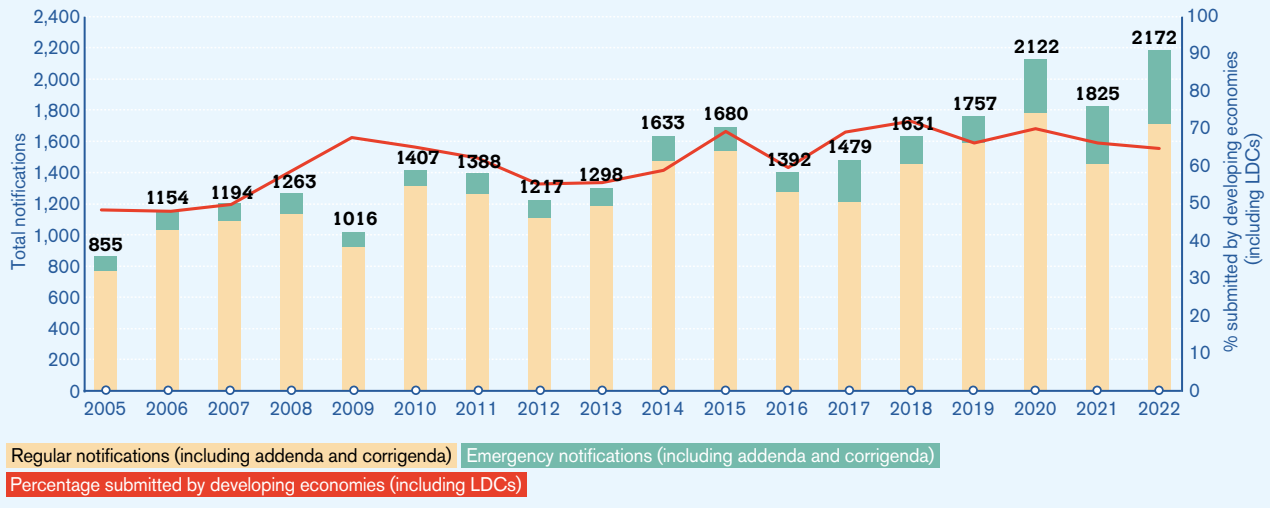
A new ePing SPS&TBT Platform was launched in July 2022 to integrate SPS and technical barriers to trade (TBT) transparency tools in the ePing system, which alerts WTO members to SPS and TBT notifications.

The platform, developed in collaboration with the International Trade Centre and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, provides a single-entry point for users to submit and track information on product requirements. It also facilitates the notification of regulations and information sharing within and across economies. WTO members participated in a workshop to provide training on the new platform. This was complemented by a "notifications clinic" targeted at SPS notification authorities and enquiry points.

Capacity-building

The WTO Secretariat undertook 16 SPS technical assistance activities. The new "SPS Transparency Champions Course", targeted at African government officials from SPS national notification authorities and enquiry points, aimed to increase understanding of WTO transparency provisions and to help officials improve the transparency framework in their countries. The "Essentials of SPS Committee Participation" course, provided in French, aimed to enhance participation of WTO members from francophone Africa in the work of the SPS Committee.

Figure 4: SPS notifications and percentage of notifications submitted by developing economies (including LDCs), 2005-22



Technical barriers to trade

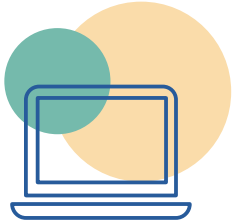
- **The Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) intensified work to develop guidelines for regulators on the choice and design of conformity assessment procedures (e.g. certification), with the aim of ensuring a business-friendly and transparent trading environment.**
- **The WTO Secretariat launched an integrated ePing SPS&TBT platform that facilitates tracking sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and TBT notifications.**
- **WTO members submitted 3,896 notifications on product requirements, one of the highest numbers on record, an important aid to transparency.**

Progress on several fronts

In 2022, the TBT Committee's work covered themes such as good regulatory practice, regulatory cooperation, conformity assessment procedures, standards, transparency, technical assistance, and trade and health as part of its 2022-24 workplan. Alongside its regular meetings, the Committee also held several thematic sessions on various issues, such as digital solutions for conformity assessment procedures, accreditation, regulatory cooperation between members on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), transparency, Codex standards development and good regulatory practices.

The Committee intensified development of guidelines on the choice and design of conformity assessment procedures (e.g., certification). The guidelines are intended to help regulators determine which conformity assessment procedures to apply in situations where risks associated with products are different.

A new transparency working group was established to advance with the Committee's work on facilitating the implementation of transparency provisions, including how to improve the clarity, quality, accessibility and timing of notifications.



19,000+

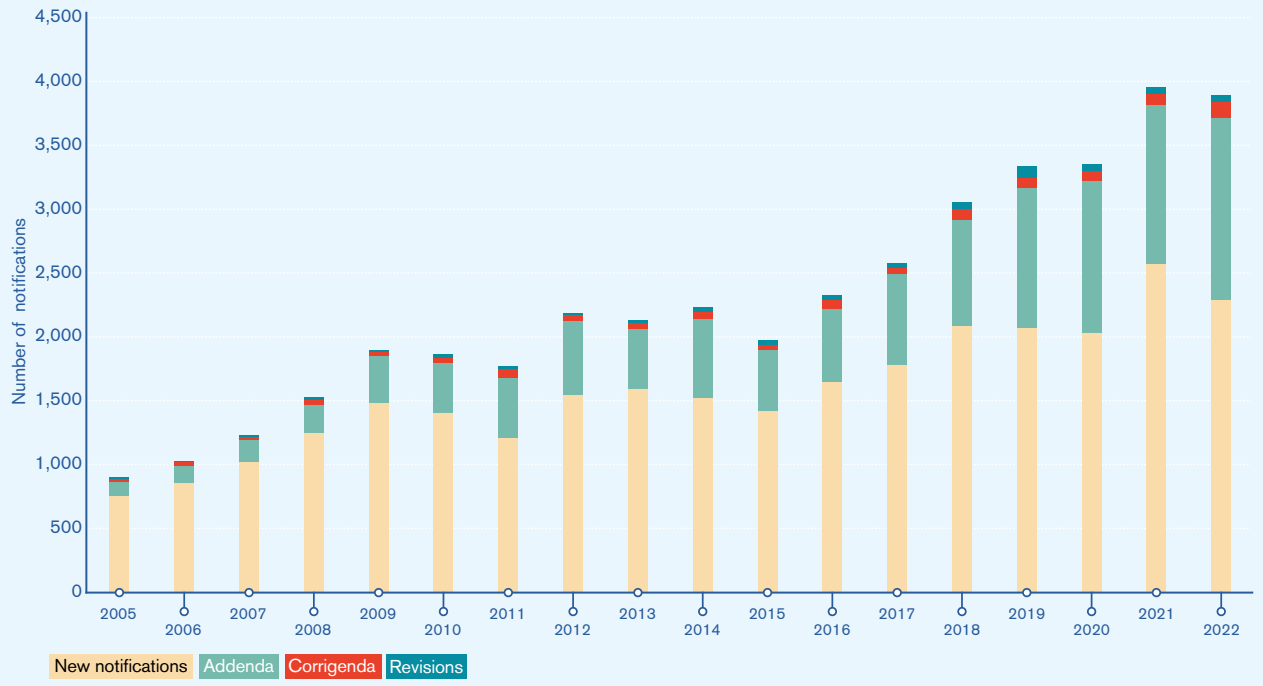
registered users on the ePing platform, from 189 countries/territories

An olive oil production facility in Benevento, Italy.

Background

The TBT Agreement aims to ensure that regulations, standards, testing and certification procedures followed by WTO members do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade. The number of regulations adopted by WTO members has continued to grow in response to consumers' demands for safe, high-quality products, the protection of health and the need to curb pollution and environmental degradation.

Figure 5: TBT notifications, 2005-22



The Committee also worked on exchanging experiences in the standards and regulatory area regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and discussed practices for future pandemic preparedness. The Secretariat issued a background document "Overview of COVID-19-Related Discussions in the TBT Committee".

In 2022, the Secretariat launched an integrated ePing SPS&TBT platform (see page 93) that facilitates tracking SPS and TBT notifications as well as specific trade concerns. The new platform is complemented by a mobile application to facilitate access to notifications on product requirements by a broader range of stakeholders. By the end of 2022, ePing had over 19,000 registered users from 189 countries/territories, up from just over 15,000 users in 2021.

Specific trade concerns (STCs)

In 2022, the Committee discussed 241 STCs, both new and previously raised concerns regarding draft or adopted TBT measures. The number of new STCs (53) decreased by 17 per cent compared with 2021 (64), and the number of previously raised STCs (188) also slightly decreased compared with 2021 (193).

A significant number of STCs related to environmental measures (such as energy conservation standards, packaging requirements and fuel economy standards) and digital issues (such as regulations on 5G, artificial intelligence systems, network security, encryption requirements and other cybersecurity-related issues).

Notifications

In 2022, WTO members submitted 3,896 notifications on product requirements, one of the highest numbers on record (see Figure 5). The number of notifying members slightly increased to 84 as compared with 2021 (83). Uganda submitted the most notifications, while the United States, Brazil, Tanzania, Kenya and Rwanda were among the top ten.

17

The number of new specific trade concerns decreased by 17%, compared with 2021

Since the launch of the new ePing platform in April, more than 99 per cent of TBT notifications are being submitted through its online facility, enabling the Secretariat to publish notifications within two days of receipt and increasing the time available for comments by other members and stakeholders. ePing also allows WTO members and the public at large to track and discuss submitted notifications and receive email alerts on relevant notifications based on product and market preferences.

Capacity-building

In 2022, the WTO Secretariat organized 26 capacity-building activities designed to help participants expand their understanding of the TBT Agreement, discuss implementation challenges and learn more about the work of the TBT Committee. The vast majority of the training activities contained either a dedicated module on ePing or were exclusively about this tool.

The TBT Agreement Transparency Champions Programme was launched in October with a course in Geneva to scale up the application of, and benefits from, transparency in regulation, and foster champions for transparency. The first cohort includes 26 officials from African countries with responsibilities for TBT transparency procedures.

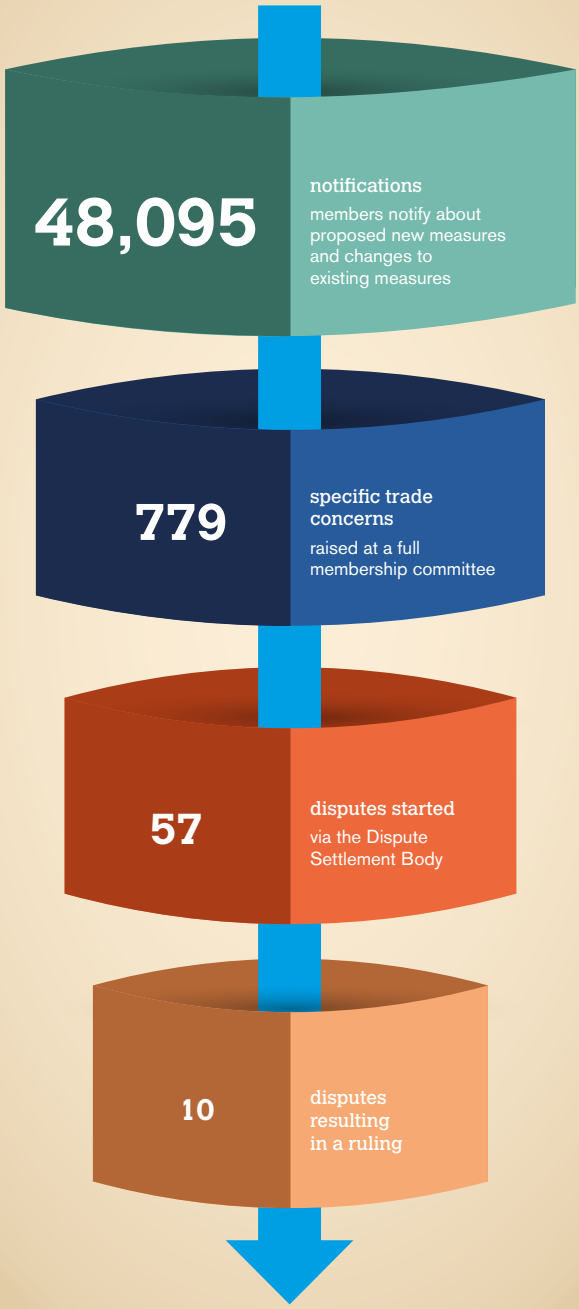
In opening remarks at the launch of the course, DDG Xiangchen Zhang said: "Transparency is a fundamental principle of the WTO and a cornerstone of the TBT Agreement."

TBT symposium "Easing regulatory bottlenecks"

In 2022, the Secretariat organized a TBT Symposium, "Easing regulatory bottlenecks", which showcased how the TBT Committee helps members to overcome bottlenecks in supply chains by promoting regulatory cooperation. The symposium examined the nature of the bottlenecks addressed by the Committee and flagged the importance of regulatory coherence in the areas of environment, health and emerging digital technologies.

Box 2: Technical requirements affecting trade in all products

Few concerns end in disputes: 1995-2022*



*until 31 December 2022.

Subsidies and countervailing measures

- **Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM) Committee chairs drew WTO members' attention to the continuing chronic low compliance with the transparency obligation to notify subsidies.**
- **Initiations of countervailing duty investigations increased to 17 in the first half of 2022, up from 11 in 2021, but down from 27 in the same 2020 period.**
- **The Committee continued to discuss ways to improve the timeliness and completeness of notifications and other information flows on trade measures, which are important for transparency.**
- **The Secretariat launched the countervailing notification portal, which is intended to streamline the notification process.**

Background

The Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM) Agreement regulates WTO members' use of subsidies and of countervailing measures on subsidized imports of a product found to be injuring domestic producers of that product. The SCM Committee reviews WTO members' notifications of specific subsidies, notifications of countervailing duty legislation, semi-annual reports of countervailing actions and *ad hoc* notifications of preliminary and final countervailing measures taken. It serves as a forum for members to discuss the implementation of the SCM Agreement and any matters arising from this.

Only 75 of the WTO's 164 members had submitted their 2021 notifications by the end-June deadline.

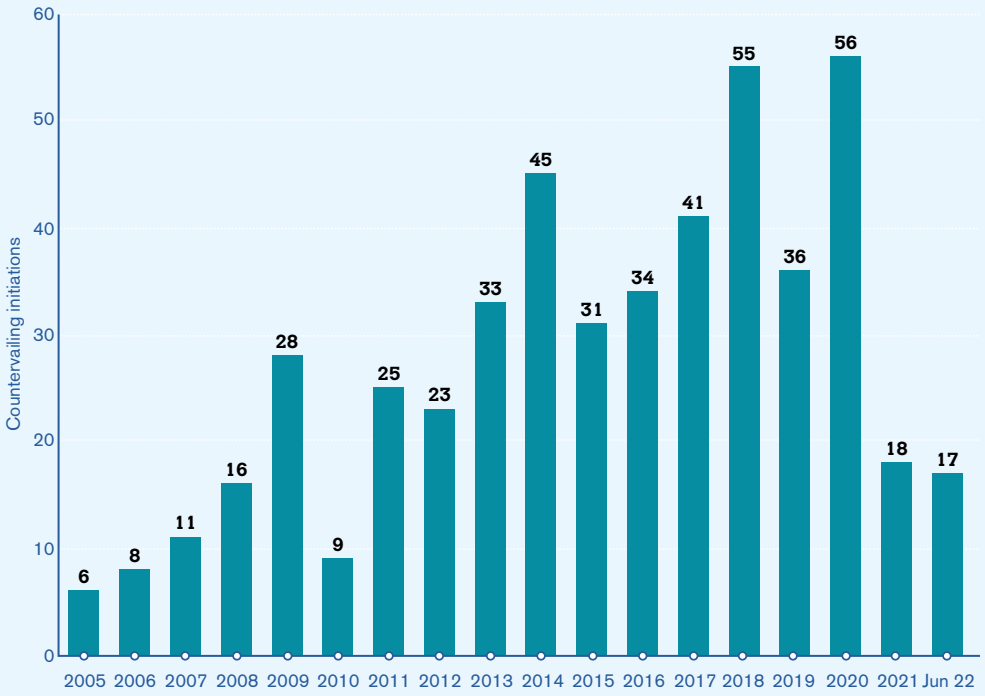
Committee chairs Noriko Teranishi (Japan) at the first meeting of the year and Kerrlene Wills (Guyana) at the second drew members' attention to the chronic low compliance with the fundamental transparency obligation to notify subsidies. They reiterated that this constitutes a serious problem for the proper functioning of the SCM Agreement.

Only 75 of the WTO's 164 members had submitted their 2021 notifications by the end-June deadline. In addition, 76 members had not submitted their 2019 notifications. Numerous members underlined the importance of transparency, citing poor compliance with notification obligations.

The Committee continued to discuss ways to improve the timeliness and completeness of notifications and other information flows on trade measures. It returned to a revised proposal by the United States on procedures for questions and answers on subsidy programmes not included in members' notifications. The Committee also continued to discuss a joint proposal from Canada, the European Union, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States to amend the procedures for review of new and full subsidy notifications.

At both Committee meetings, the chairs recalled the 31 December 2015 deadline for the extended transition period given to 19 developing economies to eliminate export subsidies. They noted that the beneficiaries

Figure 6: Initiations of new countervailing duty investigations, by year, 1 January 2005 to end-June 2022



Note: Figure 6 covers initiations up to the end of June 2022 as notified by members. Data for the second half of 2022 are not yet available.

should have made their final transparency notifications by 30 June 2016 but only 15 had done so. The Committee agreed to continue to discuss this issue in 2023. Least-developed country members and ten developing members listed in Annex VII(b) of the SCM Agreement continue to be exempted from the export subsidy prohibition.

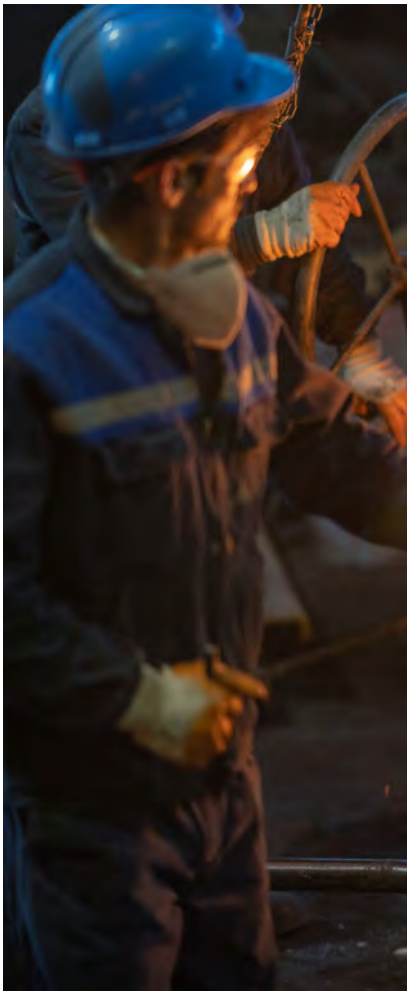
The Committee also reviewed notifications of countervailing actions taken (see Figure 6). The number of initiations of countervailing duty investigations increased to 17 in the first half of 2022, compared with 11 in the same period of 2021. As of 30 June 2022, there were 289 notified measures (definitive duties and undertakings) in force, up from 265 at the same time in 2021. In 2022, the Secretariat launched the countervailing notification portal, which is intended to streamline the notification process. The new trade remedies data portal also began operating (see page 100).

The Committee continued its discussions on subsidies and overcapacity, raised by Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. It also considered requests for information from China to the United States regarding various US policies and measures.

The Committee returned to the issue raised by Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States regarding China's publication and inquiry point obligations under China's Protocol of Accession.

In 2022, the Secretariat launched the countervailing notification portal, which is intended to streamline the notification process.

Anti-dumping investigations involving steel products accounted for 17% of new investigations in the first half of 2022.



Anti-dumping practices

- **WTO members initiated 48 new anti-dumping investigations from January to June 2022, a drop of nearly 58 per cent from the 115 initiations in the same period in 2021 (see Figure 7).**
- **The United States, followed by India, was the leading initiating member in the first half of 2022. Together, they accounted for around 54 per cent of new investigations against 68 per cent in the 2021 period.**
- **Investigations involving steel products continued to be one of the main topics for discussion in the Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices.**

In the first six months of 2022, the United States reported initiating 14 new anti-dumping investigations, up from 11 in the same period of the previous year. India initiated eight investigations in the first six months of 2022, down from 25 the previous year. After the United States and India, the top initiating members were Argentina and the Republic of Korea (five each), Australia and Chinese Taipei (three each), and Canada (two).

In the period January-June 2022, China, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Morocco, Peru and Chinese Taipei initiated more investigations than in the first half of 2021. Argentina, Australia, Canada, the European Union, Pakistan and South Africa initiated fewer investigations. The United Kingdom initiated the same number as in the first half of 2021.

Other past users of anti-dumping investigations, namely Brazil, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) states (Armenia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation), the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states (Kingdom of Bahrain, State of Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, Türkiye, Ukraine and Viet Nam did not initiate any new investigations in the first half of 2022.

Background

WTO rules for the conduct of anti-dumping investigations and the application of anti-dumping measures are set forth in the Anti-Dumping Agreement. WTO members can apply anti-dumping measures on imports of a product where the exporting company exports the product at a price lower than the normal value - generally the price the company charges in its home market - and the dumped imports cause or threaten to cause injury to the domestic industry of the like product in the importing member. The Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices provides WTO members with the opportunity to discuss any matters relating to the Anti-Dumping Agreement.

As of 30 June 2022, a total of 1,985 notified measures (definitive duties and undertakings) were in force.

Investigations involving steel products, which accounted for 17 per cent of all new investigations in the first six months of 2022, continued to be the subject of extensive debate in the Committee.

At its two regular meetings, the Committee reviewed semi-annual reports for the second half of 2021 submitted by 48 members and semi-annual reports for the first half of 2022 submitted by 49 members. Committee chairs Ahmed Al-Sulaiti (Qatar) and Juan Carlos Estrella (Ecuador), at the April and October meetings respectively, noted that some members had failed to submit semi-annual reports for the second half of 2021 or the first half of 2022.

The WTO Secretariat's new online portal for submission of anti-dumping semi-annual reports continues to be heavily used. The "explore data" function of this online tool allows members to review the data on all measures in force – those notified in their own semi-annual reports and those notified in the semi annual reports of other members.

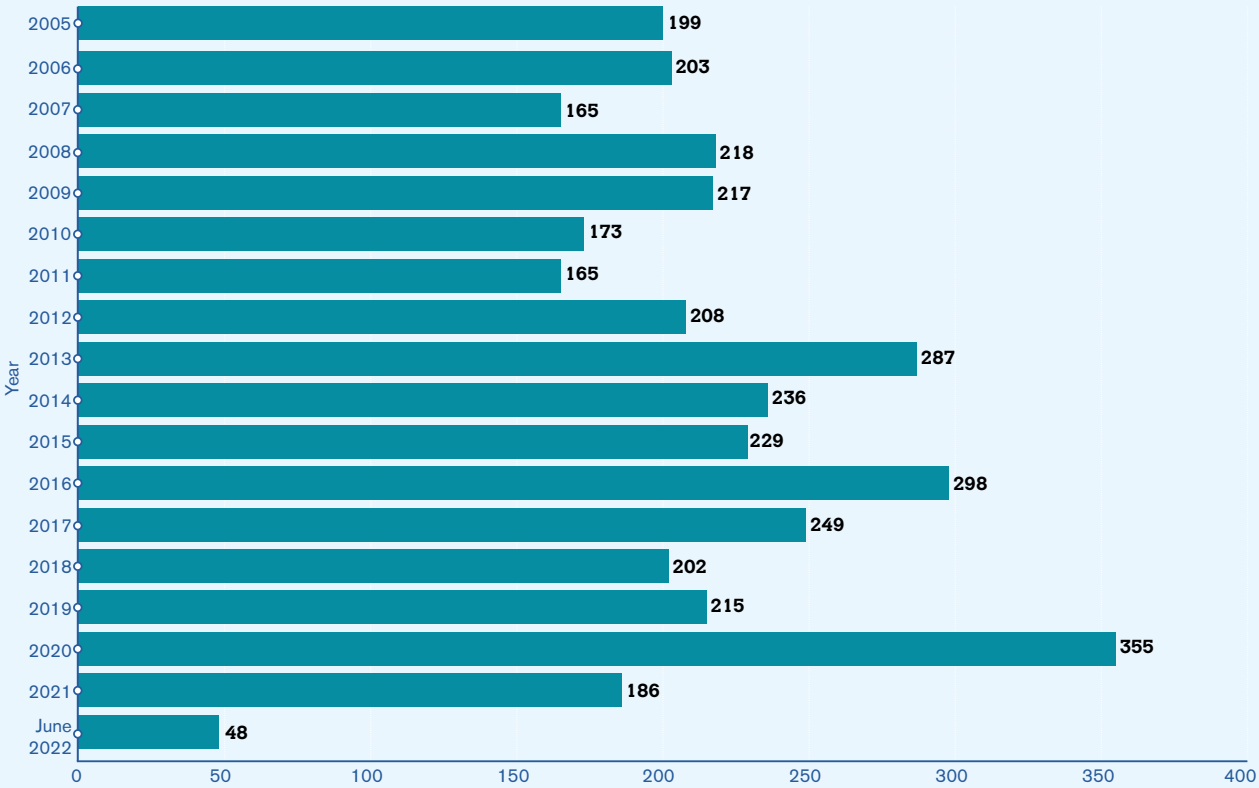
The new trade remedies data portal became available, providing enhanced online access to upgraded databases on anti-dumping and countervailing actions.

The Informal Group on Anti-Circumvention held one meeting, in April 2022. The Working Group on Implementation met twice, in April and October.

17%

Investigations involving steel products accounted for 17% of all new investigations in the first six months of 2022

Figure 7: Initiations of new anti-dumping investigations by year, 1 January 2005 to end-June 2022



Note: Figure 7 covers initiations up to the end of June 2022, as notified by members. Data for the second half of 2022 are not yet available.

Safeguards

- **WTO members launched four safeguard investigations, down from nine in 2021, and applied three measures in 2022, compared with nine the year before.**
- **Measures applied by the European Union and the United Kingdom continued to draw the most discussion.**

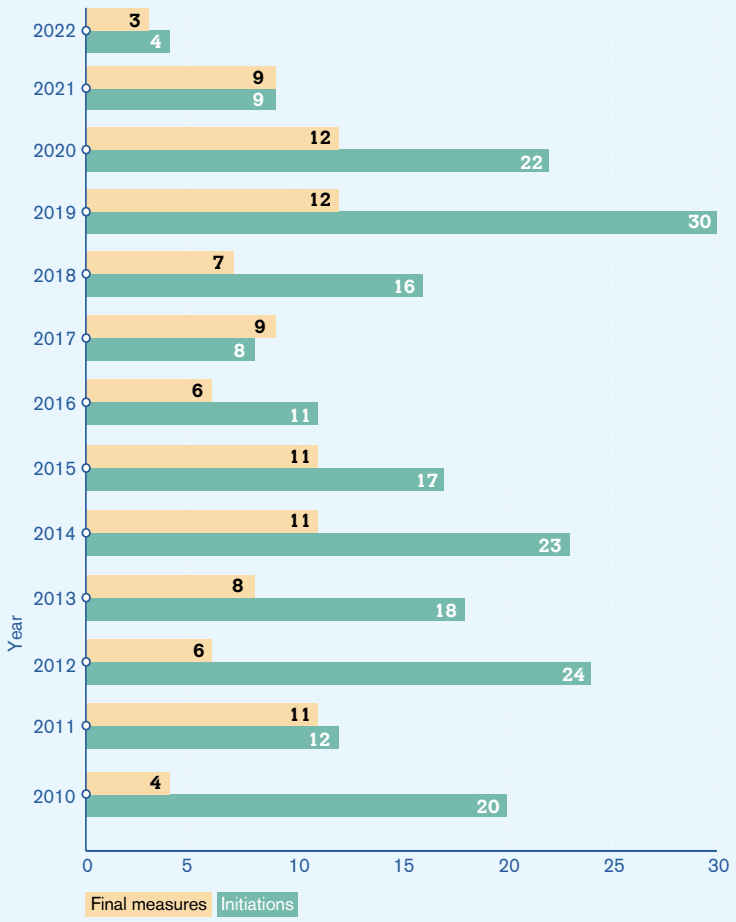
During 2022, WTO members initiated four new safeguard investigations and applied three safeguard measures, compared with nine in both cases the previous year (see Figure 8). India, Madagascar, Morocco and Tunisia initiated the investigations. India, the Philippines and Türkiye applied measures during the year.

The new investigations and application of measures are at among the lowest levels since 1995. The only years lower were 1995 (two) and 1997 (three) for initiations and 1996 for applications, when there was only one. Despite the decline in new investigations and measures, the number of safeguard measures in force increased slightly, from 41 in 2021 to 42 in 2022.

Background

The Agreement on Safeguards sets forth the rules concerning safeguard investigations and the application of safeguard measures. WTO members may take safeguard actions (impose temporary additional duties, quantitative restrictions or other measures on an imported product) where an increase in imports of the product is causing, or threatening to cause, serious injury to the domestic industry of the importing member. Subject to certain exceptions for imports from developing members, safeguard measures are applied on imports of the product from all sources (rather than from a specific member or group of members).

Figure 8: Initiations of new safeguard investigations and application of new final measures by year, 2010 to 2022 (for all WTO members)



Note: Some notifications are ambiguous about timing. For those notifications, members sometimes subsequently file an additional notification clarifying, ex post, the effective date of the measure. For this reason, the number of applications of measures indicated in the figure above can differ from the figures given in the previous Annual Report.

In total, the Safeguards Committee reviewed notifications relating to 43 specific safeguard investigations by WTO members at its regular meetings in April and October.

At both meetings, several members expressed concern over certain notified safeguard actions and called on members to strictly abide by the provisions of the Safeguards Agreement. Most members raising concerns stressed that the safeguard instrument was

intended to address emergency situations. Other general issues raised concerned the impact of safeguards on global trade and supply chains.

Two measures drew the most discussion in the two Committee meetings in 2022: the European Union's safeguard measure on certain steel products, applied since February 2019, and the United Kingdom's safeguard measure on certain steel products, applied since the United Kingdom left the European Union in February 2020.

Questions were raised over the European Union's implementation of the recommendations issued by the Dispute Settlement Body in 2020. In 2022, several members submitted proposed suspensions of concessions under the Safeguards Agreement in respect of these measures of the European Union and/or the United Kingdom.

A notification seminar was held back-to-back with the April Committee meeting to share best practices among members.

Information Technology Agreement

- **WTO members held an information dialogue with information technology (IT) representatives. A deeper understanding of cutting edge industrial technologies and global value chains is seen as fundamental to keeping the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) rule book up to date.**
- **Business representatives said the ITA and the expansion agreement are very successful, eliminating tariffs on hundreds of IT products.**

At the WTO Public Forum (see page 162), members held an ITA information and dialogue session with information technology (IT) industry representatives. Four senior industry representatives delivered presentations on semiconductor global value chains and shared the experiences and perspectives of their companies on the benefits of ITA participation for WTO members.

Background

The Information Technology Agreement (ITA) requires participants to eliminate duties on IT products on a most-favoured nation basis, meaning that all WTO members benefit from it. The ITA covers a large number of ICT products, including computers, telecommunications equipment and semiconductors. The Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products oversees the Agreement and reviews its implementation. In 2015, over 50 members concluded the expansion of the Agreement, which covers an additional 201 products valued at over US$ 1.3 trillion a year.

Business representatives said the ITA and the expansion agreement reached in 2015 are very successful, eliminating tariffs on hundreds of IT products, making personal computers and mobile phones more affordable and accessible, and helping to address the digital divide between richer and poorer economies.

The ITA's contribution to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic was also recognized. Dozens of products covered under the expansion agreement, such as pulse oximeters and multiparametric patient monitoring devices, played a key role in saving lives, speakers noted.

ITA participants said they found the business dialogue timely and relevant. A deeper understanding of cutting edge industrial technologies and the operation of global value chains is seen as fundamental to ensuring the ITA rule book remains relevant.

The Committee continued its deliberations on non-tariff measures. Regarding the electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) and electromagnetic interferences (EMI) pilot project, it noted that 43 participants had provided survey responses. The Committee encouraged remaining participants to provide information without further delay.

Regarding 22 "Attachment B" products of the 1996 Ministerial Declaration, for which there is no agreed tariff classification, the Secretariat has so far received comments from 21 delegations. The Committee encouraged delegations that had not yet provided comments to do so, with the aim of arriving at a common classification for these products within the existing HS nomenclature (see page 86).

Concern regarding Indonesian import duties on IT products was expressed at both the April and October meetings of the Committee.

On product coverage, the Committee took note of the reports from participants in the 2015 ITA Expansion Agreement. Lao PDR became the latest participant in the ITA expansion in 2021. Modifications to its goods schedules were circulated in 2022.

Three governments in the process of WTO accession – Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Bosnia and Herzegovina – requested to join the ITA. A number of members stated they did not support the participation of Belarus in the ITA.

US$ 1.3 trillion

The yearly value of products covered in the 2015 expansion of the ITA

Production of photovoltaic panels in Jiangxi province, China.

Customs valuation

- **Brazil, Georgia and Ukraine notified the Committee on Customs Valuation of updated customs legislation. Viet Nam made a first-time notification of a checklist of issues related to its legislation.**
- **The Committee continued its review of customs legislation and valuation practices of 32 members.**

In 2022, three members – Brazil, Georgia and Ukraine – provided notifications on updated customs legislation. The Committee is the focal point for the review of the customs valuation practices of WTO members and requires that all customs legislation, including updates, be notified to the Committee. The total number of members that have notified their legislation remained at 111 (representing over 80 per cent of the membership).

The Committee is currently reviewing the legislation of 32 members based on notifications provided. It also received a first-time notification from Viet Nam of a checklist of issues related to its legislation, bringing to 78 the number of members that have submitted this notification (representing over 60 per cent of the membership). The Committee also monitors the Agreement on Preshipment Inspection and reviews notifications on members' preshipment inspection measures.

Background

The WTO's Agreement on Customs Valuation seeks to establish a fair, uniform and neutral system for the valuation of goods for customs purposes, precluding the use of arbitrary or fictitious values. The Committee on Customs Valuation reviews implementation and administration of the Agreement and the Agreement on Preshipment Inspection.

Rules of origin

- **The Committee on Rules of Origin focused on transparency regarding non-preferential and preferential rules of origin, following up on ministerial calls to make it easier for least-developed countries (LDCs) to qualify for preferential treatment and make use of market access opportunities.**
- **On non-preferential rules of origin, members continued to discuss a proposal to streamline notifications.**
- **The WTO Secretariat issued a note on the impact that different types of certification have on LDCs' ability to utilize preferences.**

Non-preferential rules of origin

WTO members continued considering a proposal to streamline notifications of non-preferential rules of origin, including by introducing a new notification template. Rules of origin define where a product is made and are used for the implementation of trade policy measures, such as quotas, anti-dumping or

Background

Rules of origin are the criteria used to determine where a product is made. They are used in the implementation of many trade measures, including trade preferences, customs duties, labelling of "country of origin" and the application of anti-dumping measures. The main objective of the Agreement on Rules of Origin is to harmonize the rules that all WTO members use to determine origin in their non-preferential trade. This work is conducted by the Committee on Rules of Origin. The Committee also reviews the implementation of the 2013 and 2015 ministerial decisions on preferential rules of origin for LDCs.

"made in" labels. Following consultations on the proposal, first presented in 2019, the Chair of the Committee – Laura Gauer (Switzerland) – issued a revised draft for discussion by members.

Members also attended an information session organized by the Secretariat on the work conducted by the Committee on the harmonization of non-preferential rules of origin. The session offered an overview of the objectives and history of the negotiations.

Preferential rules of origin

At WTO ministerial conferences in Bali (2013) and Nairobi (2015), ministers laid down guidelines to make it easier for LDCs to qualify for preferential treatment and to better utilize market access opportunities.

In 2022, members agreed to continue working to ensure that the rules used by members in their non-reciprocal preferences for LDCs are simple and transparent. Such efforts could include, the Committee decided in April 2022, identifying and agreeing to best practices and further analysing the utilization of trade preferences. The April decision was welcomed by ministers at the 12th Ministerial Conference in June 2022.

In 2022, Thailand informed members that it had renewed its duty-free quota-free scheme (DFQF) for LDCs until 2026. The United Kingdom reported on the launch of its Developing Countries Trading Scheme, which replaced the UK's Generalized Scheme of Preferences. The United States reported on a webinar – "How can exporting countries improve utilization of US Trade Preference Programs?"– it organized during the 8th WTO Aid for Trade Review (see page 141).

The WTO Secretariat issued a note on the impact that different types of certification have on the ability of LDCs to utilize preferences. Self-certification, where the origin of the goods and compliance with specific origin criteria is attested by the producer or exporter, has generally better rates of preference utilization than third-party utilization. In the latter, the origin and compliance are attested by a designated or mutually recognized authority.

According to the note, the overall under-utilization rate for members allowing self-certification was 22 per cent, compared with 49 per cent for members applying third-party certification. The note called for members' cooperation in collecting more detailed information so that additional research could be conducted. Members agreed to work further on the topics covered in the note.

In April 2022, the Secretariat organized a second webinar – "What drives the utilization of trade preferences?" – as a follow-up to a similar event in 2021. Speakers explored the different factors which influence the ability and willingness of businesses to utilize trade preferences and shared their experience monitoring the utilization rates of their trade preferences.

Rules of origin play an important role in the production of high-tech goods.

Import licensing

- **The Committee on Import Licensing reviewed 96 notifications from WTO members under the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures, which aims to ensure that licensing systems are transparent and do not restrict trade.**
- **Members discussed ten specific trade concerns regarding import licensing procedures.**
- **The Committee adopted the eAgenda platform, facilitating the building of meeting agendas online and making documents and statements available in electronic format.**

In 2022, the Committee received 56 notifications from 16 members on new import licensing procedures or changes in these procedures. It also reviewed 40 notifications from 36 members containing responses to the annual questionnaire on import licensing procedures. While the number of notifications of new import licensing procedures or changes declined as compared with 2021, the number of notifications containing the responses to the annual questionnaire increased.

As of the end of 2022, 13 WTO members had not submitted any notification on import licensing and 21 members had never submitted responses to the questionnaire. WTO trade monitoring reports have identified import licensing as one of the main trade-restricting measures introduced by governments.

WTO members raised several new and recurring specific trade concerns. Canada, the European Union and the United States questioned India's import requirements on certain pulses. The European Union and the United States questioned Angola's import licensing requirements, Egypt's import licensing on certain agricultural and processed products and importation of ceramics, and Indonesia's commodity balancing mechanism.

The European Union, Indonesia, Japan, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and the United States questioned India's import licensing regime for pneumatic tyres. The European Union questioned Thailand's import procedures on feed wheat. Japan and the European Union questioned Indonesia's compulsory registration by importers of steel products, its import licensing regime for certain textiles products and its import restriction on air conditioners. The United States questioned China's changes to import licensing for certain recoverable materials.

In 2022, the Committee implemented an eAgenda platform. E-Agenda aims at facilitating the work of delegations and the Secretariat in building a meeting's agenda, including adding items, making relevant documents directly available to participants in electronic format and sharing statements.

From 27 to 29 September, the Secretariat conducted a second virtual WTO workshop on import licensing and notifications, attended by 65 government officials from 37 developing economies and least-developed countries.

65

government officials from 37 developing economies and least-developed countries attended a WTO workshop on import licensing

Background

The Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures establishes disciplines on import licensing systems, with the objective of ensuring that the procedures applied for granting import licences do not in themselves restrict trade. It aims to simplify the administrative requirements necessary to obtain licences and to ensure fair and transparent administration of the procedures. The Agreement requires WTO members to notify publications and legislation on import licensing procedures and any changes as well as to submit an annual questionnaire on import licensing procedures.

Balance-of-payments restrictions

- **The Chair of the Committee on Balance-of-Payments Restrictions held informal consultations on the Committee's functioning.**
- **No measures taken for balance-of-payments purposes were notified to the Committee in 2022.**

Background

The Committee on Balance-of-Payments Restrictions is responsible for the review of all import restrictions applied by WTO members for balance-of-payments purposes. Under WTO rules, measures can be taken to safeguard a member's external financial position and (in the case of developing economies) to ensure a level of reserves adequate for the implementation of programmes of economic development. When adopting balance-of-payments measures, members must give preference to those with the least disruptive effect on trade.

At a Committee meeting in November to approve its annual report, its Chair – Ambassador Saqer Abdullah Almoqbel (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) – reminded members that any measure directly or indirectly taken to restrict imports due to balance-of-payments reasons must be notified to the Committee and must be the subject of consultations.

The Chair called members' attention to the 12th Ministerial Conference Outcome Declaration, which acknowledged the need to address the challenges that the WTO is facing and ensure its proper functioning. In this respect, he proposed holding consultations with members regarding the functioning of the Committee.

Two rounds of informal bilateral consultations were held in November. During the consultations, members noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in an increase in balance-of-payments problems, which could lead to the adoption of trade-restrictive measures. Members agreed that transparency was important for the stability of the multilateral trading system and that notifying measures adopted for balance-of-payments reasons was a transparency obligation.

No measures taken for balance-of-payments purposes were notified to the Committee in 2022.

Trade-related investment measures

- **The Committee on Trade-related Investment Measures (TRIMs) examined two new measures in discussions of concerns regarding alleged local content requirements.**

The Committee on TRIMs in 2022 discussed investment measures which, according to the WTO members requesting these items, contained import restrictions or local content obligations – for example, the obligation to use domestically manufactured or supplied goods and services.

The Committee continued its discussion of the alleged implementation by Indonesia of local content requirements in a wide range of sectors – 4G mobile devices and base stations, telecommunication services, retail and franchising, and the pharmaceutical and medical device sectors – together with alleged investment restrictions in its energy and mining sectors.

Background

The TRIMs Agreement recognizes that certain measures aimed at promoting foreign or domestic investments can restrict and distort trade. It states that WTO members may not apply any trade-related investment measure that discriminates against foreign products or that leads to quantitative restrictions, both of which violate basic WTO principles. An illustrative list of prohibited TRIMs, which often take the form of local content requirements, is part of the Agreement. The TRIMs Committee monitors the implementation of the Agreement and allows members to consult on any relevant matters.

The Committee discussed alleged implementation of local content requirements in a range of sectors, including telecommunications services.

In addition, the Committee further discussed items concerning alleged import restrictions by India on air conditioners and alleged import restrictions by Indonesia on carpets and other textiles and air conditioners.

Two new items were raised by members in the Committee. They concerned alleged local content obligations contained in the Chinese Recommended National Standard (GB/T) for office devices and in the revision of the Chinese Government Procurement Law.

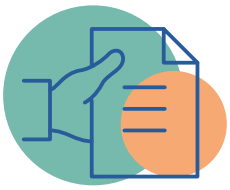
In addition, the Committee took note of notifications submitted by Tonga, Thailand and Djibouti under Article 6.2 of the TRIMs Agreement, which requires WTO members to notify the Committee of all publications in which TRIMs may be found, including those applied by regional and local governments within their territory.

State trading enterprises

- **The Working Party on State Trading Enterprises (STEs) reviewed 35 new and full notifications in 2022, up from 20 in 2021, from 31 WTO members.**
- **Compliance with notification obligations remained poor.**

The Working Party on STEs reviewed 35 new and full notifications, up from 20 in 2021, from 31 WTO members regarding the activities of their STEs during the most recent notification period or earlier notification periods. Members also asked questions about specific aspects of notifications made at previous meetings.

For the most recent notification period, covering 2020 and 2021, only 34 new and full notifications were received from the total of 137 WTO members – counting the European Union as one – subject to this obligation. WTO members were encouraged by the Chair of the Working Party, Agustín Navarro de Vicente-Gella (Spain), to continue to work with their respective capitals and the WTO Secretariat to improve their notification record.



34

Only 34 notifications were received from WTO members for 2020 and 2021

Background

State trading enterprises are defined as governmental or non-governmental enterprises, including marketing boards, which have been granted exclusive or special rights or privileges that give them an influence on imports and/or exports of goods. Such enterprises are required to act in a manner consistent with the WTO principle of non-discriminatory treatment. The Working Party on State Trading Enterprises reviews WTO members' notifications of state trading enterprises.

Trade in civil aircraft

- **Brazil applied to join the Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft.**
- **Brazil's accession request is the first to be reviewed by the Committee.**

Background

The Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft is a plurilateral agreement that aims to achieve maximum freedom of world trade in civil aircraft, parts and related equipment – such as engines, radar, flight recorders and ground flight simulators – by, among other things, eliminating tariffs on goods listed in its product annex. The Committee on Trade in Civil Aircraft provides signatories with an opportunity to consult on any matters relating to the operation of the Agreement.

In June 2022, Brazil submitted an application for accession to the Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft. The application was discussed at both a dedicated informal meeting in October and the regular meeting of the Committee in November. The Chair, Jean-Marie Meraldi of Switzerland, indicated that the signatories would need more time to consider the matter.

This is the first accession request to be reviewed by the Committee. All recently acceding WTO members took part in negotiations in the context of their accession to the WTO. North Macedonia took the number of signatories to 33 when it joined the Agreement in 2019.

The Committee continued the transposition exercise of the product annex of the Agreement, initiated in 2021. The purpose is to update the annex to reflect the latest amendments to the Harmonized System (HS), the system used to classify traded goods on a common basis. At the regular meeting, the Secretariat made a presentation on a related technical note, which would serve as a starting point for the exercise.

The Committee also continued to discuss how to strengthen transparency in light of the fact that the exact status of the obligations of each signatory is not easy to confirm due to the legally complicated nature of the Agreement.

An engineer working on an aircraft turbine in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Trade facilitation

- **The Committee on Trade Facilitation marked the fifth anniversary of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The landmark accord helped ensure that food, medical products and other essential supplies continued to reach people during the COVID-19 pandemic, the DG said.**
- **The Solomon Islands and Guinea-Bissau notified their domestic ratifications of the TFA, bringing the number of members to have ratified to 156 (95 per cent).**
- **The Committee held a dedicated session on assistance to developing and least-developed countries on implementing the TFA.**
- **The Committee adopted a new framework for the management and operation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF), which aims to help developing economies implement the TFA.**

Speaking on the fifth anniversary on 22 February 2022 of the coming into force of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), DG Okonjo-Iweala said the landmark accord had helped support global supply chain resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Border reforms to fulfil TFA commitments, such as the streamlining of trade procedures, expedited approvals for perishable goods, and establishment of information portals, have helped ensure that food, vaccines, medical products and other essential supplies continued to reach people, despite difficult conditions," the DG said. "However, full implementation of the TFA, supported by aid for capacity building from partners, will be necessary to help economies bounce back and better withstand future shocks," she said.

WTO members marked the anniversary with a workshop in June. Participants highlighted the multifaceted economic benefits of the Agreement, including its impact on digitalization, resilience, inclusiveness and coordination but also emphasized the need for sustained, robust technical assistance and capacity-building support.

95%
of WTO members have ratified the TFA

Background

The Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) entered into force in February 2017. It aims to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit, and establishes measures for effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues. The Agreement also contains provisions for technical assistance and capacity building. The Committee on Trade Facilitation oversees the TFA and reviews its implementation.

> **Border reforms to fulfil TFA commitments, such as the streamlining of trade procedures, expedited approvals for perishable goods, and establishment of information portals, have helped ensure that food, vaccines, medical products and other essential supplies continued to reach people, despite difficult conditions.**
> DG Okonjo-Iweala

Implementation of the TFA

The Solomon Islands and Guinea-Bissau notified their domestic ratifications of the TFA, bringing the number of members to have ratified to 156 (95 per cent).

Developing economies and least-developed countries (LDCs) continued to submit required notifications. The TFA is the first WTO agreement in which developing and LDC members can determine their own implementation schedules and seek to enhance their capacity to implement the Agreement through the provision of assistance and support. The Committee granted requests from seven LDCs to extend the notification deadline for implementation of certain TFA provisions beyond the 22 August 2022 cut-off date.

In April 2022, the Committee held the first of four planned annual sessions to discuss transit issues of landlocked countries, as called for in the four-year review of the TFA carried out in 2021. Speakers noted the importance of infrastructure developments, digitalization, the streamlining and transparency of procedures, and collaboration between landlocked and transit economies.

Assistance and capacity building

The Committee held its annual dedicated session in December on how to better assist developing economies and least-developed countries in implementing the TFA, looking specifically at certain provisions due for implementation in 2023 and 2024.

The DG called for greater effort and cooperation to ensure no member is left behind. Five years into the Agreement, "the global implementation rate for commitments stands at 74 per cent. This is positive," she said. "However, the rate for developing members and least-developed countries (LDCs) is about 66 per cent and LDCs lag behind significantly at 37 per cent."

According to a WTO Secretariat report to the Committee, 54 members have commitments to implement certain TFA provisions by 2023 and 2024. They involve measures such as simplified paperwork, ensuring cooperation among authorities responsible for border controls, and establishing a single window (single contact point) for submission of requirements.

Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility

In April 2022, the Committee adopted a new framework for the management and operation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF), updating guidelines developed in 2015, prior to the entry into force of the TFA. TFAF aims to help developing economies implement the TFA.

In 2022, the focus of TFAF's work was on LDCs' TFA implementation notifications, expressions of interest for grants and project-preparation grants, an independent evaluation of the Facility and preparing the 2023 workplan.

Three grant requests from members were matched with development partners, covering more than 30 provisions of the TFA in total.

The operational guidelines require the Facility to commission an independent review within five years of entry into force of the TFA. The evaluation was conducted by KPMG Norway and was completed by the end of 2022.

156

Solomon Islands and Guinea-Bissau brought the number of members to have ratified the TFA to 156

Trucks queue at the ferry terminal in Dover, United Kingdom.

Trade in services

- **WTO members started implementing ministers' mandate to improve the operation of the services waiver for least-developed countries (LDCs), including by improving LDC services export data.**
- **The Council for Trade in Services received 35 notifications, covering new or revised measures that significantly affect trade in services, up from 21 in 2021.**

WTO members discussed how to follow up on outcomes from the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12). Under consideration were the LDC services waiver, which seeks to boost the participation of LDCs in services trade, the e-commerce work programme, the WTO response to pandemics and WTO reform.

LDC services waiver

At MC12, ministers instructed the Council to review and promote the operation of the waiver, introduced in 2011, which allows more favourable treatment for services and suppliers from LDCs. They tasked members with exploring improvements in LDC services export data, reviewing information on suppliers and consumers of LDC services in the markets of preference-grantors and assessing best practices in facilitating the use of those preferences.

At MC12, ministers instructed the Council to review and promote the operation of the waiver, which allows more favourable treatment for services and suppliers from LDCs.

The Chair of the Council, Ambassador Kemvichet Long of Cambodia, undertook consultations on how to implement the mandate. All members underscored the importance of the waiver and their willingness to engage further on the issue. The LDC Group indicated that it would present a written proposal. The Council directed the WTO Secretariat to prepare a methodological note on how LDC services trade statistics could be improved.

E-commerce

Members discussed how to follow up on the MC12 decision to "reinvigorate" the work programme. In 2022, several members presented their domestic experience and initiatives in the digital sphere. The Council agreed that the Secretariat would produce a compilation of the information delegations have shared to date.

Other MC12 mandates

The Chair held consultations on WTO reform and pandemic responses. On reform, members suggested possible improvements to the Council's monitoring and deliberative function while on pandemic responses some delegations proposed engaging in an information exchange exercise and others suggested holding a workshop.

Background

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) defines trade in services in terms of four types of transactions: mode 1 – cross-border supply (a supplier in one WTO member provides services to a consumer in another member's territory); mode 2 – consumption abroad (a consumer from one member consumes services in another member's territory); mode 3 – commercial presence (a foreign company provides services through establishment in another member's territory); and mode 4 – presence of natural persons (individuals move to supply services in another member's territory). The Council for Trade in Services oversees the operation of the GATS.

Other issues

The Council started its fifth review of exemptions to the most-favoured nation (MFN) principle. Under this principle, members must not discriminate between the services and service suppliers of WTO members. Members agreed the review will follow the same question-and-answer process used for the last one in 2016. The review will examine whether the conditions creating the need for a member's exemption to the MFN treatment principle still prevail.

Japan and the United States reiterated concerns about cybersecurity measures of both China and Viet Nam. The United States raised concerns about the localization of customer services in Saudi Arabia. China expressed concerns about Australian 5G measures, US measures related to mobile applications and telecom operators and Indian measures on investment approval and mobile applications.

The Russian Federation raised its concerns about unilateral measures taken by various members, who replied that their measures had been introduced in response to the war in Ukraine.

The Council received 35 notifications of new or revised measures that significantly affect trade in services where the notifying members have commitments. Eighteen other notifications dealt with economic integration agreements covering services trade and another eight concerned recognition measures in services sectors.

Specific commitments

The Committee on Specific Commitments considered a proposal from Türkiye on implementation issues related to specific commitments and Article II (MFN) on cross-border supply of road transport services under the General Agreement on Trade in Services. The discussion on the Turkish proposal so far being preliminary, the Committee will continue to consider the issues raised.

Trade in financial services

The Committee on Trade in Financial Services considered a proposal submitted in October by Canada and co-sponsored by Chile, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Ukraine to organize a seminar on "Financial Services: Trade, Inclusion and Accessibility". The purpose is to promote discussion on the interplay between financial services trade, financial inclusion and inclusive growth. The proposal will continue to be discussed in 2023.

Trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS)

- **Ecuador, Eswatini and the Maldives deposited their instruments of acceptance for the TRIPS protocol, taking to 136 the number of members that have accepted the amendment easing WTO members' access to affordable medicines.**
- **The WTO Secretariat resumed its annual in-person course on trade and public health for senior government officials, with a special focus on the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- **Thirty members notified the TRIPS Council of new or updated IP legislation, twice as many as in 2021. Notifications are an important source of information and transparency.**

Background

The intellectual property system has become central to the debate about economic development and broader public policy questions, such as innovation policy and public health. The TRIPS Agreement is the most comprehensive international treaty governing the protection, administration and enforcement of intellectual property rights. The Council for TRIPS, a body also open to certain observers, administers the TRIPS Agreement, provides a forum for debate on policy issues and reviews the intellectual property legislation of individual WTO members.

Public health

Ecuador, Eswatini and the Maldives deposited their instruments of acceptance for the protocol amending the TRIPS Agreement, taking to 136 the number of members that have accepted it. The amendment, the first to a multilateral WTO agreement, made a special compulsory licensing system an integral part of the accord and gives developing economies and least-developed countries (LDCs) an additional secure, legal avenue to procure affordable medicines from external sources.

The remaining 28 members that have yet to deposit instruments of acceptance continue to benefit from a 2003 waiver decision that first established the mechanism. They currently have until 31 December 2023 to accept the amendment.

A compulsory or government use licence is issued by a government authority or a court to allow use of a patented invention without the consent of the patent holder. TRIPS rules ordinarily require that such licences predominantly supply the domestic market. The special compulsory licensing system permits a derogation from this rule to facilitate the export of needed pharmaceutical products to members lacking sufficient domestic production capacity.

TRIPS and public health continued to be addressed in various technical cooperation activities organized by the WTO Secretariat as part of cooperation with the World Health Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The three organizations held two online workshops in 2022 aimed at strengthening the capacity of policymakers and experts to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

A workshop in February highlighted information resources for the pandemic response while a second in October looked at innovation and access to diagnostics for COVID-19 and beyond. In December, the three organizations resumed their series of annual technical symposia on current policy issues with an event titled "COVID-19 Pandemic: Response, Preparedness, Resilience".

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WTO members have accepted the TRIPS Agreement amendment, easing members' access to affordable medicines

At the end of 2022, the WTO Secretariat resumed its annual one-week in-person course for senior government officials on trade and public health, this time with a special focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. As in prior years, the course was conducted in collaboration with the WHO and WIPO secretariats.

COVID-19

The TRIPS Council continued to discuss IP-related measures members have taken during the pandemic. The discussions were based on a compilation maintained by the Secretariat on the WTO website – "COVID-19: Measures Regarding Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights" – and the Ministerial Declaration on the WTO Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Preparedness for Future Pandemics adopted at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022.

The declaration instructed WTO bodies to continue or initiate work in their respective area of competence to analyse lessons learned and challenges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on WTO members' proposals.

The Council also considered proposals that ultimately concluded in a ministerial decision at MC12 giving members greater scope to diversify production of COVID-19 vaccines and override patents through a targeted waiver and clarifications to the TRIPS Agreement (see page 61). The decision stipulated that members would decide within six months whether to extend it to COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics.

Although members remain committed to the common goal of providing timely and secure access to high-quality, safe, efficacious and affordable medical technologies for all, they have not yet reached consensus on extending the decision (see page 62).

Promoting transparency

In March 2022, the WTO Secretariat issued the second Annual Report on Notifications and Other Information Flows, which explains transparency mechanisms related to the TRIPS Agreement and notification trends, among other things.

During 2022, 30 WTO members notified the TRIPS Council of new or updated IP legislation, twice as many as in 2021. To date, 139 WTO members have notified their TRIPS implementing legislation. Several members provided further background on their respective notified legislation.

Additionally, 112 members have provided responses to a checklist notifying the essential elements of their systems for enforcement of IP rights and 148 have notified contact points for cooperating with each other on eliminating trade in IP-infringing goods. Members' notifications constitute an important source of information and transparency.

The Council was briefed on TRIPS-related measures covered in the Director-General's G20 and WTO-wide trade monitoring reports and on IP policy matters raised during trade policy reviews. Topics included the evolution of members' domestic copyright, trademark, geographical indications and patent regimes, IP enforcement online and international cooperation on IP.

The e-TRIPS gateway and the online submission system for WTO members are streamlining the submission and management of notifications and other transparency materials and providing user-friendly access to all TRIPS-related materials.

Incentives for technology transfer

In March 2022, the Council concluded its annual review of reports provided by developed economies on incentives granted to promote and encourage the transfer

In March 2022, the Council concluded its annual review of reports provided by developed country members on incentives granted to promote and encourage the transfer of technology to LDCs.

of technology to LDCs. Contributing to discussions were government officials who attended a virtual workshop dedicated to the implementation of the provisions, held immediately prior to the March Council meeting. The Council started its next annual review in October.

TRIPS non-violation and situation complaints

The TRIPS Council continued its discussion of the application of so-called non violation and situation complaints. This relates to the question of whether members can bring disputes where an expected benefit from the TRIPS Agreement has been nullified, even if there is no specific violation. Ministers agreed at MC12 to the TRIPS Council's November 2021 recommendation that the current moratorium on such complaints be further extended until MC13, which is to be held in February 2024.

Plants, animals, biodiversity and traditional knowledge

The Council continued its discussion on the patentability of plant and animal inventions, the relationship between the TRIPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore.

WTO members reiterated their positions on whether the TRIPS Agreement should be amended to prohibit the patentability of life forms and whether – and, if so, how – it should do more to promote the CBD objectives of authorized access and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge from other members' jurisdictions.

Technical cooperation and capacity-building

The WTO Secretariat launched a new web page on "Trade in knowledge: intellectual property, digital trade and knowledge flows", bringing together resources aimed at helping policymakers and others understand the changing patterns of knowledge flows across borders and consider the legal, economic and policy implications.

WHO, WIPO and the WTO jointly launched in April 2022 a COVID-19 technical assistance platform, providing a "one-stop shop" for their members and WTO accession candidates to address capacity-building needs to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Officials can submit a request online for tailored technical assistance on making full use of all options to access vaccines, medicines and technologies.

IP and innovation

The Council continued its information exchange on IP and innovation, focusing on microfinance, IP licensing opportunities and the role of IP to raise finance for start-ups. Members shared their experiences and domestic policies in these areas.

Trade and environment

- **Ministers at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) cited the importance of the multilateral trading system in meeting environmental challenges and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**
- **Ministers recognized the role of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) as a forum for dialogue on the relationship between trade and environmental measures.**
- **The CTE continued to discuss environmental topics at the centre of global concerns, such as climate change and ways to promote a circular economy and sustainability.**
- **The WTO played an active role at the UN's COP27 Climate Change Conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.**

12th Ministerial Conference

MC12 in June 2022 produced important outcomes for the WTO's trade and environment work. Ministers affirmed that climate change is a global environmental challenge and cited the importance of the multilateral trading system in achieving the UN's 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The outcome document highlighted the role of the CTE "as a standing forum dedicated to dialogue among members on the relationship between trade measures and environmental measures".

CTE Chair, Ambassador Simon Manley of the United Kingdom, sought members' ideas on how best to advance the work of the Committee in following up on MC12. Delegations underscored the importance of transparency and cooperation to prevent trade frictions and the need to harness trade policies to protect the planet.

Suggestions on ways forward included holding thematic discussions, coordinating with other committees on cross-cutting issues and examining support for developing economies and least-developed countries. Several members added that the WTO must not only recognize environmental challenges but also commit to address them.

Key themes

The Committee continued to discuss topics such as fossil fuel subsidies reform, the circular economy – which emphasizes reusing and recycling materials, plastics pollution, sustainability, biodiversity, transfer of technology, climate change and carbon border adjustment mechanisms.

Background

Sustainable development and protection and preservation of the environment are fundamental goals of the WTO. The Committee on Trade and Environment is responsible for examining the relationship between trade and the environment.

Discussions and briefings took place at every Committee meeting on three member-led trade and environment initiatives – the Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade, the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions, and the Fossil Fuel Subsidies Reform. Co-convenors of these initiatives updated the Committee on their ministerial statements of December 2021 and their 2022 workplans.

Several members briefed the Committee on their efforts to combat plastics pollution. Maldives informed delegations of the steps taken to phase out single-use plastics. Saudi Arabia briefed on the key role of the circular economy. Japan presented its "Plastic Resource Recycling Promotion Law", which promotes recycling throughout the life cycle, from design and manufacturing to disposal. The European Union spoke of its intention to move to a circular system in which plastics are recycled.

The EU continued briefing members on the European Green Deal, which aims at net zero greenhouse-gas emissions by 2050. The briefings included its legislative proposals on a carbon border adjustment mechanism and on curbing EU-driven deforestation. The latter seeks to minimize the risk that products associated with deforestation or forest degradation enter the EU market. The EU also presented its legislative proposal on eco-design for sustainable products and revisions to its waste shipment regulation.

The WTO Secretariat reported to members on responses to the Aid for Trade monitoring and evaluation (see page 141) exercise, which highlighted members' efforts to integrate climate and environment objectives in domestic frameworks, with an emerging focus on circular economy initiatives.

Climate change and trade

The WTO played an active role at the UN's COP27 Climate Change Conference, which took place in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 6 to 18 November (see page 14). Speaking at the launch there of the WTO's World Trade Report, which focused this year on climate change and international trade (see page 172), DG Okonjo-Iweala said an effective strategy for tackling global warming cannot succeed without governments considering the important role of trade in meeting climate goals.

In the Committee, Switzerland highlighted its work in concluding cooperation agreements defining the conditions for the transfer of internationally transferred mitigation outcomes. India briefed on its renewable energy and energy efficiency measures aimed at reducing emissions intensity by 45 per cent by 2030. China provide an update on its progress regarding achieving peak CO_2 emissions and carbon neutrality and its concepts for international cooperation.

Members also considered the US presentation of its discussion paper "Climate Change and Circular Economy". The United Kingdom provided regular updates on COP26 outcomes, and the progress made since, underscoring the need to place climate and environmental issues at the heart of the WTO's agenda. Egypt also briefed on preparations for COP27.

The UK again briefed members on the Forest Agriculture and Commodities Trade Dialogue, which developed a roadmap to support transition to a coherent international system for sustainable agricultural-commodity production and trade.

New Zealand provided an update on negotiations towards an Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability (ACCTS), launched together with Costa Rica, Fiji, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. The ACCTS would include removal of tariffs on environmental goods, disciplines to eliminate harmful fossil fuel subsidies and voluntary eco-labelling programmes.

Australia and Singapore presented the Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement – the first of its kind – which builds on existing cooperation to act on climate change, strengthen trade and investment in clean energy and assist in advancing net zero ambitions.

In December, the Secretariat published an information note mapping the proliferation of standards for decarbonizing the steel industry and outlining how the work of the WTO could support harmonization efforts and help prevent trade frictions. The note underscores the importance of addressing developing economies' needs with respect to decarbonization standards.

Environmental database and new publications

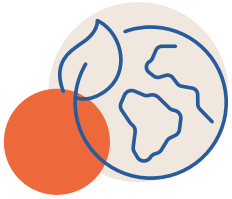
The Secretariat briefed members on the latest information in the Environmental Database, which covers information on roughly 7,000 environment-related notifications, 14,500 measures notified under WTO agreements and 9,300 environment-related entries in trade policy reviews. In a sign of greater transparency, a record 931 environment-related notifications were registered in 2021, containing 2,250 measures, a 62 per cent increase from 2020 (see Figure 9).

Outreach and training activities

A joint webinar with the World Bank entitled "How to unleash trade and scale-wide adoption of environmental goods and services" was held in June 2022.

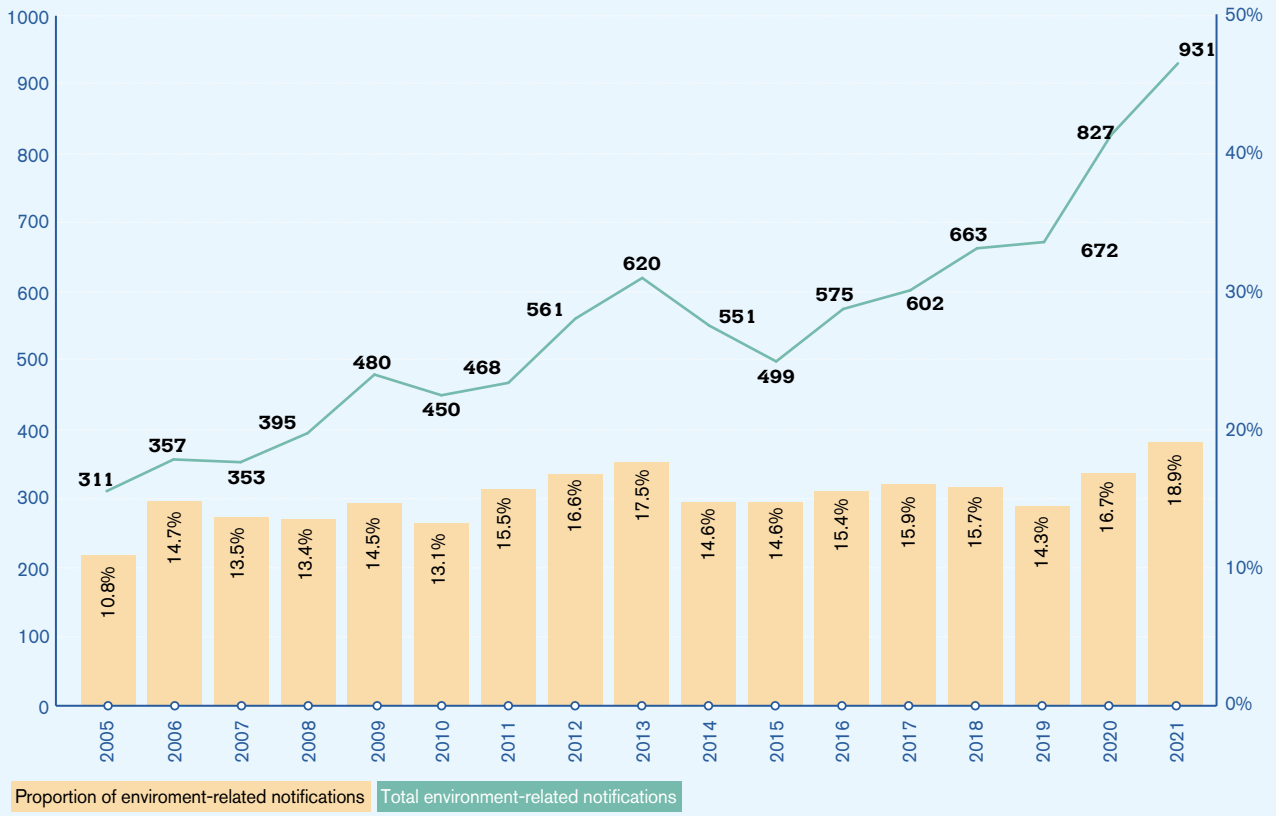
Trade and environment week

In October, the WTO organised the third Trade and Environment Week, with 16 side events hosted by members and regional groupings. Topics included traceability of supply chains, plastic pollution, climate adaptation and resilience, fisheries, and environmental goods and services. The week featured over 80 speakers and attracted over 1,000 participants in person and online.



1,000+
people participated in Trade and Environment Week events

Figure 9: Environment-related notifications, 2005 to 2021



Trade and transfer of technology

- **Experts from ministries and international organizations shared perspectives and findings on technology transfer to help invigorate the Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology and to increase flows of technology to developing economies.**

- **DDG Zhang highlighted the multifaceted nature of technology transfer and how it is a critical vehicle for greener and more sustainable economies.**

In November, experts from Argentina, Peru and Senegal, along with experts from the FAO, STDF, UNCTAD, World Economic Forum, WHO, WIPO and the WTO, shared perspectives and findings on technology transfer to help the Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology improve its understanding of the nexus between technology transfer and trade. The aim is to increase technology flows to developing economies.

DDG Zhang highlighted the multifaceted nature of technology transfer and how the nexus with trade could increase the flow of technology to developing economies. Technology transfer is a critical vehicle for greener, sustainable and more inclusive economies, he said.

Background

The Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology was established at the Doha Ministerial Conference in 2001 "to examine the relationship between trade and transfer of technology and to make recommendations on steps that might be taken, within the mandate of the WTO, to increase flows of technology to developing countries".

The November meeting looked into a framework for technology transfer, technology transfer applied to sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and technology transfer to promote access and innovation at a time of pandemic. Speakers noted that technology transfer is a collaborative process encompassing knowledge, skills and know-how and involving several actors, including governments, academia and industries.

Some provisions in WTO agreements mention technology transfer but it is not clear how such transfers take place. However, there was agreement at the November meeting that technology transfer takes place when there is a business interest and the capacity of partners to create, transfer and absorb knowledge. Participation in global value chains boosts technology diffusion by increasing access to different markets and importers.

Regional trade agreements

- **The WTO received 17 notifications of regional trade agreements (RTAs) currently in force, compared with 32 in 2021. The new notifications concern 12 RTAs. Europe is involved in the highest number of RTAs.**
- **Over 235 RTAs (including accessions to existing RTAs) have been reviewed by WTO members since December 2006 under the transparency mechanism for RTAs, involving 133 members.**

Background

The Committee on Regional Trade Agreements (CRTA) monitors all RTAs notified to the WTO, except those notified under special provisions for agreements between developing economies (the Enabling Clause), which are considered by the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD). The CRTA and CTD consider RTAs individually and the CRTA also considers the systemic implications of RTAs for the multilateral trading system.

Notifications

WTO members submitted 17 notifications of RTAs, which are reciprocal preferential trade agreements between two or more partners. The 17 notifications, compared with 32 in 2021, concern 12 RTAs. Six of these are newly notified RTAs, five are notifications of trade in services of already notified RTAs in trade in goods and one is the notification of an accession to an already notified RTA that covers trade in goods only.

Six of the RTAs are between developing and developed partners and six are between developing partners only. Europe was involved in the highest number of RTAs (seven), followed by the Asia Pacific region (five), Africa (two), the Middle East (two) and the Americas (one). Five of the agreements covered members from two different regions.

Total RTA notifications stood at 807 on 31 December 2022, of which 583 concern RTAs in force (see Figure 10). The goods and services aspects of RTAs and accessions to existing RTAs are notified and counted separately. If all three elements are counted together, the notifications involved 557 individual RTAs, of which 355 were in force.

The number of RTAs not notified rose by two to 58 compared to October 2021. The WTO Secretariat issues a list of RTAs in force but not notified before each meeting of the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements (CRTA).

Monitoring RTAs

All RTAs are subject to the WTO's transparency mechanism for RTAs, which entered into force in December 2006. The mechanism provides specific guidelines on when a new RTA should be notified to the WTO Secretariat and the related information and data to be provided. It also requires the Secretariat to prepare a factual presentation on each RTA and for each RTA to be reviewed by WTO members.

By the end of 2022, over 235 RTAs currently in force (including accessions to RTAs), involving 133 WTO members, had been reviewed.

807

The total number of RTA notifications as of 31 December 2022

583

The number of RTAs in force as of 31 December 2022

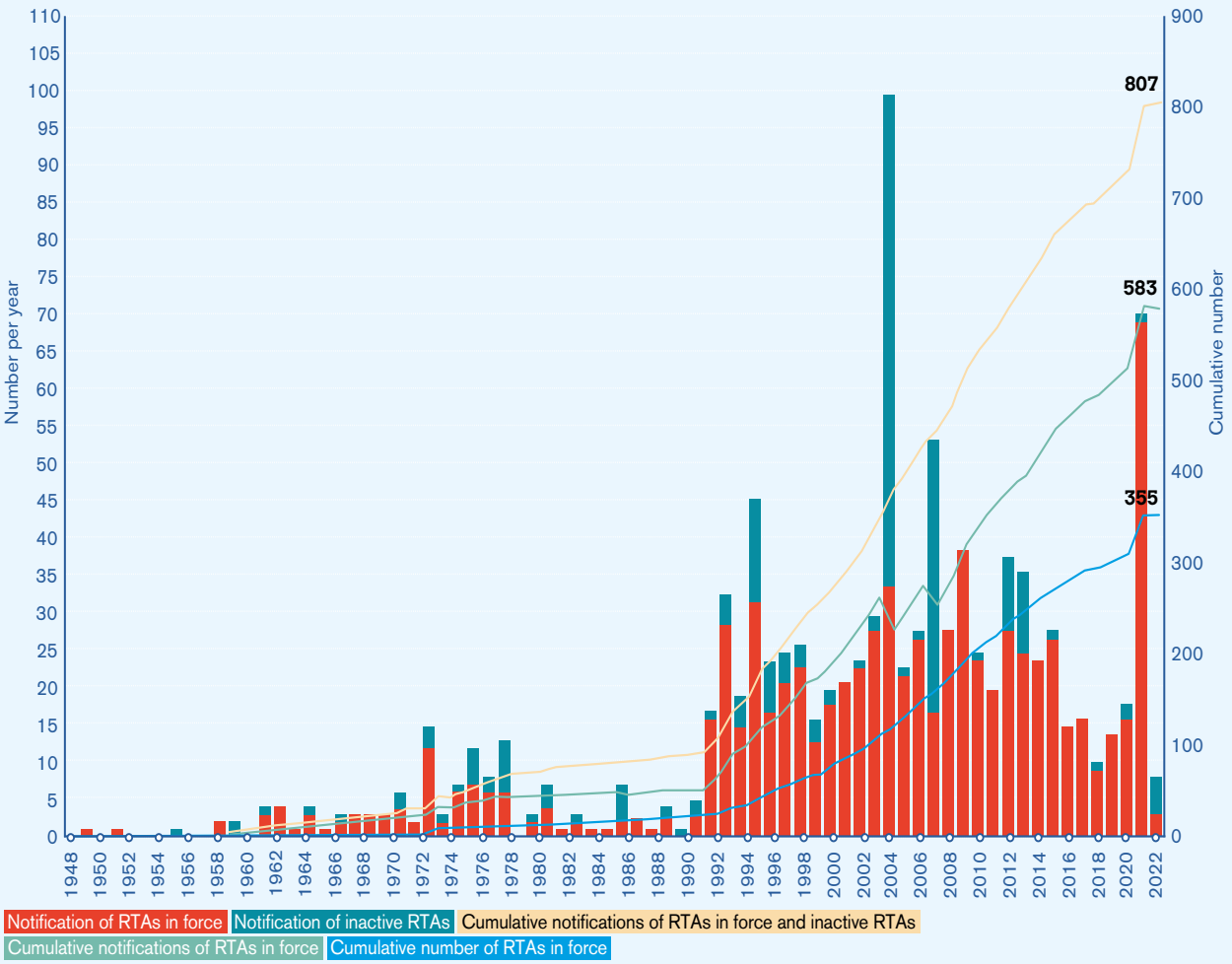
RTAs notified under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) are considered by the CRTA while RTAs notified under the Enabling Clause (see page 136) are considered by the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD), based on the WTO Secretariat's factual presentation (see Table 3).

Under the transparency mechanism, WTO members are encouraged to inform the Secretariat of any agreements being negotiated or that have been signed but have not entered into force (so-called early announcements). They are required to inform the Secretariat of any changes to a notified agreement and to provide a report once an agreement is fully implemented.

In 2022, the CRTA considered 26 notifications of RTAs, counting goods, services and accessions separately, compared with 12 in 2021 and 17 in 2020. The CTD considered three RTAs. In 2022, three early announcements were received from members.

Under the transparency mechanism, the CRTA also discusses end-of-implementation

Figure 10: RTAs notified to the GATT/WTO (1948 to 2022) by year of entry into force



Note: For notifications, goods, services and accessions to an RTA are counted separately. The cumulative lines show the number of RTAs/notifications in force over time. The notifications of RTAs in force are shown by year of entry into force and the notifications of inactive RTAs are shown by the year they became inactive.

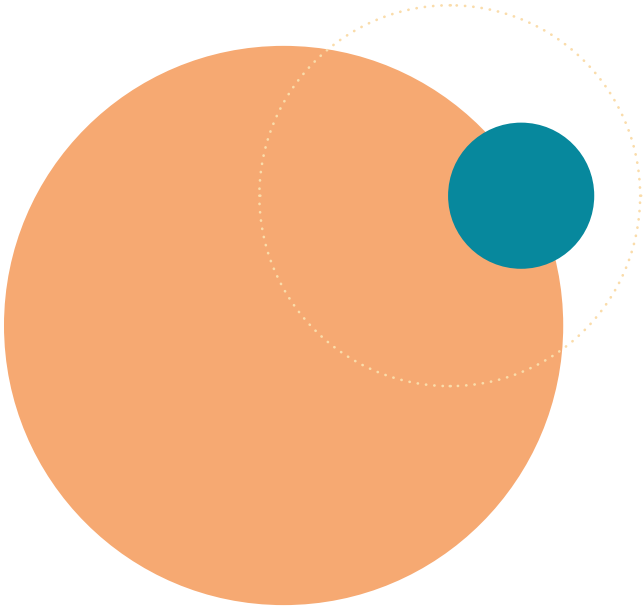


Table 3: RTAs (including accessions to existing RTAs) considered in 2022

Considered in the CRTA
United Kingdom – Türkiye (goods)
United Kingdom – Singapore (goods and services)
China – Mauritius (goods and services)
Ukraine – Israel (goods)
Namibia – Zimbabwe (goods)
United Kingdom – Chile (goods and services)
United Kingdom – Canada (goods and services)
United Kingdom – Jordan (goods)
European Union – Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) (goods and services)
United Kingdom – Mexico (goods)
United Kingdom – Switzerland (goods)
United Kingdom – Tunisia (goods)
United Kingdom – Republic of Korea (goods and services)
Republic of Korea – Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) (goods and services)
Republic of Korea – Türkiye (services)
United Kingdom – Kenya (goods)
United Kingdom – Israel (goods)
United Kingdom – Egypt (goods)
Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – Singapore (services)
Considered in the CTD
Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – Singapore (goods)
Morocco – United Arab Emirates (goods)
Accession of Seychelles to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (goods)

Note: The table refers to the consideration of 21 agreements, eight of which related to both trade in goods and services, 12 to trade in goods and one to trade in services only.

Further information on these agreements may be found in the WTO Database on RTAs: http://rtais.wto.org.

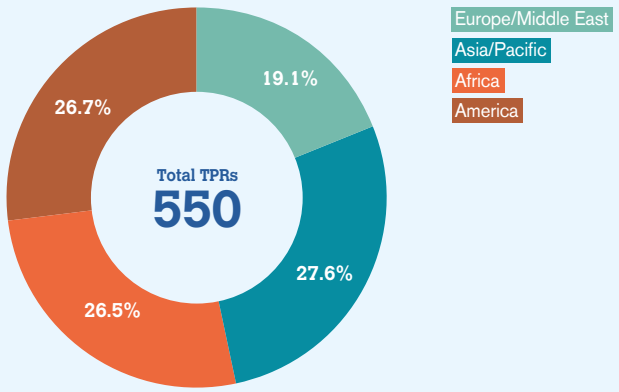
reports for RTAs, which are short, written reports on how liberalization commitments have been put into effect. They are important for understanding whether RTAs accomplish what they set out to do. No such report was received during the year. Chair Taeho Lee (Republic of Korea) noted that reports had been due for 180 RTAs as of 31 January 2022, up from 156 the year before.

The General Council established the transparency mechanism on a provisional basis in 2006. Members are required to review the legal relationship between the mechanism and relevant WTO provisions on RTAs. The Negotiating Group on Rules started the review in 2011. At the 10th Ministerial Conference in Nairobi in December 2015, ministers called on WTO members to work towards making the mechanism permanent.

Trade Policy Reviews

- **In 2022, the Trade Policy Review Body reviewed the trade policies of 16 WTO members, with COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine common themes.**
- **In 2023, the reviews of 30 members (including three group reviews) are scheduled. Certain reviews due to take place in 2021-22 were rescheduled for 2023 due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Figure 11: Trade policy reviews, by region, 1989 to 2022



The Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB) reviewed the trade policies of 16 members in 2022: Barbados, Brazil, Djibouti, Georgia, Ghana, Guyana, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Moldova, New Zealand, Pakistan, Panama, Seychelles, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and the United States.

Following initiatives taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all the reviews were conducted in hybrid format. The group reviews of the Economic Community of Central African States (CEMAC) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) were postponed until 2023 on account of the pandemic. The TPRB has conducted 550 reviews since 1989, with a balanced regional representation (see Figure 11).

Background

The Trade Policy Review Mechanism is the WTO's transparency pillar, aiming to improve members' adherence to WTO rules and thus to the functioning of the multilateral trading system. Through its regular trade policy reviews, the mechanism enables members to collectively examine the trade policies and practices of individual members in all trade-related areas. Reviews are not intended to serve as a basis for the enforcement of obligations or for dispute settlement procedures.

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Trade policies of 16 WTO members were reviewed in 2022

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on economic growth and trade continued to be a common theme in the reviews. As members started to emerge from the effects of the pandemic, special attention was focused on support measures and initiatives that have enabled or expedited the recovery. It emerged that, overall, members have refrained from taking additional measures to limit imports during the pandemic.

The war in Ukraine increasingly impacted many economies, in particular those members under review in the latter part of the year and those in geographical proximity. The war has impacted many economies in terms of their border measures, trade sanctions, food security and energy policies.

Interest in new issues in the WTO was shown during the reviews, in particular regarding participation in the various joint initiatives (see page 65), the multi-party interim appeal arrangement (MPIA) in dispute settlement (see page 133), environmental and other WTO plurilateral initiatives or agreements.

Thematic issues, such as climate change, supply chains, environmental standards and policies, and digital and technological developments, were explored in the meetings. Trade and gender issues (see page 150) continued to be raised regularly.

The concluding remarks of the Chair for TPRs in 2022 are shown in Table 4.

Programme for 2023

In 2023, 30 WTO members are scheduled for review, including certain members deferred from earlier years. They are: Albania; Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, and Gabon (grouped as members of CEMAC); Chile; Dominican Republic; El Salvador; European Union; Fiji; Honduras; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Jordan; Liberia; Malaysia; Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (grouped as members of OECS); Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa (grouped as members of the Southern African Customs Union); Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu (Chinese Taipei); and Türkiye.

Table 4: Concluding remarks of Chair for TPRs of 2022

Members	Concluding remarks
Barbados	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp531_crc_e.htm
Brazil	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp532_crc_e.htm
Djibouti	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp530_crc_e.htm
Georgia	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp520_crc_e.htm
Ghana	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp527_crc_e.htm
Guyana	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp522_crc_e.htm
Mexico	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp529_crc_e.htm
Moldova	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp528_crc_e.htm
New Zealand	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp526_crc_e.htm
Pakistan	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp524_crc_e.htm
Panama	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp521_crc_e.htm
Seychelles	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp533_crc_e.htm
Switzerland and Liechtenstein	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp525_crc_e.htm
United Arab Emirates	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp523_crc_e.htm
United States	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp534_crc_e.htm

In 2023, 30 WTO members are scheduled for review, including certain members deferred from earlier years.

376

WTO members introduced more trade-facilitating (376) than trade-restrictive (214) measures on goods unrelated to COVID-19 in the year to mid-October 2022

Trade monitoring reports

- **The latest Trade Monitoring Report covering the period between mid-October 2021 and mid-October 2022 came at a time when the global economy continued to face multiple challenges, including the war in Ukraine, climate change, soaring food and energy prices and the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- **The pace of implementation of export restrictions by WTO members has increased since 2020, first in the context of the pandemic and subsequently due to the war in Ukraine and the food crisis.**
- **WTO members introduced more trade-facilitating (376) than trade restrictive (214) measures on goods not related to the pandemic during the review period. Most of the facilitation involved imports while most of the restrictions concerned exports. For the first time since the beginning of the trade monitoring exercise, the number of export restrictions has outpaced import restrictions.**
- **Although fewer non-COVID-19 trade restrictions were introduced during the period, the stockpile of already existing restrictions remained large.**

Background

The WTO began regular monitoring of global trade developments in early 2009, covering all trade-related measures implemented by WTO members and observers. Initially launched in the context of the global financial crisis, the trade monitoring exercise has become a regular function in the WTO. It further strengthens the transparency aims of the Trade Policy Review Mechanism by shedding light on the latest trends in the implementation of policy measures that facilitate as well as restrict the flow of trade. The regular trade monitoring reports are discussed by members at meetings of the Trade Policy Review Body.

WTO members introduced trade restrictions at an increased pace between mid-October 2021 and mid-October 2022, in particular regarding exports, at a time of economic uncertainty exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the food security crisis, according to the latest WTO Trade Monitoring Report released in November.

Some of the export restrictions were temporary and were in place for a short period of time. Overall, as of mid-October 2022, 52 export restrictions on food, feed and fertilizers and 27 COVID-19-related export restrictions on essential products to combat the spread of the virus were still in place.

At the Trade Policy Review Body meeting of 6 December, DG Okonjo-Iweala presented her latest Trade Monitoring Report. She called on WTO members "to refrain from adopting new trade-restrictive measures, particularly export restrictions, that can further contribute to a worsening of the global economic outlook" and urged them to "cooperate to keep markets open and predictable in order to allow goods to move around the world to where they are needed".

In the year to mid-October 2022, WTO members introduced more trade-facilitating (376) than trade-restrictive (214) measures on goods unrelated to the pandemic. The average number of trade-facilitating measures per month was the highest recorded since 2012. Most of the facilitation happened regarding imports while most of the restrictions concerned exports.

For the first time since the beginning of the trade monitoring exercise in 2009, the number of export restrictions has outpaced import restrictions. The trade coverage of trade-facilitating measures was estimated at US$ 1.16 trillion, sharply higher than the US$ 481.6 billion of the previous year; trade-restrictive measures totalled US$ 278 billion (see Figure 12), more than double 2021's US$ 105.9 billion.

The stockpile of import restrictions in force continued to grow (see Figure 13). By mid-October 2022, some 9.3 per cent of global imports were affected by import

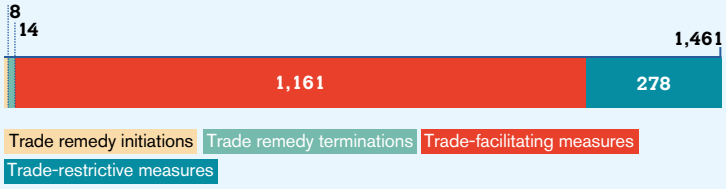
restrictions implemented since 2009 and still in force, in line with 9.3 per cent in 2021.

Initiations of trade remedy investigations by WTO members declined sharply during the review period (10.9 initiations per month, the lowest since 2012) after reaching a peak in 2020 (36.1 initiations per month).

Trade remedy actions remain an important trade policy tool for many WTO members, accounting for 37.4 per cent of all non COVID 19 related trade measures on goods recorded in the report, down from 66 per cent in 2021. Anti-dumping (see page 99) continues to be the most frequent trade remedy action in terms of initiations and terminations.

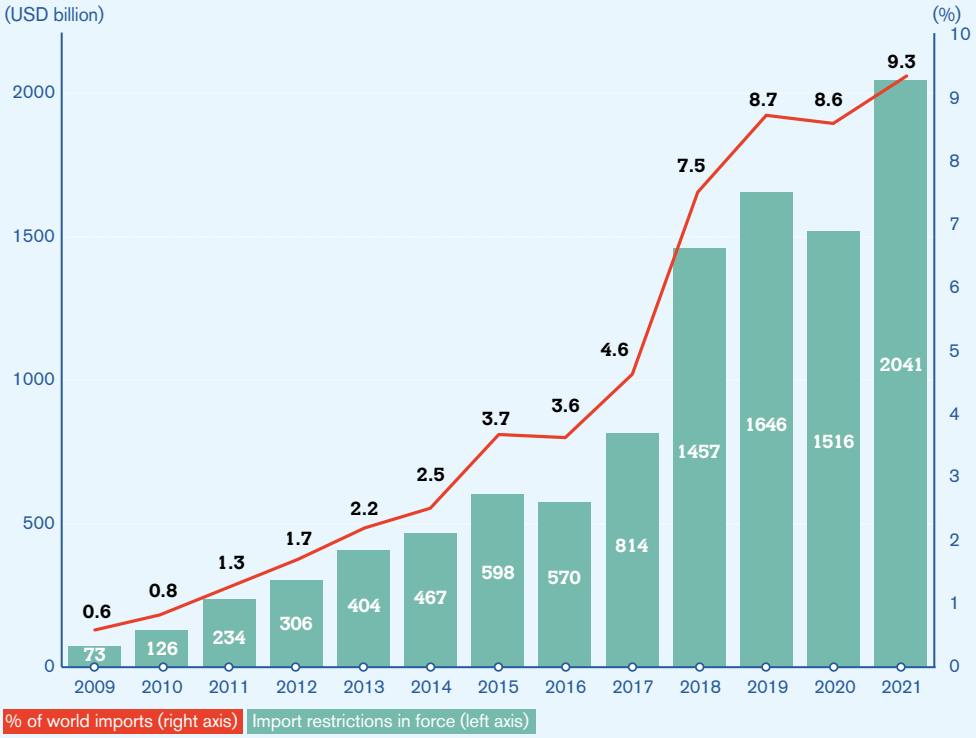
In services, 174 new measures were introduced by WTO members, a third of which targeted telecommunications, computer, internet and other network enabled services, while a quarter affected financial services. Although most new measures were trade facilitating, a significant number was trade-restrictive.

Figure 12: Trade coverage of import and export measures introduced between mid-October 2021 and mid-October 2022 in US$ billion



Note: Trade-facilitating measures cover import- and export-facilitating measures. Trade-restrictive measures cover import and export-restricting measures.

Figure 13: Cumulative trade coverage of import-restrictive measures on goods since 2009



Note: The cumulative trade coverage estimated by the WTO Secretariat is based on information available in the Trade Monitoring Database on import measures recorded since 2009 and considered to have a trade-restrictive effect. The estimates include import measures for which HS codes were available. The figures do not include trade remedy measures. The import values were sourced by the UN Comtrade database.

The implementation of new COVID-19-related trade measures by WTO members has slowed, with 45 measures recorded on goods and four on services in the monitoring period. Additional information communicated by WTO members mainly consisted of termination of existing measures or amendments of others. Many COVID-19-related measures affecting trade in services were still in force. The number of new COVID-19-related support measures by WTO members and observers to mitigate the social and economic impacts of the pandemic fell sharply.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, 443 COVID-19-related trade and trade-related measures in the area of goods have been introduced by WTO members and observers. Most of these measures were trade facilitating (246, or 56 per cent) while the rest were trade-restrictive (197, or 44 per cent).

Members continued to phase out pandemic-related measurers, particularly the restrictive ones during the review period. According to information received by the Secretariat, as of mid-October 2022, 79.2 per cent of COVID-19-related trade restrictions had been repealed, leaving 27 export restrictions and 14 import restrictions in place. Although the number of pandemic-related trade restrictions still in place has decreased, their trade coverage remains important at US$ 134.6 billion (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Trade coverage of COVID-19 trade and trade-related measures on goods, by mid-October 2022, in US$ billion

Status of the reports

The WTO Secretariat prepared four reports on global trade policy developments in 2022, including two on trade measures by G20 economies. The reports have no legal effect on the rights and obligations of WTO members and do not seek to pronounce on whether a trade measure is protectionist or question the explicit right of members to take certain trade measures.

As of mid-October 2022, 79.2 per cent of COVID-19-related trade restrictions had been repealed, leaving 27 export restrictions and 14 import restrictions in place.

Trade, debt and finance

- **WTO members continued to discuss access to trade finance, based on proposals by Côte d'Ivoire and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group.**
- **The WTO and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) launched a report on trade finance in West Africa, detailing how trade expansion is vastly constrained by limited and costly access to finance.**

The Working Group on Trade, Debt and Finance continued considering a proposal from Côte d'Ivoire and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group for a work programme aimed at facilitating trade finance, particularly for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), with a focus on developing economies affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

WTO members acknowledged the difficulties in accessing trade finance in developing economies during periods of stress, such as pandemic and conflict, but noted that trade finance gaps – financing requested but rejected by lenders or donors – are to an extent structural. Progress was made in 2022 in identifying potential areas of consensus.

Background

WTO ministers decided in 2001 to establish a Working Group on Trade, Debt and Finance to look at how the WTO could contribute to finding a durable solution to the external debt problems of many developing economies and to avoid having WTO members' trade opportunities undercut by financial instabilities. The Working Group has focused its attention on a range of financial issues with an impact on trade, including issues related to the availability of trade finance and the relationship between exchange rates and trade.

DG Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and IFC Managing Director Makhtar Diop launched a joint publication on "Trade Finance in West Africa" in Washington DC in October. Based on a survey of banks in the four largest economies of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal – the report said that these countries' trade expansion was vastly constrained by limited and costly access to trade finance.

Trade finance in the four countries supported only 25 per cent of trade, lower than the African average of 40 per cent and the global average of 60-80 per cent. Rejection rates for requested trade finance were high (25 per cent), with small businesses (SMEs) and women-owned SME applicants disproportionately affected.

The study calculated that if identified improvements, such as reducing trade finance costs or introducing new SME-friendly instruments, could increase the trade finance coverage to the African average, the four countries could see an increase of 8 per cent in trade each year or US$ 13 billion.

At the launch of the report, the DG called for coordinated efforts to close trade finance gaps, noting the importance of using technology and training to facilitate knowledge transfer and assist capacity building for small businesses.

In 2022, multilateral development banks supported more than 12,000 trade transactions, many of them for essential medicines, food and other essential goods, worth more than US$ 35 billion. Multilateral development banks provide support to trade finance in economies facing the most challenges, including low-income economies affected by conflict, food crises or a deterioration of their credit rating.

In partnership with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, the Export-Import Bank for Africa and the African Development Bank, the IFC and the WTO completed in May 2022 a pilot workshop bringing together local banks, SMEs and professional organizations to support new export clusters in Côte d'Ivoire. The aim of the workshop was to share knowledge on current forms of trade finance and allow a dialogue between local producers and bankers.

25

Trade finance in West Africa supported only 25% of trade, lower than the African average of 40%

Agreement on Government Procurement

- **Progress was made with respect to the accessions of Brazil and North Macedonia to the Government Procurement Agreement.**
- **The Dominican Republic and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) became observers to the Committee on Government Procurement (CGP).**
- **Parties continued informal consultations on a new Chair of the CGP but without reaching a consensus.**

Selection of the Chair

The parties to the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA 2012) undertook further informal consultations but without reaching a consensus on the Committee's next Chair. The Committee had tentatively planned several meetings during the year but did not proceed with any of them.

Background

GPA 2012 aims to open up, to the extent agreed by its parties, parties' government procurement markets to suppliers from other parties, and to make government procurement more transparent and predictable. It provides legal guarantees of non-discrimination for the goods, services and suppliers of GPA parties with regard to government procurement covered by the Agreement. The GPA 2012 is a plurilateral agreement open to all interested WTO members and binding only on the parties to it. Currently, 48 WTO members are covered by GPA 2012 and there are 37 observers to the Committee on Government Procurement, which administers GPA 2012.

Accessions to the Agreement

Brazil continued to actively engage with the GPA parties on its accession. It organized two informal meetings with the parties and submitted a second revised market access offer.

North Macedonia circulated a revised market access offer. On 30 December, the parties reached an agreement in principle on North Macedonia's accession although a formal CGP decision is still pending.

New observers

The Dominican Republic joined the CGP as an observer, making it the first Caribbean member to do so. In addition, the EBRD became an intergovernmental organization observer to the CGP.

Workers lay tarmac on a new road near Arusha, Tanzania.

Dispute settlement

Dispute settlement activity

- **From mid-March 2022, improvements regarding the COVID-19 pandemic allowed panels, arbitrators and parties to resume in-person meetings in Geneva. As of the end of December 2022, panel proceedings were ongoing in 18 disputes.**
- **Nine panel reports, two arbitration decisions and two arbitration awards were circulated during 2022.**
- **At the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022, ministers agreed to talks on addressing concerns with respect to the dispute settlement system, with a view to securing a fully functioning system by 2024**
- **All seven positions on the Appellate Body remained vacant and no appeals could be heard.**

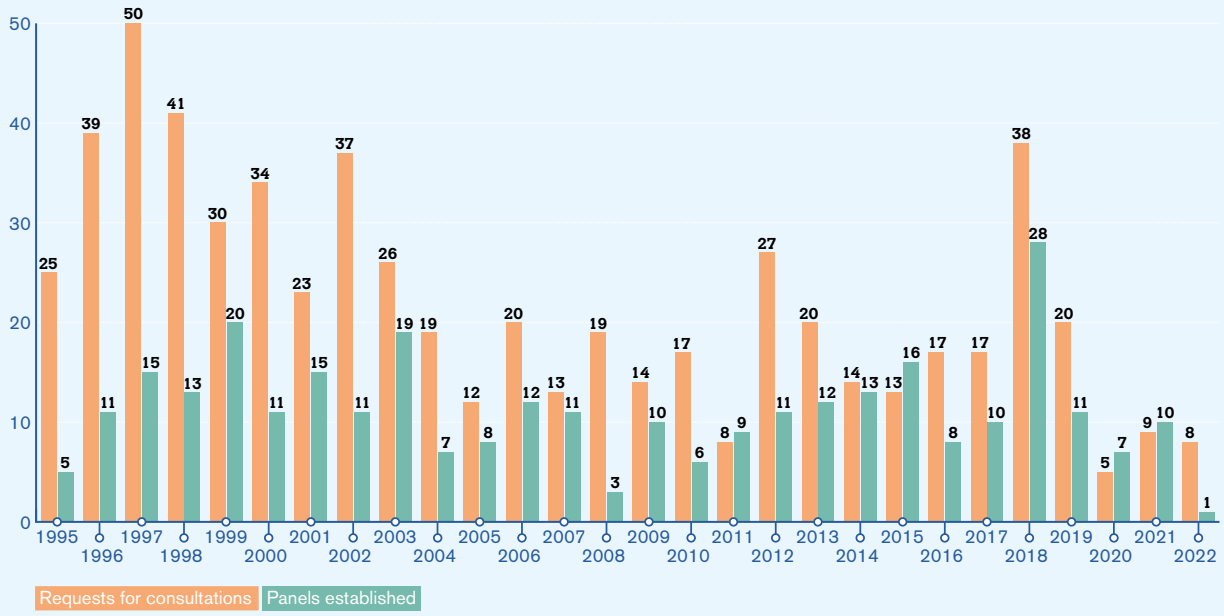
Background

WTO members can bring disputes when they consider their rights are being infringed with respect to any agreement contained in the Final Act of the Uruguay Round that is subject to the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU). The General Council convenes as the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) to deal with disputes. The DSB has authority to establish dispute settlement panels, to adopt panel and Appellate Body reports, maintain surveillance over the implementation of recommendations and rulings, and authorize suspension of concessions and other obligations in the event of non-compliance with those recommendations and rulings.

Table 5: Disputes initiated in 2022 (requests for consultations)

Dispute settlement number	Short title	Date of request	Status on 31 December 2022
DS608	Russia – Wood (EU)	20/01/2022	In consultations
DS609	Egypt – Import Registration Requirements (EU)	26/01/2022	In consultations
DS610	China – Goods (EU)	27/01/2022	Panel requested 07/12/22
DS611	China – IPRs Enforcement (EU)	18/02/2022	Panel requested 07/12/22
DS612	UK – CfD Local Content (EU)	28/03/2022	In consultations
DS613	EU – Citrus Fruit (South Africa)	27/07/2022	In consultations
DS614	Peru – Biodiesel (Argentina)	02/09/2022	In consultations
DS615	US – Semiconductors (China)	12/12/2022	In consultations

Figure 15: Disputes initiated and original panels established, 1995 to 2022



Requests for consultations

During 2022, WTO members filed eight requests for consultations concerning allegedly WTO-inconsistent measures (see Table 5), compared with nine in 2021. This is the first stage in the dispute settlement process.

By the end of 2022, a total of 615 disputes had been initiated under the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU) since the entry into force of the WTO agreements in 1995 (see Figure 15).

Dispute settlement proceedings

If the parties to a dispute are unable to resolve their differences through consultations, the complainant can ask the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) to establish a dispute settlement panel, the second phase of the process.

In 2022, the DSB established one panel ("Australia – AD/CVD on Certain Products (China)", DS603). In addition, six panels were composed – the third phase – during this period (see Table 6).

With a view to providing for review of panel reports in the absence of a functioning Appellate Body, parties to ten disputes had agreed, as of the end of 2022, to resort to an alternative appeal mechanism based on arbitration proceedings under Article 25 of the DSU. Eight of these disputes involved the use of the so-called multi party interim appeal arbitration arrangement (MPIA), to which 52 WTO members are participants.

The parties in two disputes – "US – Steel and Aluminium Products (EU)" (DS548) and "EU – Additional Duties (US)" (DS559) – informed the DSB that they had agreed to resort to arbitration under Article 25 of the DSU. In each case, the parties agreed that, upon the composition of the arbitrator, the dispute before the panel would be "immediately terminated through withdrawal of the complaint" and the arbitration would be "immediately and indefinitely suspended".

615

disputes initiated since the WTO was established in 1995

During 2022, WTO members filed eight requests for consultations concerning allegedly WTO-inconsistent measures.

In April 2022, the complainant (Qatar) in "Saudi Arabia – IPRs" (DS567) notified the DSB that it had agreed to terminate the dispute and not seek adoption of the panel report. In the dispute "United Arab Emirates – Goods, Services and IP Rights", (DS526), in which Qatar was also the complainant, the panel's authority lapsed on 16 January 2022.

Reports, awards and decisions

Nine panel reports were circulated in 2022. The DSB adopted two panel reports during this period, and one report was the subject of a Notification of Appeal to the Appellate Body (see Table 7).

Two arbitration awards under Article 25 of the DSU were circulated during the review period – "Turkey – Pharmaceutical Products (EU)" (DS583), and "Colombia – Frozen Fries (EU)" (DS591).

The parties to the two disputes resorted to Article 25 of the DSU regarding panel reports that had been issued to parties, but not circulated to WTO members. In DS583, the parties agreed to a set of arbitration procedures and notified the DSB accordingly. In DS591, the parties informed the DSB that in agreeing to procedures for arbitration, they were giving effect to the MPIA. In both cases, the parties agreed to "abide by the arbitration award, which shall be final" (see Table 8).

Two arbitration decisions under Article 22.6 of the DSU on the permissible level of retaliation as a temporary remedy in the event of non-compliance were circulated (see Table 8).

Appeals

One notification of appeal was filed in 2022 – by Indonesia in the dispute "Indonesia – Raw Materials" (DS592). As of 31 December 2022, appeals in 25 disputes were pending before the Appellate Body.

Given the ongoing absence of consensus among WTO members on launching the Appellate Body selection process, all seven positions remained vacant in 2022 and the Appellate Body was consequently unable to hear appeals.

Dispute settlement reform

At MC12 in June 2022, ministers agreed to talks on addressing concerns with respect to the dispute settlement system, with a view to securing a fully functioning system by 2024 (see page 10).

9

panel reports were circulated in 2022

As of 31 December 2022, appeals in 25 disputes were pending before the Appellate Body.

Table 6: Panels composed in 2022

Dispute settlement number	Short title	Date of composition	Status on 31 December 2022
DS599	Panama – Import Measures (Costa Rica)	24/01/2022	Panel proceedings ongoing
DS601	China – AD on Stainless Steel (Japan)	24/01/2022	Panel proceedings ongoing
DS604	Russia – Domestic and Foreign Products and Services	22/02/2022	Panel proceedings suspended (8 March 2022)
DS602	China – AD/CVD on Wine (Australia)	04/03/2022	Panel proceedings ongoing
DS605	Dominican Republic – AD on Steel Bars (Costa Rica)	08/04/2022	Panel proceedings ongoing
DS603	Australia – AD/CVD on Certain Products (China)	05/09/2022	Panel proceedings ongoing

Table 7: Panel reports circulated and/or adopted in 2022

Dispute settlement number	Short title	Report circulated	Report adopted or appealed
DS546	United States – Safeguard Measure on Washers	08/02/2022	The DSB has agreed to extra time for the adoption/appeal of this report
DS524	Costa Rica – Avocados (Mexico)	13/04/2022	Adopted 31/05/2022
DS595	EU – Safeguard Measures on Steel (Turkey)	29/04/2022	Adopted 31/05/2022
DS592	Indonesia – Raw Materials	30/11/2022	Report appealed 08/12/2022 (Indonesia)
DS544	US – Steel and Aluminium Products (China)	09/12/2022	Adoption/appeal pending
DS552	US – Steel and Aluminium Products (Norway)	09/12/2022	Adoption/appeal pending
DS556	US – Steel and Aluminium Products (Switzerland)	09/12/2022	Adoption/appeal pending
DS564	US – Steel and Aluminium Products (Turkey)	09/12/2022	Adoption/appeal pending
DS597	US – Origin marking (Hong Kong, China)	21/12/2022	Adoption/appeal pending

Table 8: Arbitration awards and decisions circulated in 2022

Dispute settlement number	Short title	Date circulated
	Article 25 DSU	
DS583	Turkey – Pharmaceutical Products (EU) (Article 25)	25/07/2022
DS591	Colombia – Frozen Fries (Article 25)	21/12/2022
	Article 22.6 DSU	
DS437	US – Countervailing Measures (China) (Article 22.6 – US)	26/01/2022
DS505	US – Supercalendered paper (Article 22.6 – US)	13/07/2022

John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition

In 2022, 71 universities representing 39 WTO members and observers participated in the regional rounds of the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition on WTO Law, which were held virtually from February to May 2022. The top 25 teams from these rounds qualified for the final round.

The WTO co-hosted the final round of the 20th anniversary edition of the competition, which took place between 28 June and 2 July. The University of Zurich emerged as the winner of the competition, and the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium) was the runner-up. The competition is organized by the European Law Students Association (ELSA) with technical support from the WTO.

During September 2022, the WTO and the Geneva-based Advisory Centre on WTO Law provided training to potential coaches of teams from developing economies and least-developed countries that were interested in participating in the 2023 moot court competition.

71

universities participated in the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition on WTO law

Supporting development and building trade capacity

Trade and development (including LDCs and small economies) 136

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Trade and development

- **The Committee on Trade and Development discussed initiatives to boost developing economies' trade capacities and advance their integration into the global trading system.**
- **WTO members welcomed a decision at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) to reinvigorate activities under the E-commerce Work Programme.**
- **The Committee looked at how to operationalize fully the mandate of the Committee to act as focal point for development work within the WTO.**

The Committee on Trade and Development discussed initiatives to boost developing economies' trade capacities and to advance their integration into the global trading system – including in e-commerce – at meetings in 2022. It also looked at how trade is helping developing economies and least-developed countries

Background

The Committee on Trade and Development is the focal point for the coordination of all work on trade and development issues in the WTO. The Committee deals with a variety of issues, including all developmental issues, technical cooperation and training, and notifications under the Enabling Clause, which allows developed economies to give more favourable treatment to developing economies.

(LDCs) (see page 138) respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and build resilience to future crises. It continued its examination of duty-free, quota-free (DFQF) market access for LDCs.

On e-commerce (see page 80), members welcomed the decision at MC12 to reinvigorate activities under the Work Programme on E-Commerce with the aim of increasing the participation of developing economies and LDCs in digital trade.

Work continued on the link between trade and development, as instructed by trade ministers. In particular, the Committee looked at how to operationalize fully the mandate of the Committee to act as focal point for development work within the WTO. The Committee Chair, Ambassador Usha Chandnee Dwarka-Canabady (Mauritius), encouraged continued engagement among members to make progress on the question.

The Committee held two dedicated sessions on the monitoring mechanism on provisions for special and differential treatment (S&D) for developing economies in WTO agreements and decisions.

The mechanism is designed to be a way to review the implementation of S&D previsions, which range from longer periods for implementing agreements and commitments to providing technical assistance. However, the Chair noted that there were no written submissions, which are required for the monitoring mechanism to become fully operational. She urged members to reach agreement on how to move forward with the mechanism.

The United States, Norway and Japan notified the Committee about generalized system of preferences schemes, under which developed economies grant preferential tariffs to imports from developing economies. On regional trade agreements, the Committee received notification of a protocol to amend the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China.

Notifications were also made concerning the accession of Seychelles to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which was subsequently considered by the Committee, and on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between India and the United Arab Emirates.

Documents relating to the Latin American Integration Association were considered by the Committee. The Committee also considered the Free Trade Agreement between Morocco and the United Arab Emirates and the Free Trade Agreement between the Gulf Cooperation Council member states and Singapore.

Technical cooperation and training

The WTO's Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (see page 147) reported to the Committee that requests for local technical assistance activities dropped considerably in 2020 and 2021 amid the COVID-19 pandemic as many WTO members and observers postponed their requests until face-to-face activities could resume.

The WTO technical assistance annual report for 2021 showed that course participation fell 23 per cent compared to 2020 and requests for local activities declined to a historic low. Digital fatigue from extensive use of online solutions for meetings during the COVID-19 restrictions increased global competition for e-learners' time and the difficulties of remote working were also identified as possible contributors to the decline.

A rice farmer at work in Battambang, Cambodia.

Least-developed countries

- **The UN General Assembly adopted the Doha Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the decade 2022-31, with trade being a priority area.**
- **The WTO signed a partnership agreement with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for LDCs (UN-OHRLLS) on implementing trade elements of the Doha Programme.**
- **LDCs' share in global merchandise exports stayed at 0.93 per cent in 2021, according to a WTO Secretariat note.**

Background

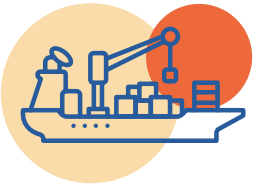
The Sub-Committee on LDCs, established in July 1995 as a subsidiary body to the Committee on Trade and Development, focuses its work on an agreed WTO work programme for LDCs. This programme looks at several systemic issues of importance to LDCs in the multilateral trading system, such as market access, technical assistance and accessions to the WTO.

Doha Programme of Action for LDCs

In March 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted the Doha Programme of Action for LDCs for the decade 2022-31, with trade featuring among the six priority areas. The programme reflects LDC priorities at the WTO, including implementation of LDC decisions, doubling the LDCs' share in global trade exports, and increasing Aid for Trade (see page 141) to LDCs. Improving LDC participation in digital trade is also a target.

The programme was adopted during the first part of the Fifth UN Conference on the LDCs (LDC5), held in New York, with the second part set for Doha in March 2023. The WTO and the UN Office of the High Representative for LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing Countries (UN-OHRLLS), in cooperation with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and regional UN offices, conducted regional consultations to advance trade elements of the programme. Policy notes were prepared, covering digital trade and the evolving trading landscape, among other topics, for presentation at the UN conference in Doha.

At the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), the WTO signed a partnership agreement with UN-OHRLLS on implementation of the Doha Programme. Trade ministers and WTO ambassadors from over 40 LDCs attended the ceremony. "Over the last decade, our members have provided increased trade



0.93%
LDC's share in global merchandise exports

opportunities to expand LDC exports, and the WTO remains the main forum to achieve the Doha Programme of Action targets in the area of trade," DG Okonjo-Iweala said at the signing.

LDC trade trends

LDCs' share in global merchandise exports stayed at 0.93 per cent in 2021, according to a Secretariat note. LDC's share of global imports also remained unchanged at 1.39 per cent. Import growth has consistently outpaced export growth, with a widening trade deficit (US$ 113 billion in 2021). The note found that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic was uneven, with LDCs' share in world commercial services exports declining to 0.49 per cent in 2021 from 0.53 per cent in 2020.

LDC priorities in global trade

LDC priorities in global trade were discussed at a seminar in December 2022. Over 60 participants, including 35 capital-based officials from over 20 LDCs, discussed MC12 outcomes, the trading environment and ways of strengthening the multilateral trading system.

> **Over the last decade, our members have provided increased trade opportunities to expand LDC exports.**
> DG Okonjo-Iweala

"National and regional perspectives are vital to enrich our knowledge. I hope the ideas generated at the seminar will serve as an inspiration for other technical assistance programmes of the WTO moving forward," said Ambassador Kadra Ahmed Hassan of Djibouti, Coordinator of the WTO LDC Group.

Shared experiences

At a meeting in May of the Sub-Committee on LDCs, WTO members focused on initiatives of the International Trade Centre (ITC), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) aimed at helping small businesses in LDCs improve their capacity to trade. Beneficiaries in The Gambia, Madagascar and Senegal shared their experiences. In October, WTO members discussed the potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area to support economic growth and development in LDCs.

The Sub-Committee Chair, Ambassador Kirsti Kauppi of Finland, announced in October a new WTO webpage showcasing LDC successes in leveraging trade to improve people's lives. The webpage covers initiatives from East Africa, Djibouti, Togo, Madagascar and The Gambia.

South-South dialogue

The fifth South-South Dialogue on LDCs and Development under China's LDCs and Accessions Programme was held in Geneva in May, bringing together over 80 delegates. The event offered an opportunity to discuss some forward-looking perspectives on LDC trade priorities. The challenges of graduation from LDC status were also discussed.

"We have to double down on our efforts and deliver results for people in LDCs and around the world. The long stalemate in negotiations here has shaken the WTO's credibility. When I talk to ministers and leaders, they express support for the WTO, and for strengthening it to make it more effective," DG Okonjo-Iweala said in her opening address.

Small economies

- **Ministers reaffirmed at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) their commitment to the Small Economies' Work Programme and instructed the Committee on Trade and Development to keep monitoring the progress of small economy proposals in WTO bodies.**

- **Ministers instructed the WTO Secretariat to provide relevant information and factual analysis for discussion in the Committee and to work on integrating small economies into the post COVID-19 economy.**

Background

The Committee on Trade and Development – in dedicated sessions – oversees work on small economies and monitors the progress of proposals from small, vulnerable economies in the various WTO bodies and negotiating groups. Several small economies are small island states.

Harvesting of tea leaves in Sylhet, Bangladesh.

Ministers reaffirmed at MC12 their commitment to the Work Programme on Small Economies and instructed the Committee on Trade and Development to continue its work in dedicated session. They instructed the Committee to continue monitoring the progress of small economy proposals in WTO bodies and negotiating groups, with the aim of providing responses to the trade-related issues identified regarding the integration of small, vulnerable economies (SVEs) in the multilateral trading system.

Ministers took note of the work carried out since 2018, including on challenges that small economies experience in their efforts to reduce trade costs, particularly through trade facilitation, on opportunities and challenges for small economies in attracting investments and on the economic and trade impact of natural disasters on small economies.

Ministers instructed the Secretariat to provide relevant information and factual analysis for discussion among members in dedicated sessions, in particular on integrating small economies into the post COVID-19 economy – looking into the effects of the pandemic and the challenges and opportunities it generated.

At the proposal of the SVE Group, members agreed to an outline for a background document to be prepared by the Secretariat delving into trends in merchandise and services trade for small economies, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the challenges and opportunities for small economies in the post COVID-19 recovery phase.

Opening plenary session of the 8th Aid for Trade Global Review at the WTO in July.

Aid for Trade

- **Aid for Trade disbursements rose to US$ 48.7 billion in 2020, from US$ 47.2 billion in 2019. A total of US$ 556.4 billion has been disbursed since 2006.**
- **The WTO held its 8th Global Review of Aid for Trade in July, including high-level sessions attended by heads of intergovernmental organizations and ministers. Over 1,000 people participated in the event.**
- **The Review discussed the role of Aid for Trade in supporting environmentally sustainable trade that leverages the potential of digital connectivity and promotes economic inclusion, especially for women.**

Background

Aid for Trade helps developing economies, and particularly least-developed countries, trade. The WTO-led Aid for Trade initiative encourages developing economy governments and donors to recognize the role that trade can play in development. In particular, the initiative seeks to mobilize resources to address the trade-related constraints identified by developing and least-developed countries.

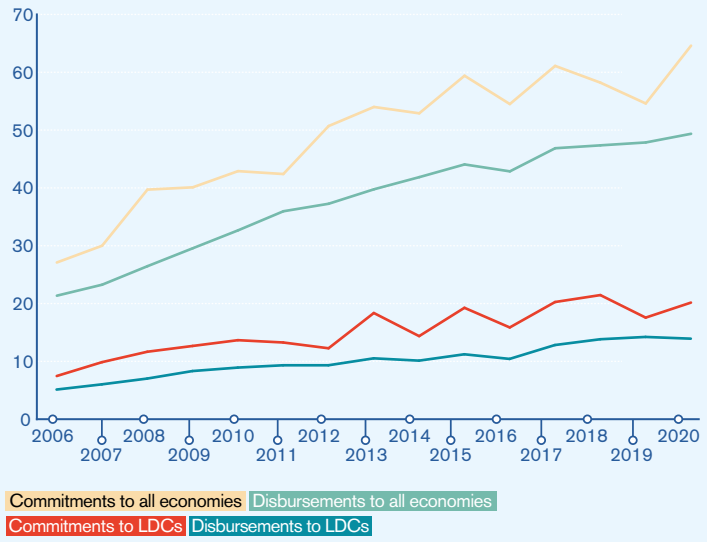
Aid for Trade financing

The most recent Aid for Trade data published by the OECD shows that total disbursements rose to US$ 48.7 billion in 2020, up from US$ 47.2 billion in 2019 (see figures 16 and 17). Commitments reached US$ 64.6 billion in 2020, up from US$ 54.6 billion in 2019. Aid for Trade figures are in 2020 US dollar constant prices, which may account for slight variations from previous reports.

Between 2006 and 2020, the last year for which figures are available, the total amount of Aid for Trade, part of official development aid, disbursed to developing economies reached US$ 556.4 billion. Some US$ 480 billion in development finance was also provided at non-concessional rates.

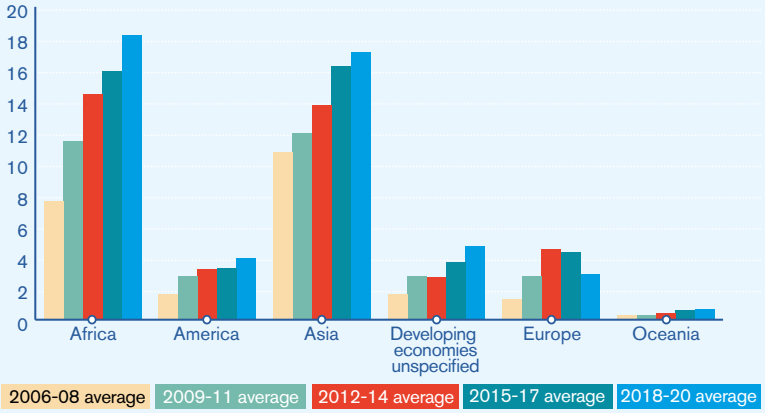
Disbursements have increased in every region since the launch of the initiative (see Figure 17). In 2020, flows showed a small decline in Africa, Asia and Oceania but increased elsewhere, particularly to Europe. The Americas saw the most notable change, from US$ 3.1 billion in 2019 to US$ 4.9 billion in 2020, an increase of 58 per cent.

Figure 16: Aid for Trade commitments and disbursements by income group (in US$ billion, 2020 prices)



Source: OECD-CRS (Creditor Reporting System).

Figure 17: Aid for Trade disbursements by continent (in US$ billion, 2020 prices)



Source: OECD-CRS (Creditor Reporting System).

Aid for Trade work programme

The Committee on Trade and Development continued implementing its 2020-22 Aid for Trade work programme – "Empowering Connected, Sustainable Trade" – the theme of the 8th Aid for Trade Global Review (see below). Members, development institutions, UN agencies and multilateral development banks reported on their activities.

The Committee organized workshops on the themes of digital connectivity and economic diversification, maximizing the economic diversification impact of Aid for Trade and on the findings of the 2022 Aid for Trade monitoring and evaluation exercise – self-assessment questionnaires submitted by governments from developing economies and least-developed countries, donors, regional economic communities and South-South partners. Members were able to exchange views on how Aid for Trade can support the transition towards environmentally sustainable development and promote digital connectivity and women's economic empowerment (see page 150).

1,000+

participants at the biennial Aid for Trade Global Review in July

2022 Global Review of Aid for Trade

The WTO held its biennial Aid for Trade Global Review in July, with the focus on helping developing economies and least-developed countries recover from multiple crises and build resilience to ensure long-term sustainable development. The review included 53 sessions, attended by over 1,000 participants, including 25 heads of international agencies or ministers.

The event was structured around three themes – women's economic empowerment, digital connectivity, and environmental sustainability. "The Aid for Trade initiative can and should aim to help develop critical trade infrastructure while supporting climate friendly, resilient and socio economically inclusive outcomes," DG Okonjo-Iweala declared.

"The Aid for Trade Global Review 2022" publication, launched by the WTO at the opening plenary session, found that the COVID-19 pandemic had prompted a readjustment of Aid for Trade priorities, with both recipients and donors citing strategies developed specifically to support recovery from the economic impact of the pandemic. Digital connectivity emerged as an important factor for economic resilience during the pandemic. Along with e-commerce, these are areas where public–private partnerships are flourishing, yet there is still considerable scope to expand Aid for Trade financing in this area, the report said.

The DG told the opening session that the pandemic, combined with numerous contemporary challenges, had highlighted the need for increasing trade capacities of developing economies and least-developed countries (LDCs). The Aid for Trade initiative was responding to these crises, with record high disbursements and commitments. She called for increased private sector involvement in trade-related development assistance to support recovery and resilience. She also suggested rebranding "Aid for Trade" as "Investment for Trade" to underline the importance of greater public-private sector cooperation.

Enhanced Integrated Framework

- **US$ 90 million worth of projects were supported by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) as at the end of 2022, with the aim of harnessing trade to promote the development of least-developed countries (LDCs).**
- **EIF, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC) launched a project to help eight African countries integrate into the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).**
- **Building capacity remained a central feature of EIF support, with a focus on building skills around monitoring, evaluation and learning, project implementation and effective communication.**

The EIF continued to build on the twin pillars of institutional and policy support and catalysing productive capacity in LDCs. Since the start of EIF operations in 2010, over 16,000 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises have received support. This has helped to generate US$ 600 million in additional exports and contributed to the creation of more than 36,000 jobs.

Gender and environment remain priority cross-cutting issues, with women constituting over 60 per cent of beneficiaries. EIF resources have leveraged more than US$ 100 million in co-finance from LDC governments, development partners and the private sector. EIF capacity-building work with trade ministries has helped to create 59 trade and investment-promoting regulations, such as a new intellectual property law in Rwanda.

Delivering on support to LDCs

The total value of projects supported by the EIF in phase two of its work stood at US$ 90 million at the end of 2022, with projects totalling US$ 64 million under implementation. The EIF has secured over US$ 52 million in co-financing from partners in phase two, with all ongoing projects to be closed in 2023.

EIF Enhanced Integrated Framework

36,000+

The EIF has contributed to the creation of more than 36,000 jobs since 2010

Background

The EIF is the only multilateral partnership dedicated exclusively to assisting LDCs in their use of trade as an engine for growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction. The EIF partnership of 51 countries, 24 donors and eight partner agencies works closely with governments, development organizations, civil society and academia. Together, they leverage know-how to tackle the world's most pressing trade-for-development issues. The WTO houses the Executive Secretariat of the EIF.

Processing of tea leaves for export in Phongsaly, Lao PDR, a project financed by EIF.

Targeting a wide range of LDC priorities, projects include institutional and policy support, such as assisting Timor-Leste in its accession to the WTO (see page 42). Other projects include linking postal and customs services, trade policy development, leveraging of climate and trade financing, and women's economic empowerment (see page 150).

March saw the launch of a new project aimed at helping eight African countries integrate into the AfCFTA, which came into force in 2019. Led by the EIF, UNECA and the ITFC, the project was launched at a virtual event bringing together the ministers of trade of Niger, Senegal and Togo and other government representatives of Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mauritania. The remaining two countries, financed through the partner organizations, are Côte d'Ivoire and Tunisia.

"This programme illustrates the spirit of partnership needed to support the implementation of the AfCFTA," DG Okonjo-Iweala said in her opening remarks at the event.

US$ 90 million

The total value of projects supported by the EIF as of end-2022

Independent evaluation

Building on the findings of an independent evaluation of the EIF, which ended in January 2022, the EIF Board increased the focus on finalizing remaining operations under phase two of its work. The EIF partnership also began work on identifying options for the future of trade-related technical assistance (see page 147) to LDCs.

Focus on sustainability of results

A core focus of the EIF has been to establish local implementation units in LDCs to coordinate Aid for Trade projects and support the objective of mainstreaming trade in government policy. By 2022, 41 of the 51 EIF countries had integrated these units into their government structures. In addition to the support these units provide for the sustainability of projects, there has been a focus on broader sustainability, including dedicated sustainability reviews in Cambodia, Senegal and Tanzania.

Stimulating South-South learning

Capacity-building remained a central feature of EIF support, with a focus on building skills around monitoring, evaluation and learning, project implementation and closure, and effective communication. Three capacity-building events brought together over 140 EIF partners from LDCs and other implementing partners in Bangkok, Addis Ababa and Lome to share lessons and best practices.

Trade, climate change and LDCs

Interest and engagement around trade and climate change issues accelerated, with the EIF collaborating with partners to work with The Gambia on linking trade and climate policies and financing mechanisms. A seven-part series of articles on trade and climate change in LDCs was published on the EIF's Trade for Development website.

A biopesticide development project funded by the STDF in Limpopo, South Africa.

Standards and Trade Development Facility

- **The Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) Working Group approved eight projects and seven project preparation grants, totalling US$ 7 million, to help developing economies meet international standards on food safety, plant and animal health and access international markets.**
- **Lessons from STDF projects and other work were shared at over 60 in-person and virtual events, attended by some 5,000 participants from international and regional organizations, government authorities and the private sector.**
- **An external assessment recognized STDF efforts to promote gender equality but called for more action to mainstream gender considerations across STDF activities.**
- **Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) experts participated in May in the STDF's first climate change week, which explored the implications of climate change on STDF areas of activity.**

STDF

US$ 7 million

The value of projects approved by the STDF in 2022

Guided by the 2020-24 Strategy – "Safe and Inclusive Trade Horizons for Developing Countries" – the STDF worked to promote increased and sustainable SPS capacity in developing economies. With STDF support, government authorities in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean upgraded SPS legislation, rolled out new procedures for surveillance of plant and animal diseases, introduced new technologies for improved management of SPS risks, and improved public-private cooperation.

Good practices developed with the STDF's support are responding to SPS challenges, as called for in the MC12 SPS Declaration (see page 91) in support of global food security.

STDF projects deliver safe trade

In 2022, 13 project grants (PGs) and ten project preparation grants (PPGs) were completed. In Burkina Faso, the STDF helped farmers to control aflatoxins in maize, reducing contamination by up to 92 per cent and contributing to an increase in maize exports. In Uganda, STDF financing supported a

Background

The STDF is a global partnership helping developing economies improve food safety, animal and plant health and meet sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements for trade, based on international standards. Established by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the World Bank, the World Health Organization and the WTO, the STDF contributes to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction and food security. In 2022, it was financed by voluntary contributions from Australia, Canada, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States.

public-private approach for surveillance and certification systems, dramatically reducing the threat posed by plant pests to horticulture exports (see page 23).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a regional project enabled 28 laboratories in eight countries to meet international testing standards, improving detection of transboundary diseases. In Mongolia, the STDF piloted an animal identification and registration system, strengthening animal disease control and export certification.

New projects

The STDF Working Group, made up of partners, donors and developing-economy experts, approved eight new project grants and seven PPGs worth over US$ 7 million, up from US$ 3.6 million in 2021. Eight of these new projects and preparation grants are regional and will aim to promote harmonized approaches for improved SPS outcomes.

Since 2004, more than US$ 67 million has been approved for 238 projects, a third of them regional. Least-developed and other low-income economies have benefited from 64 per cent of STDF project funds (see Figure 18).

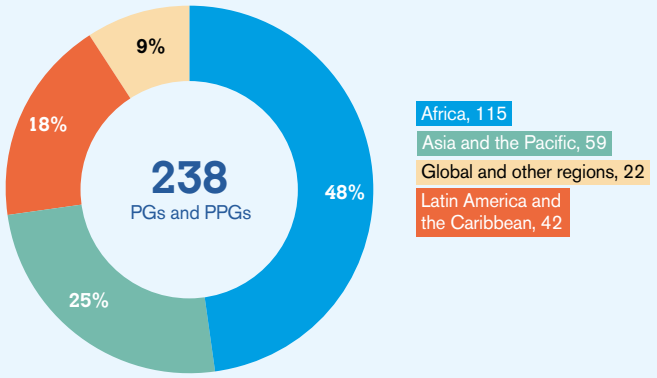
Spreading knowledge

The STDF continued to promote awareness of cross-cutting topics, including public-private partnerships, e-certification, good regulatory practices and the STDF's P-IMA framework, which offers an evidence-based approach to improve SPS planning.

Experiences and lessons from STDF's projects and other work were shared at over 60 events, attended by some 5,000 participants from international and regional organizations, government authorities and the private sector. Over 90 Working Group members and other experts from some 40 organizations participated in STDF practitioner groups, hosting online webinars to share experiences on SPS themes.

The STDF guide on good regulatory practices has been downloaded more than 800 times since its publication in late 2021.

Figure 18: STDF projects and PPGs, 2004 to 2022



External gender assessment

In November, the STDF released the results of an external gender assessment that looked at how gender equality is being addressed in the STDF's work. The assessment should help define an STDF gender action plan, complementing the WTO's work on trade and gender (see page 150).

The assessment stemmed from a realization that women, especially those in low-income economies, face more difficulties in accessing the resources and skills required to comply with SPS standards.

The assessment urged the Working Group to raise awareness on gender issues across the STDF partnership and to give greater visibility to these issues.

First STDF climate change week

In May, SPS experts participated in the first-ever STDF climate change week. In a series of webinars, participants explored the challenges of climate change for food safety, and animal and plant health capacity, and identified opportunities to respond to emerging risks and to facilitate safe trade.

The week showcased how trade can play a positive role in helping tackle the effects of climate change on the world's food supply. Due to climate change, regions will increasingly face food deficits, requiring increased trade to meet demand.

The WTO Secretariat resumed face-to-face technical assistance in 2022 in response to the improved COVID-19 situation.

Technical cooperation and training

- **The WTO Secretariat gradually resumed face-to-face technical assistance activities while continuing to offer virtual delivery methods.**
- **The Secretariat conducted approximately 120 technical assistance activities, 50 per cent more than in 2021. E-learning courses increased to 139, with eight new courses added.**
- **Approximately 5,500 participants benefited from local, regional and global technical assistance activities, and over 3,400 e-learning course enrolments were completed.**
- **Africa remained the region with the highest participation in e-learning courses, with 37 per cent of total participants.**

Background

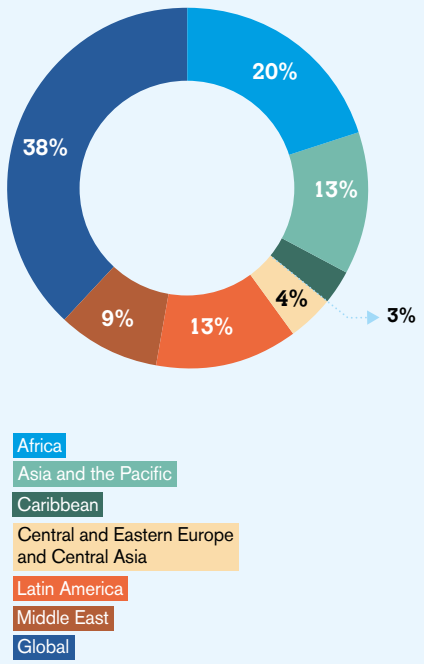
The Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation coordinates the WTO's technical assistance programmes. Its activities include e-learning, global and regional training courses, academic programmes and workshops at local and regional level. The technical assistance programmes help WTO members better understand their rights and obligations in the multilateral trading system. This strengthens their capacity to benefit from participation in the system.

Due to the improved COVID-19 situation, the WTO Secretariat resumed face-to-face local, regional and global technical assistance activities while also maintaining virtual methods of delivery. This resulted in 120 technical assistance activities during the year (excluding e-learning courses), which was 50 per cent more than in 2021.

The number of e-learning courses offered by the Secretariat increased to 139, with eight new courses added. Over 50 per cent of all participants accessed their training through e-learning on the WTO's online platform.

Approximately 5,500 participants benefited from local, regional and global technical assistance activities and over 3,400 e-learning course enrolments were completed (with most participants doing multiple courses). Compared with the previous year, the overall number of training activities increased by one-third but was still short of pre-COVID-19 levels.

Figure 19: Technical assistance activities by region in 2022



French and Irish Mission Internship Programme

Mohammed Wakil Bukar,
Nigeria

The programme was an eye-opener, with a great amount of experience and knowledge. The training activities, experience and exchange of knowledge and ideas across trade policy and negotiation processes at the WTO and the multilateral trading system in general are unquantifiable. I had helpful learning opportunities on different thematic areas of the WTO and hope to contribute positively towards promotion of the multilateral trading system. It is an honour and privilege to be part of this great programme and thanks to the WTO and the sponsors (France and Ireland) for the opportunity."

Netherlands Trainee Programme

Alice Tumbo,
Kenya

"My journey through the Netherlands Trainee Programme has been a career and character-building experience. The exposure that I gained at the WTO Secretariat in terms of facilitating both regular work and negotiations in a multilateral setting was invaluable. The programme also provided an opportunity to build useful networks among colleagues at the Secretariat and fellow trainees. The numerous meetings and discussions with other institutions have broadened my outlook on the multilateral trading system. My capacity to deliver on my country's trade agenda has been greatly enhanced."

Consistent with past trends, Africa had the highest percentage of overall technical assistance activities (20 per cent) followed by the Asia-Pacific region and Latin America (13 per cent each), Arab and Middle East region (9 per cent), Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (4 per cent) and the Caribbean (3 per cent). Africa also had the highest participation in e-learning courses (37 per cent) followed by Asia-Pacific (28 per cent). Twenty-seven per cent of e-learning courses were undertaken by participants from least-developed countries (LDCs).

Activities were implemented under the 2022-23 technical assistance and training plan, which has continued with the "results-based management" approach to training activities. Guidelines and benchmarks helped to maintain a high standard of content, consistent teaching methods and regular evaluation of all WTO technical assistance activities.

The largest number of activities implemented in 2022 (38 per cent) were "global" activities for participants from all WTO beneficiary members and observers and not targeted at any specific region or economy. The remaining 62 per cent were local and regional activities (see Figure 19), with the majority delivered at local level, in line with the Secretariat's demand-driven approach.

Participation in technical assistance activities

Women represented nearly 50 per cent of participants for all WTO technical assistance activities. Roughly 63 per cent of technical assistance activities (including e-learning courses) were delivered in English, 20 per cent in French, 7 per cent in Spanish and the remaining 11 per cent in more than one language, using interpreters.

Technical assistance continued to be provided for countries seeking to join the WTO (see page 45), with several government officials from acceding countries participating in face-to-face and remotely delivered technical assistance events.

Internship programmes

In 2022, consistent with past trends, most government officials completing WTO internships were from LDCs and other low-income countries in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, with participation reflecting gender balance, in line with the objectives of the programmes.

Nineteen participants (eight women and eleven men) completed the French and Irish Mission Internship Programme, which offers a ten-month placement to a capital-based official at the selected member's mission in Geneva. Twelve participants (eight women and four men) completed the Netherlands Trainee Programme, which also runs for ten months. Five officials (three women and two men) participated in the Regional Coordinator Internship Programme, and three interns (two women and one man) were engaged in the Accession Internship Programme.

Twelve young professionals (seven women and five men) were recruited for the Young Professionals Programme in 2022, using a merit-based selection process. The young professionals come from WTO members with no more than one professional staff in the WTO Secretariat to improve opportunities for young professionals from members under-represented at the WTO (see page 189).

Financing technical assistance

The bulk of the technical assistance programme is financed by the Global Trust Fund through voluntary contributions from WTO members. There has been a gradual decrease in voluntary contributions for over a decade. In 2022, total contributions were CHF 3.9 million, down from CHF 5.4 million in 2021.

Other funding sources include the WTO regular budget for Geneva-based courses and local technical assistance activities – CHF 4.8 million for 2022 – and contributions from other trust funds (such as the French and Irish Mission Internship Programme and the Netherlands Trainee Programme), which totalled CHF 2.5 million in 2022.

Regional Coordinator Internship

Jonah Taravaki,
Vanuatu

"The RCI Programme gave me opportunities to explore important WTO meetings, such as the General Council, TRIPS Council, Committee on Customs Valuation, Committee on Agriculture, Budget and Finance, Market Access, etc, and learn from the discussions. I had the privilege to take part in the retreats organized by the WTO on fisheries and agriculture. These retreats are important for the Pacific in addressing fisheries issues in relation to the MC12 outcomes and agriculture, especially with regards to the food security crisis. The experience is amazing, building courage and confidence."

Young Professionals Programme

Anastasiia Koltunova,
Ukraine

"During my tenure, I had the privilege to contribute to the multifaceted and dynamic work of the Trade and Environment Division, both in the areas of technical barriers to trade (TBT) and trade and environment. I had a unique opportunity to broaden my knowledge on linkages between trade, on the one hand, and climate change, public health and digital issues, on the other, and to expand my expertise in WTO dispute settlement."

DG Okonjo-Iweala opens the inaugural World Trade Congress on Gender at the WTO on 5 December.

Trade and women's empowerment

- **The WTO and the WTO Gender Research Hub launched the first World Trade Congress on Gender to discuss women's empowerment through trade.**
- **The Trade and Gender Unit focused on promoting gender-responsive trade policy making, driving research on trade and gender and making Aid for Trade work for women.**
- **The WTO launched the WTO Research Database on Trade and Gender, a one-stop source for examining the trade and gender nexus from various angles.**

The WTO and the WTO Gender Research Hub in December organized the inaugural edition of the World Trade Congress on Gender, the first time the WTO has brought together researchers and government officials to discuss women's empowerment through trade.

Under the theme "Gender Equality for Sustainable Trade and Recovery," the congress attracted more than 80 speakers for its 15 sessions covering the latest findings on harnessing gender-responsive trade policies to help the world recover from multiple crises created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, high energy and fuel prices and climate change.

Women are harder hit by global crises and research is vital to ensure trade policy makes an effective contribution to a gender-responsive recovery, the congress heard. "Crises are not gender neutral. We need to act, and we need to act now," DG Okonjo-Iweala said at the opening session. "We are moving in the right direction but we have a long way to go. We need good research to show us the way," she added.

The Gender Research Hub is a global network of trade and gender experts, whose core participants include the OECD, UNCTAD, the IMF, the World Bank, the ITC, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and

the Caribbean, the WTO Chairs Programme and prestigious universities.

Priority areas

In 2022, the WTO Trade and Gender Unit focused its work on three priority areas – promoting gender-responsive trade policy making, driving research on trade and gender globally, and making Aid for Trade (see page 141) work for women.

The Unit's Trade&Gender360° Strategy, a capacity-building programme on trade and gender for government officials and women entrepreneurs, aims to enhance members' knowledge of trade and gender equality and to provide training programmes for government officials. The programmes enable officials to address women's trade-related challenges and to participate in the formulation and implementation of gender policies, strategies and programmes.

A total of 53 government officials from over 30 WTO members completed a training course on trade and gender held in March and April. Participants were given guidance on integrating gender considerations into their work and local trade policies.

The Research Hub organized three workshops where trade and gender experts and external stakeholders discussed current issues related to trade and gender. The workshops focused on access to trade finance for women entrepreneurs, gender data collection and the integration of gender issues into WTO work.

Women's Day

In a video message to mark International Women's Day on 8 March 2022, the DG said that trade must be used as a vehicle for ending the marginalization of women in the global economy amid widening gender inequalities stemming from the COVID-19 crisis. "Narrowing gender gaps in trade and the wider economy is not just the morally right thing to do, it is the smart economic thing to do," she said.

The DG announced that an independent agency will make recommendations for specific gender-responsive programmes and actions by the WTO Secretariat. "Achieving gender balance and inclusiveness both internally and externally are two sides of the same coin. Both are part of the WTO's efforts to become gender-responsive," she said.

Database and monitoring exercise

In April, the WTO launched the WTO Research Database on Trade and Gender, a one-stop source with more than 140 research papers and publications examining the trade and gender nexus from various angles. The new policy tool complements work of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender (see page 72) on issues related to gender data collection in trade.

The Aid for Trade monitoring and evaluation exercise (see page 141) shows that more than 90 per cent of WTO members integrate gender issues in their programmes, supporting women entrepreneurs through capacity building. For the first time, members have introduced "non-trade" issues in their programming, such as gender-based violence. The challenges faced by members pertain mostly to impact assessment and data collection.

90%+

Aid for Trade monitoring showed that more than 90 per cent of WTO members integrate gender issues in their programmes

Panellists at the World Trade Congress on Gender in a session on the economic implications of gender-based violence.

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Cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations

- DG Okonjo-Iweala attended the COP27 Climate Summit in Egypt where she said tackling global warming cannot be successful without taking into account the role of trade in meeting climate goals.
- The DG warned G20 leaders against fragmenting the multilateral trading system, telling them; "We need to strengthen trade cooperation, not weaken it." Meeting in Bali, Indonesia, G20 leaders recognized the core role of the WTO in the multilateral trading system.
- Together with the heads of the IMF, World Bank and WHO, the DG worked to leverage multilateral finance and trade solutions to accelerate access to COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.

Background

The WTO works closely with other intergovernmental organizations and regional bodies, especially those involved in trade-related issues. This cooperation helps to ensure coordinated action and a consistent approach to international trade policies.

UN climate summit

Economies will fail to tackle global warming unless they include trade and trade policies in their plans to meet climate goals, DG Okonjo-Iweala warned. "We cannot afford to leave trade and the WTO behind," she said in launching the WTO's World Trade Report at the COP27 Climate Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in November (see page 15). The WTO's flagship report focused for the first time on climate change and international trade.

The DG spoke at several high-level sessions. She also joined world leaders in a call to mobilize US$ 12.5 billion over five years to support Africa's transition to greener economies and climate adaptation. At a high-level forum – Global Investment and Trade for Climate Transformation – convened by the WTO and UNCTAD, the DG highlighted the need to develop climate-smart policies to promote international trade and investment in climate-change mitigation and adaptation projects.

G20

The DG attended the G20 Heads of State and Government Summit in November in Bali, Indonesia. She underlined the need to avoid fragmenting the rules-based world trading system and to lift export restrictions on food, feed and fertilizers, which have been increasing, with the world's poorest suffering most from such policies. "We need to strengthen trade cooperation, not weaken it," she declared.

The G20 leaders issued a Bali Declaration reaffirming their commitment to a rules-based, equitable, sustainable and transparent multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core. Leaders also agreed that WTO reform is key in strengthening trust in the multilateral trading system.

The WTO also took part in meetings of G20 trade ministers, the G20 Trade and Investment Working Group and G20 agriculture ministers. It continued to monitor food crop policies under the G20 Agriculture Market Information System initiative, which aims to increase transparency in international commodity markets and improve policy coordination.

A study looking into volatility in the fertilizer market and its impact on agricultural production was issued in November by the WTO and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Calling for urgent action to address the fertilizer crisis, the study outlines policy recommendations for G20 governments, highlighting the importance of keeping the fertilizer market open to meet global demand.

With UNCTAD and the OECD, the WTO continued to publish six-monthly reports on trade and investment measures in G20 countries. The WTO Trade Monitoring Report on G20 trade measures, issued in October, shows that amid economic uncertainty exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the food security crisis, G20 economies between mid-May and mid-October 2022 introduced export restrictions at an increased pace, particularly on food and fertilizer.

Indonesia's President, Joko Widodo, greets DG Okonjo-Iweala at the G20 Leaders' Summit in Bali, Indonesia in November.

The WTO and the Caribbean Development Bank sign a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen cooperation on helping small businesses trade globally.

COVID-19

DG Okonjo-Iweala worked with the heads of the IMF, World Bank and WHO to leverage multilateral finance and trade solutions to accelerate access to COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, particularly for low- and middle-income economies, through the Multilateral Leaders Task Force she co-founded in 2021. These joint efforts developed relations with the main manufacturers of COVID-19 vaccines, vaccine inputs and other stakeholders (see page 12).

The WHO, WIPO and the WTO jointly held a series of workshops to increase the flow of information on the pandemic and in April launched a trilateral COVID-19 technical assistance platform to help members and accession candidates request tailored technical assistance to address their capacity-building needs. In December, they gathered experts for a joint technical symposium to examine key pandemic challenges within the frameworks of health, trade and intellectual property and to discuss building resilience. "This will help lay the foundation for better responses to future global health crises", said DG Okonjo-Iweala.

The WTO Secretariat also collaborated with the World Bank to publish "Trade Therapy: Deepening Cooperation to Enhance Pandemic Defences" (see page 170), which analyses the role that trade plays in ensuring access to medical goods and services during global health crises.

FIFA

The WTO and FIFA agreed to work together to examine how international trade and football can serve as catalysts for economic growth and social inclusion. The collaboration was spelled out in a memorandum of understanding signed by WTO DG Okonjo-Iweala and FIFA President Gianni Infantino.

Food security

In September 2022 and February 2023, the heads of the WTO, FAO, IMF, World Bank Group and the World Food Programme made joint calls for an urgent response to the food and nutrition security crisis, noting that 349 million people across 79 economies are acutely food insecure, meaning they do not have food of an adequate quality for their basic needs.

23

The WTO is one of 23 international organizations and UN agencies involved in the UN Secretary General-led High-Level Task Force working to achieve the SDGs

High-level meetings

In November, the DG attended a meeting hosted by the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on "Strengthening the multilateral order together", together with the heads of the International Labour Organization (ILO), IMF, OECD and the World Bank. The DG also participated in December in the seventh "1+6" Roundtable, held by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, with other leaders from other international organizations to discuss how to promote strong, inclusive and sustainable growth.

OECD

A high-level OECD delegation, led by Secretary-General Mathias Cormann, visited the WTO on 13 September as part of a Swiss initiative to deepen collaboration between international organizations and to underline Geneva's importance as a multilateral hub. The OECD and the WTO cooperate in a range of areas, including in the trade in value-added (TiVA) database and in improving the measurement of digital trade (see page 176). They are developing trade facilitation indicators, with an interactive web tool covering 152 economies.

United Nations

DG Okonjo-Iweala attended the spring and autumn meetings of the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB), composed of the executive heads of UN agencies, funds and programmes and the executive heads of the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO.

The WTO is part of the UN Secretary General-led High-Level Task Force, which brings together 23 UN agencies and international organizations to provide policy coordination and political leadership to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

UNCTAD, ITC and UN regional commissions

UNCTAD, the ITC and the WTO jointly produce the annual "World Tariff Profiles" (see page 169) and quarterly and annual statistics on international trade in services. They also combine in statistical capacity building, including training and e-learning courses.

The WTO's cooperation with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) has grown, particularly in helping LDCs graduating from LDC status (see page 138) to adapt to the change.

DG Okonjo-Iweala and FIFA President Gianni Infantino agree to work together to use trade and football as drivers of economic and social development.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Presidential Lecture Series

Open and equitable international trade is at the centre of reinventing the global order to address the world's most pressing challenges, H.E. Ms Mia Amor Mottley, the Prime Minister of Barbados, told a large audience at the inaugural event of the WTO's Presidential Lecture Series on 23 March 2022 at the WTO's headquarters in Geneva.

H.E. Ms Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados, delivers the inaugural lecture of the WTO's Presidential Lecture Series.

WTO ambassadors, Swiss authorities, heads of intergovernmental organizations, representatives of non-governmental organizations, business and academia participated in the event, which was opened by Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala.

Background

The WTO's Presidential Lecture Series provides a platform for distinguished speakers from all walks of life, ranging from presidents, prime ministers and high-level politicians to business leaders, scientists, authors and philanthropists, to discuss multilateral cooperation and global governance issues, including trade-related matters and sustainable development goals.

In her opening remarks, DG Okonjo-Iweala underscored the aim of the WTO's Presidential Lecture Series: "Multilateral institutions and values are under threat. The speakers in this series will shed light on potential ways forward, towards the WTO's founding goals of raising people's living standards, creating jobs, and promoting sustainable development."

DG Okonjo-Iweala warmly welcomed Prime Minister Mottley: "Since taking office in 2018, Prime Minister Mottley has emerged as one of the most powerful voices among political leaders on the international stage. She is fearless; she speaks truth to power on issues like climate justice, vaccine inequity, sovereign debt, and the unique vulnerabilities facing small economies. She makes Barbados punch above its weight."

In her speech, Mia Mottley noted the failures of the old global order, highlighting issues such as global debt, rapid climate change, the

wto.org/english/news_e/events_e/presidentiallectures_e.htm

The world needs more mobile labour, capital and technology to defeat climate change. We need to be part of the digital revolution to deliver better health, education, and quality of life.

Mia Amor Mottley

COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. "The global order is not working; it is not delivering in the areas of critical importance necessary to achieve the goal of sustainable development for the majority of the world's population," she said.

World leaders need to show true political will to transform the global order without "retreating behind national and regional lines of defence," said Prime Minister Mottley, stressing that "the WTO can be and must be in the vanguard of the change we need". She highlighted "the absolute need for us to bring the architecture of a new global order into the 21st century – transparent and fair and rooted in moral legitimacy."

Mia Mottley outlined the major trade obstacles facing exporters from small island developing economies, such as the digital gaps, shortage of supporting financing mechanisms and discriminatory standards. "These, not tariffs, not genuine competitiveness and comparative advantages, are the obstacles to today's international trade. They will be an obstacle too to the efficient and fair prosecution of climate mitigation through the global transfer of capital, technology, and opportunity," she said.

She continued: "The world needs more mobile labour, capital and technology to defeat climate change. We need to be part of the digital revolution to deliver better health, education, and quality of life. International trade is at the centre of solving climate change and using digital trade to advance global development."

She concluded: The new global order "requires a next generation WTO committed to calling out obstacles to equitable trade, committed to being even more representative, acting as a countervailing, reforming force against the tendency to narrow, exclusive trade relationships, with a seat at the highest tables to promote the international trade dimension to the world's problems."

The event was moderated by Ambassador Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme of Botswana.

H.E. Ms Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados, in conversation with DG Okonjo-Iweala and Ambassador Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme (Botswana).

Contact with the business community

- **Business representatives met the Director-General at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022 to encourage WTO members to work for ambitious outcomes at the conference.**
- **Business organizations hosted 33 sessions at the WTO Public Forum on topics such as delivering an inclusive trade agenda and the growing role of services and digital trade.**

Background

Business and the WTO have always been closely connected. The private sector is a major beneficiary of transparent and predictable trade rules and obligations. Business is an important interlocutor for both governments and the WTO. It is actively involved in the multilateral trading system and participates in public activities of the WTO.

DG meets business representatives during MC12

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), which represents the global business community, organized a meeting for DG Okonjo-Iweala with 50 business representatives on the margins of MC12. In a statement, the ICC encouraged ministers to work towards ambitious outcomes that meet the needs of economies and people around the world.

COVID-19 therapeutics producers

In November, the DG met with the heads of companies engaged in the production of key COVID-19 therapeutics, with a view to improving access in low-and middle-income economies. The meeting built on the earlier positive dialogue of the DG with the heads of vaccine manufacturers. At MC12, ministers granted a targeted waiver regarding patents for COVID-19 vaccines, and WTO members are discussing whether the decision can be extended to diagnostics and therapeutics (see page 61).

Business at the Public Forum

The Public Forum, whose theme was "Towards a sustainable and inclusive recovery: Ambition

33

The WTO Public Forum featured 33 sessions hosted by business organizations

A session at the WTO Public Forum co-organized by the International Chamber of Commerce.

DG Okonjo-Iweala receives the World Trade Award from the National Foreign Trade Council Foundation in Washington, D.C.

to action", featured 33 sessions hosted by business organizations. The sessions covered topics such as delivering an inclusive trade agenda for a more sustainable future, the growing role of services and digital trade, the role of trade in biodiversity conservation and how to empower small business through digital technologies.

Other contact with business

Throughout the year, WTO officials, including the DG, met with members of the business community in Geneva or elsewhere. The issues most frequently discussed included the state of play in the WTO's trade negotiations, trade tensions and the Appellate Body impasse (see page 134).

In April 2022, the DG received in Washington the National Foreign Trade Council Foundation's prestigious World Trade Award. The award, which had previously been given to Nelson Mandela, Kofi Annan and former US Trade Representative Mike Froman, recognizes outstanding contributions to furthering open trade.

Speaking at a meeting of more than 800 Spanish business leaders in San Sebastián, Spain, in June 2022, DDG Anabel González said that companies worldwide need to invest in building a stronger and more agile global trading system for the benefit of all. "More than ever, businesses need stable, predictable and uniform conditions to access global markets, something that only the WTO rules-based trading system can provide," she said.

> **More than ever, businesses need stable, predictable and uniform conditions to access global markets, something that only the WTO rules-based trading system can provide.**
>
> DDG Anabel González

Relations with non-governmental organizations

- **DG Okonjo-Iweala briefed non-governmental organizations (NGOs) during the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) on the state of play in the negotiations. Nearly 440 NGOs registered for the conference.**
- **The number of sessions co-organized by NGOs during the 2022 Public Forum almost doubled to 60.**

DG Okonjo-Iweala briefed accredited NGOs during MC12 about the state of play in the negotiations, including on fisheries subsidies (see page 55), the TRIPS waiver (see page 61) and agriculture. Over 52 NGO representatives participated.

Ahead of MC12, representatives of nearly 200 environmental organizations presented the DG with a letter for WTO members calling for governments to swiftly conclude a global agreement to phase out harmful fisheries subsidies.

During MC12, NGOs were provided with a dedicated NGO centre, allowing space for meetings and daily briefings by the WTO Secretariat on discussions at the conference. A total of 439 NGOs registered for MC12 and 466 participant badges were printed for NGO representatives.

NGOs played an active part in the WTO's annual Public Forum (see page 162), co-organizing 60 sessions, compared with 35 the year before.

In 2022, NGOs were invited to seven WTO Secretariat briefings on meetings of the Trade Negotiations Committee and the General Council. Nearly 60 representatives from 30 NGOs benefited from these briefings on the WTO's work.

DDG Zhang with the WTO Chair Holder in Ecuador at a meeting of the WCP Network in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ecuador: Improving civil society participation in trade policy-making

A workshop aimed at improving the participation of civil society groups in the negotiation and implementation of trade agreements was organized by the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, a participant in the WTO Chairs Programme, in Ecuador in October 2022. Members of the National Mechanism for Dialogue with Civil Society and public officials from various government ministries discussed ways to improve NGO participation in concluding trade agreements. The results of the workshop were presented to DDG Zhang at an event bringing together the Chairs from the Latin-American and Caribbean region in Quito in November 2022.

Background

The WTO maintains regular dialogue with civil society organizations to enhance cooperation and increase their awareness of WTO activities and the multilateral trading system. Continuing and strengthening the relationship with civil society remains important for increasing transparency and increasing public awareness of the work of the WTO.

Contact with parliamentarians

- **During the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), a delegation of parliamentarians presented DG Okonjo-Iweala with a statement expressing strong support for the multilateral trading system.**
- **The statement also called for the Ministerial Conference to be a starting point for reforming the WTO to ensure it can meet the challenges of the 21st century.**

During MC12, a delegation of parliamentarians presented DG Okonjo-Iweala with a statement expressing strong support for the multilateral trading system and calling for the conference to act as a starting point for modernizing the WTO. The statement was submitted by Bernd Lange, Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, and three other members of the Committee.

"MC12 can offer a great opportunity to reinstate trust in the multilateral trading system and should be the starting point for modernizing and reforming the WTO to ensure it can play a role in addressing the challenges of the 21st century, including issues such as climate change and sustainability and in particular today, global food security," the statement said.

DG Okonjo-Iweala receives a statement in support of the WTO from MEPs at the start of MC12.

The Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the European Parliament, met on 13 June in Geneva to discuss the role of the WTO and the challenges facing world trade. It was briefed by the WTO Secretariat on the state of play in trade negotiations and on the topics for discussion at MC12.

The Steering Committee also met in April and September, with the participation of DDGs Ellard and Paugam, respectively. Both WTO officials stressed the importance of parliamentary engagement with the WTO. In September, the Committee organized a panel on "Food security as a key element for a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive trading system" during the WTO Public Forum (see page 162).

The Secretary-General of the IPU, Martin Chungong, spoke at an event for Asian-Pacific parliamentarians co-organized by the WTO, the Rajaratnam School for International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore and the Singapore-based Temasek Foundation in May 2022. He highlighted the increased engagement of parliamentarians with WTO issues.

WTO outreach events were held for parliamentarians in Buenos Aires in November and in Marrakech, Morocco, in December. The activities attracted over 200 legislators from Caribbean, Latin American, Arab and Mediterranean regions.

Background

Parliamentarians play an important role in the multilateral trading system. Any deal resulting from intergovernmental negotiations at the WTO will, in most cases, need approval from legislators. The WTO seeks to maintain an open dialogue with parliamentarians and to help them gain a deeper understanding of the organization and its work.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Public Forum 2022

Under the theme "Towards a sustainable and inclusive recovery: Ambition to action", the 2022 Public Forum was held from 27 to 30 September in the WTO. Nearly 1,300 participants attended in person. A total of 147 sessions were organized, including three high-level sessions.

1,300

Nearly 1,300 participants attended the Public Forum in person

Multiple crises require new thinking

In conversation with CNN anchor Richard Quest on the opening day, DG Okonjo-Iweala highlighted how the Public Forum was taking place at a difficult time for both global trade and the world economy against a backdrop of geopolitical instability and climate crises. These challenges will require new approaches, she said.

"It's not business as usual because the world is in a very difficult place at this time," the DG said. "We have a situation in which we are grappling with multiple crises, which I often refer to as a polycrisis, simultaneous exogenous shocks hitting the world."

In a subsequent plenary debate on the Forum theme of sustainable and inclusive recovery, a high-level panel of experts from civil society, the private sector and international organizations discussed some of the major challenges facing policymakers: recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the threat of future pandemics, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Leveraging technology to promote inclusive growth

Another high-level debate, involving civil society organizations and the private sector, explored how technology can be a catalyst for inclusive growth. The discussions underlined the importance of levelling the playing field for digital access so that digitalization can be a key driver of economic growth.

Thousands of African companies used digital platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic to broaden their consumer base and to reach many more economies, speakers noted. There is a massive potential for African businesses to seize digital opportunities, they added.

Highlighting the important role of trade rules, speakers pointed to the ongoing e-commerce negotiations (see page 65) at the WTO. If rule makers can put in place the right rules for e-commerce, not just developed economies but developing economies will benefit, they said.

Delivering a trade agenda for a sustainable future

Representatives from international organizations, the private sector and academia shared their views on ways of "Delivering a Trade Agenda for a Sustainable Future". During the session on this topic, the need to think radically and break silos between trade and environment was stressed to help the international community take on board that trade is part of the solution to climate change.

Panellists agreed that international organizations, governments, businesses and civil society must coordinate to update WTO rules written more than a quarter of a century ago when the environmental crisis was far less pressing.

To recognize the milestone of an agreement on fisheries subsidies (see page 55) in June 2022 and to encourage its prompt entry into force, a photo exhibition entitled "Let's save an exhausted ocean" portrayed the dangers

Background

The Public Forum is the WTO's largest annual outreach event. It provides a unique platform for heads of states, parliamentarians, businesspeople, students, academics and civil society to come together and debate a wide range of trade and development topics.

DG Okonjo-Iweala in conversation with CNN Anchor Richard Quest at the 2022 Public Forum.

resulting from fish stock depletion. The exhibition was co-organized with the Stop Funding Overfishing Coalition.

Overcoming barriers for women entrepreneurs

A high-level session showcased the experiences of women entrepreneurs, highlighting the importance of an inclusive economic recovery. Women-owned businesses have faced higher barriers since the outbreak of COVID-19, adding to long-standing challenges, such as lack of access to finance and gender bias.

To overcome barriers keeping women out of international markets, DG Okonjo-Iweala called for "active trade policies that ensure non-discrimination and that help women access global value chains". She added: "With the right tools to compete and the right policies, women can break the glass ceiling in trade."

Involving youth

A session on 30 September – "The Missing Peace" – looked at how to involve youth in trade, policymaking and peacebuilding for a more sustainable future. More than a third of the world's 1.8 billion young people live in fragile and conflict-affected states, where opportunities for education and jobs are extremely limited. The DG stressed that trade could play an important role in breaking the vicious circles of poverty, frustration and conflict in these countries and in increasing opportunities for young people.

Trade for Peace Programme

- **Ministers of the g7+ WTO Accessions Group adopted a declaration calling for a dedicated work programme on trade for peace for fragile and conflict-affected (FCA) states.**
- **The WTO held the third edition of Trade for Peace Week under the theme "Fragility and Conflict: Building Peace through Trade and Economic Integration".**

Ministers of the g7+ WTO Accessions Group met on the margins of the 12th Ministerial Conference in June 2022. The meeting – the second such ministerial gathering – took stock of the first five years of the Group's activities and adopted a declaration calling for the establishment of a dedicated work programme on trade for peace for FCA states.

"Having gone through the devastating experiences of violent conflict … we urgently need effective support to access the international trade tools provided by the WTO," said Liberia's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mawine G. Diggs, who chaired the meeting.

Speaking on behalf of the Director-General, DDG Zhang Xiangchen commended the Group's work. "I believe the Group's goal is even more relevant today than ever as we experience increased tensions from conflicts in different parts of the world," he said.

In November, the WTO held the third edition of Trade for Peace Week under the theme "Fragility and Conflict: Building Peace through Trade and Economic Integration". The five-day event included panel discussions at which WTO members and observers, policymakers and experts exchanged ideas on concrete areas of collaboration to address the challenges faced by FCA states.

Trade for Peace Future Leaders, a new youth-engagement initiative, was launched in September 2022 to increase youth engagement worldwide on trade and peace and to underscore the importance of youth in the future of trade and peace-building.

Background

The g7+ WTO Accessions Group includes nine members – three LDCs which acceded to the WTO (Afghanistan, Liberia, Yemen) and six acceding LDCs (Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Timor-Leste). The Trade for Peace Programme grew out of the launch of the g7+ WTO Accessions Group. It aims to promote the rules-based system as a peacebuilding tool by highlighting the role of trade and economic integration in the security and development fields. It has four pillars: political engagement and partnerships; outreach and public dialogue; research; and training and capacity building.

Ministers of the g7+ WTO Accessions Group met on the margins of MC12 to call for the establishment of a dedicated work programme on trade for peace for fragile states.

The WTO's media team holds a press briefing at the start of MC12.

Contact with the media

- **The 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) was by far the biggest WTO media event in 2022, with more than 270 journalists accredited to cover it.**
- **The WTO's trade forecasts and its participation in the COP27 climate summit also attracted much media interest.**

MC12 in June was by far the biggest WTO media event in 2022, with the conference covered by major news outlets from around the world. More than 270 journalists worldwide were accredited for MC12, with 154 present in Geneva to cover the event in person. The media team organized more than a dozen press conferences, briefings and events over the five and a half days of the conference.

The launch of the annual trade forecast in April and the revised trade forecast in October attracted strong media interest. A total of 87 journalists participated in the press conference for the launch of the annual forecast while 33 journalists attended the press conference for the revised forecast.

The media team supported the WTO's active role at the COP27 climate summit in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt in November, organizing a press briefing for the launch of the World Trade Report (see page 172) and a press conference with the Director-General. It also organized interviews with the DG for major media outlets at COP27.

Journalists were invited to 47 WTO press conferences, briefings and other events in 2022. Press officers assisted with the organization of webinars and online conferences and supported media activities around the Public Forum (see page 162).

In cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the media team organized a seminar for 13 French-speaking journalists from Africa at the WTO in late 2022, generating 30 print and radio stories on trade and the WTO.

The WTO media team approved over 150 requests for registration to the online newsroom, where journalists can access press releases and publications under embargo. The total number of accredited journalists registered stood at 2,085 as of the end of 2022.

270+

journalists were accredited for MC12, with 154 present in person

Contact with the public

- **The WTO website attracted over 2.9 million monthly visits in 2022.**
- **WTO videos were viewed over 220,000 times. The most popular video, with over 12,700 views, was "Let's Talk WTO".**
- **The number of followers on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Weibo and TikTok grew by 8 per cent to 2 million.**
- **The WTO issued over 50 publications in 2022 on topics ranging from trade finance to climate change.**

WTO website

The WTO website attracted over 2.9 million monthly visits in 2022, a slight drop on the record 3.2 million visits in 2021 when interest was increased by the arrival of the new Director-General, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. China accounted for the most visits, with 21.3 per cent, followed by the United States (10.9 per cent) and Russia (6.3 per cent).

Total page views fell to 81.9 million, from 94.6 million in 2021. Over 530 news items were published on the site, 20 per cent more than in 2020.

Some of the most downloaded files were the WTO's flagship publications, the "World Trade Statistical Review 2021" (142,000 downloads), the "Annual Report 2022" (over 51,000 downloads) and the "World Trade Report 2022" (22,200 downloads). The publication "The History and Future of the World Trade Organization" was downloaded almost 108,000 times.

WTO videos were viewed over 220,000 times in 2022. The most popular video, with over 12,700 views, was "Let's Talk WTO". The "Let's Talk Tariffs" video was viewed over 6,100 times and the WTO trade forecast 2022-2023 press conference was viewed over 4,400 times. The "Let's Talk Trade" series aims at explaining trade topics in everyday language.

Some 83,700 people have registered to receive email alerts for WTO news items (see Figure 20). The largest number is from India (10.5 per cent), followed by the United States, Mexico, Peru, Colombia and France.

Figure 20: Users registered for email alerts by occupation, as of end-2022

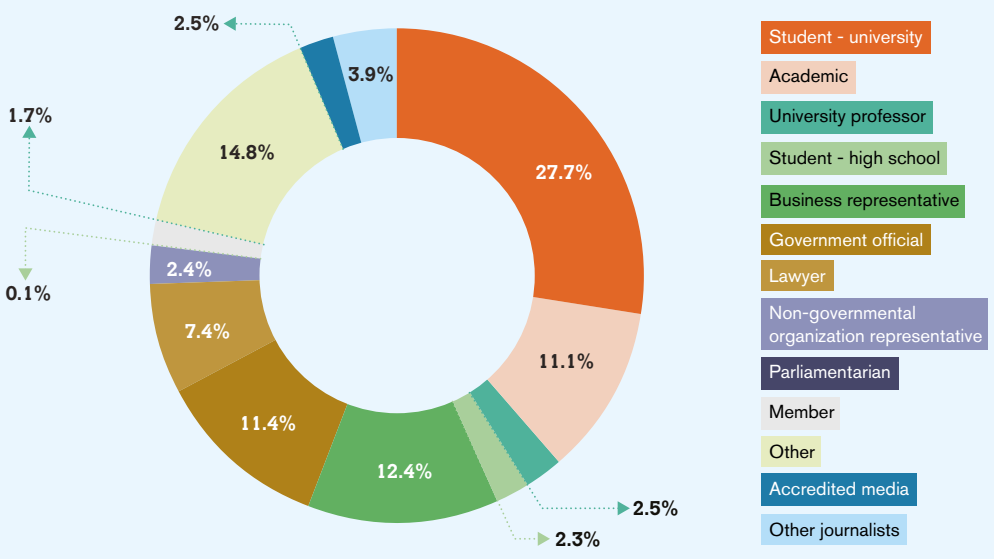
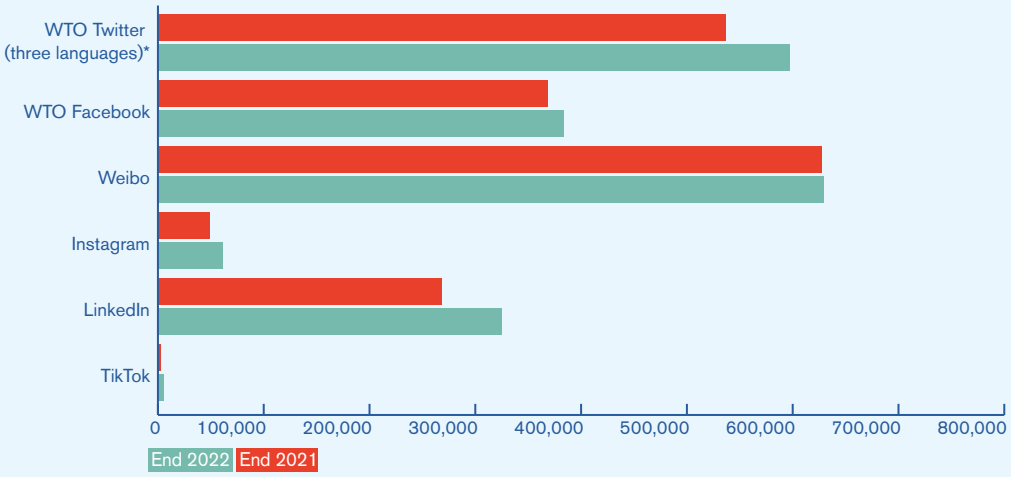


Figure 21: Percentage growth in the number of followers of the WTO on social media platforms



Social media

The number of followers on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Weibo and TikTok grew by 8 per cent to 2 million (see Figure 21). During the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) and the Public Forum (see page 162), the WTO witnessed the highest audience growth.

Posts covering the DG's activities and MC12 received the most views and comments. Other popular topics included the Aid for Trade Global Review in July 2022 (see page 142).

To promote its work to wider audiences, including youth, the WTO started creating reels (films) on Instagram, providing trade-related information and presenting WTO activities in short videos that encourage interaction from followers.

Audio-visual products

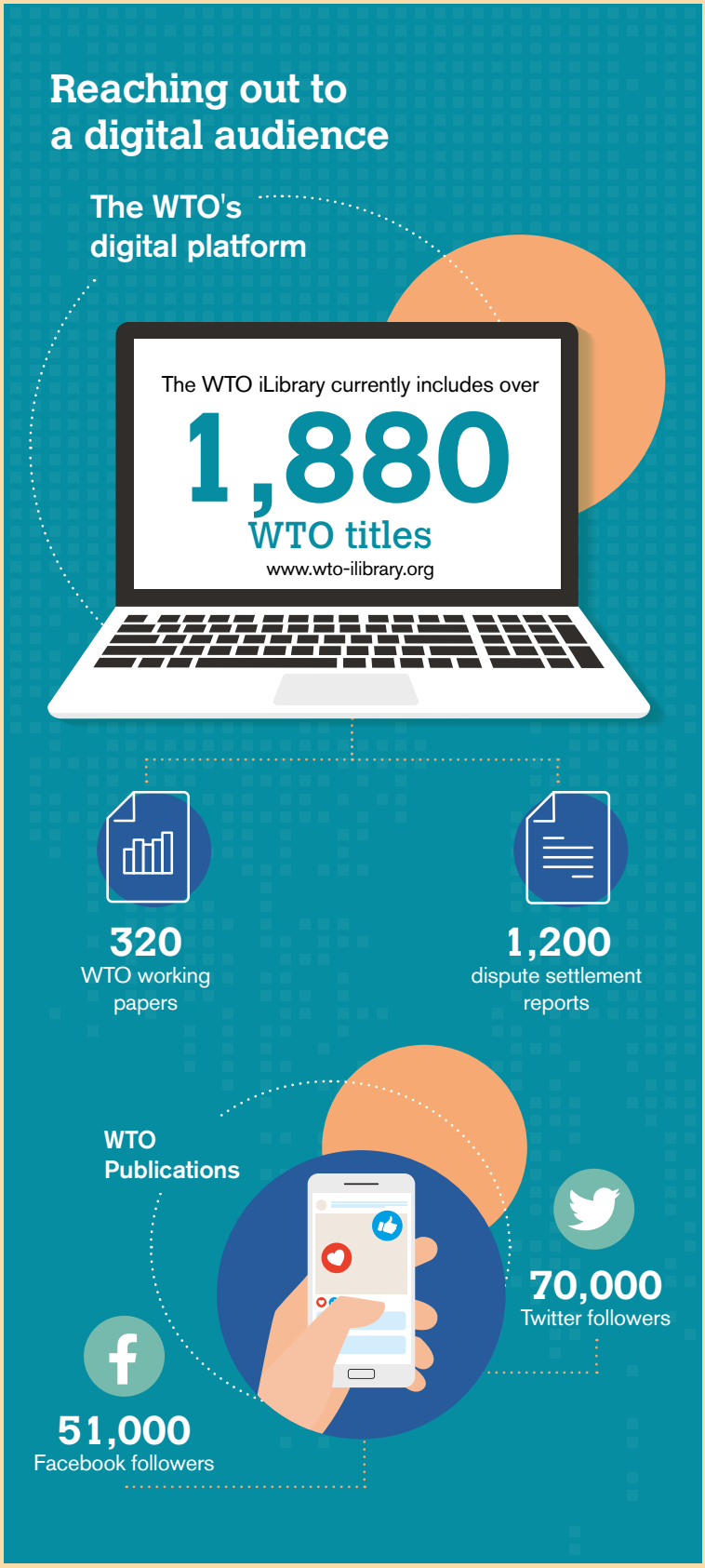
Overall video production grew by 23 per cent in 2022. The most viewed new videos were the Presidential Lecture with Barbados Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley (see page 156), followed by the Global Supply Chains Forum, a virtual event held under the theme "Easing supply chain bottlenecks for a sustainable future", the 2022-23 trade forecast and the MC12 videos.

The "Let's Talk Trade" podcast production, launched to delve into specific topics, doubled over the course of 2022, with three more seasons on global supply chains, MC12 outcomes and trade-related aspects of football. In "Trade Goals", a season about the global value chain of football, business representatives, football players, sports lawyers, WTO experts and others shared their perspectives on how football is a local game but a global product.

Student group presentations

Until mid-May 2022, presentations to students were held virtually due to COVID-19. Once the building was re-opened to visitors, most presentations were held on-site. The WTO organized 81 presentations for some 2,430 participants.

The presentations mostly covered the history, functions and work of the WTO in general although a few were focused on legal affairs, intellectual property and career opportunities. Sixty-five of the presentations were held in English, seven in French, two each in German and Swedish and one each in Arabic, Finnish, Greek, Portuguese and Ukrainian.



WTO publications

The WTO issued over 50 publications in 2022 on topics ranging from trade finance to climate change. Most WTO publications can be downloaded from the WTO's website in English, French and Spanish while printed copies can be purchased from the WTO Bookshop in Geneva and the WTO Online Bookshop. WTO apps are available free from the App Store and Google Play.

Flagship publications

Annual Report

ISBN 978-92-870-5386-2 | CHF 50

The report provides a comprehensive account of the WTO's activities in 2021 and early 2022. It also looks at the successful conclusion in June 2022 of the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference originally scheduled for end-2021.

World Trade Report 2022: Climate Change and International Trade

ISBN 978-92-870-5395-4 | CHF 60

The report explores the complex interlinkages between climate change and international trade, and how trade can contribute to addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

World Trade Statistical Review 2022

ISBN 978-92-870-5352-7 | CHF 50

A comprehensive overview of the latest developments in world trade, with a detailed analysis of the most recent trends for trade in goods and services.

Other annual publications

Trade Profiles 2022

ISBN 978-92-870-5376-3 | CHF 60
Key indicators on trade in goods and services for 197 economies. Highlights each economy's major exports and imports and its main trading partners.

World Tariff Profiles 2022

ISBN 978-92-870-5367-1 | CHF 50
Comprehensive information on tariffs and non-tariff measures imposed by over 170 countries and customs territories. Co-published with ITC and UNCTAD.

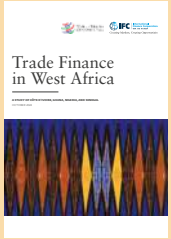
Trade Policy Reviews

CHF 60 per trade policy review
Fourteen trade policy reviews (TPRs), analysing trade policies and practices, were issued in 2022 for Argentina, Bahrain, China, Guyana, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyz Republic, Mauritius, Oman, Qatar, Russian Federation, Singapore, Tajikistan, Tonga and Viet Nam.

Dispute Settlement Reports 2021

CHF 220
Report of the panel on "US – Ripe Olives from Spain". Co-published with Cambridge University Press.

New publications



Trade Finance in West Africa: A Study of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal

Digital only | Free
This study focuses on the obstacles to trade finance faced in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal and the potential boost to trade resulting from closing trade finance gaps. Co-published with the International Finance Corporation.

WCO/WTO Study Report on Disruptive Technologies

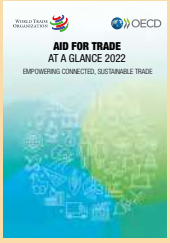
Digital only | Free
This publication explores how so-called disruptive technologies, such as blockchain, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence and machine learning, can be used to ease the flow of goods across borders. Co-published with the World Customs Organization.

Implementing the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies: Challenges and Opportunities for Developing and Least-Developed Country Members

Digital only | Free
The report examines existing bilateral and multilateral assistance in support of sustainable fisheries, including how this may be relevant to meeting obligations under the new WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

Aid for Trade Global Review 2022: Empowering Connected, Sustainable Trade

ISBN 978-92-870-7206-1 | CHF 50
Drawing on the 2022 OECD-WTO Aid for Trade monitoring and evaluation exercise, this publication presents an analysis of the responses provided by developing economies, least-developed countries and donors and outlines future priority areas for the Aid for Trade initiative.



Aid for Trade at a Glance 2022: Empowering Connected, Sustainable Trade

ISBN 978-92-64-16326-3 | CHF 50
This report analyses the evolution of Aid for Trade flows in the context of recent crises, such as COVID-19, that have had significant impact on trade and investment. Co-published with OECD.

Tackling Illicit Trade in Medical Products: Better International Cooperation for Better Health

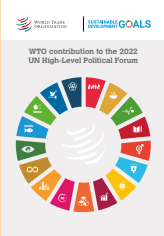
Digital only | Free
This publication explores WTO tools and activities that can help WTO members develop and strengthen their trade policy responses to combat illicit trade in medical products.

Trade Therapy: Deepening Cooperation to Strengthen Pandemic Defenses

ISBN 978-1-4648-1885-1 | CHF 50
The publication provides new data on trade in medical goods and services, surveys the policy landscape, and proposes an action plan to deal with future pandemics. Co-published with the World Bank.

Cross-border Paperless Trade Toolkit

Digital only | Free
This toolkit aims to raise awareness of the technical and legal tools to be called upon to adopt cross-border paperless trade systems. Co-published with ESCAP and UNCITRAL.



WTO Contribution to the 2022 UN High-Level Political Forum

Digital only | Free
The 2022 report focuses on the WTO's efforts to achieve trade-specific targets in SDGs 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17.

Trade Impacts of LDC Graduation: Matters related to the WTO Agreements

Digital only | Free
This pocket edition of "Trade Impacts of LDC Graduation" summarizes the implications of LDC graduation on matters related to WTO rules. Co-published with EIF.

Subsidies, Trade, and International Cooperation

ISBN 979-8-400-20835-5 | CHF 30
This publication seeks to highlight the potential benefits of closer cooperation among governments on subsidies and considers areas where this might be pursued constructively. Co-published with IMF, OECD and the World Bank.

The Promise of TradeTech: Policy Approaches to Harness Trade Digitalization

ISBN 978-92-870-7101-9 | CHF 30
This publication explores how international policy coordination could advance the adoption of digital technologies and trade digitalization across the world. Co-published with the World Economic Forum.

The Crisis in Ukraine: Implications of the War for Global Trade and Development

Digital only | Free
This publication examines the implications of the war in Ukraine for global trade and development. It highlights in particular how the war is causing severe risks to food and energy security and exacerbating supply chain difficulties.

One Year of War in Ukraine: Assessing the Impact on Global Trade and Development

Digital only | Free
This publication examines the implications of the war for global trade and development, looking in particular at the impact of the war on exports from Ukraine and Russia and exploring how economies highly dependent on imports from the conflict region have responded.

Trade in Knowledge: Intellectual Property, Trade and Development in a Transformed Global Economy

Edited by Antony Taubman and Jayashree Watal.

ISBN 9781108748476 | CHF 50
This publication offers a fresh understanding of what it means to trade in knowledge in today's technological and commercial environment. Co-published with Cambridge University Press.

The Role of Advanced Technologies in Cross-border Trade: A Customs Perspective

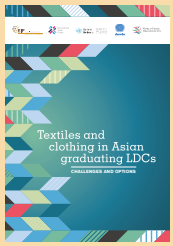
Digital only | Free
This publication sheds light on the opportunities and challenges faced by customs authorities when deploying technologies such as blockchain, the internet of things, big data, data analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning. Co-published with the World Customs Organization.

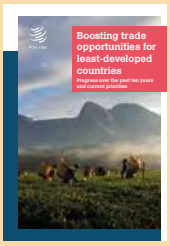
Standards Toolkit for Cross-border Paperless Trade: Accelerating Trade Digitalisation through the Use of Standards

Digital only | Free
This toolkit provides the most notable and widely used standards in trade digitalization for unlocking the benefits of cross-border paperless trade. Co-published with the International Chamber of Commerce.

Textiles and Clothing in Asian Graduating LDCs: Challenges and Options

Digital only | Free
The textiles and clothing sector has been a key driver of export growth in Asian LDCs on the path to graduation from LDC status. This report examines the likely impacts of graduation on these LDCs. Co-published with the EIF, ITC, UNDESA and UNCTAD.





Boosting Trade Opportunities for Least-developed Countries: Progress over the Past Ten Years and Current Priorities

Digital only | Free
This report highlights that further international efforts are needed to help LDCs increase their participation in global trade and confront the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Economic research activities

- **The WTO's flagship "World Trade Report" explored how international trade and trade rules can contribute to addressing climate change.**
- **Transparency is essential for understanding how government subsidies impact international trade and how to minimize any negative effects, according to a report by the WTO, the IMF, OECD and World Bank.**
- **A WTO and World Bank report discussed how trade can be leveraged to improve global health security.**

World Trade Report 2022: Climate Change and International Trade

The WTO's flagship publication, the "World Trade Report 2022", explores the complex interlinkages between climate change and international trade and discusses how international trade and trade rules can contribute to addressing climate change. It shows that while trade generates greenhouse gas emissions from production and transport, trade and trade policies can play an essential role in helping economies reduce emissions by accelerating the dissemination of environmental goods, services, technologies and best practice.

"Trade is the missing part of the puzzle for more ambitious, more effective climate

Key findings from the 2022 World Trade Report

Although climate change will disrupt trade, international trade can be a force multiplier for economies' adaptation efforts by reducing their costs and increasing their impact. Economies more open to trade tend to have a greater capacity to adapt to climate change.

Climate change is reshaping economic and trade prospects across the world and is a major threat to future growth and prosperity. Agriculture, tourism and some manufacturing sectors are particularly vulnerable to climate change.

The transition to a low-carbon economy will require decarbonizing international trade, including transportation. Decarbonization pathways include switching to lower-carbon fuels and improving energy and operational efficiency.

While trade does generate greenhouse gas emissions, trade can speed up the low-carbon transition by enabling access to climate technologies, incentivizing innovation and fostering competition and scale economies that help drive down their costs.

International trade cooperation can make climate actions more credible and effective, and the low-carbon transition more just, by minimizing trade frictions and investor uncertainty.

action," DG Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said at the launch of the report in November at the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. "Despite forces threatening to pull apart the world community, we must not decouple economies and create separate trade blocs, lest we impair the success of climate action. The fragmentation of supply chains and the reshoring of manufacturing risks delaying the transition to a low-carbon economy and making it far more costly," she added.

Subsidies, trade and international cooperation

At the IMF-World Bank spring meeting, DG Okonjo-Iweala, together with heads of the IMF, OECD and World Bank, launched a joint report on subsidies, emphasizing the need to strengthen international cooperation.

The report focuses on subsidies with possible harmful international effects – in particular, those that have the potential to distort trade or investment. Transparency is an essential first step for understanding how government subsidies impact international trade and how to minimize any negative effects, the report says.

Trade and health

A WTO-World Bank report – "Trade Therapy: Deepening cooperation to strengthen pandemic defenses" – stresses that open markets can increase access to medical services and goods, including the inputs needed to manufacture them, improve their quality and diversity, and reduce costs.

Open trade, combined with government financial support, spurred the rapid development of vaccines against COVID-19. But excessive concentration of production, restrictive trade policies, supply chain disruptions and regulatory divergence can jeopardize public health responses to pandemics and other health crises. "This report underscores how trade is a force for good in terms of enabling access to medical goods and services – but also points to where we can improve," DG Okonjo-Iweala said at the launch in June.

Policy approaches to trade digitalization

In April, the WTO and the World Economic Forum released a joint publication entitled "The Promise of TradeTech: Policy approaches to harness trade digitalization". It explores how trade agreements can be leveraged to further advance the adoption of digital technologies and trade digitalization in areas such as data transmission and liability frameworks.

Disruptive technologies for border management

Advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, blockchain, the Internet of Things, virtual reality and 3D printing, can be used to improve the efficiency of customs processes and to ease the flow of goods across borders. This is the conclusion of a joint "Study Report on Disruptive Technologies" issued by the WTO and the World Customs Organization. The report includes 42 case studies.

Trade Cost Index

In 2022, the Economic Research and Statistics Division extended the WTO Trade Cost Index to 118 economies, allowing for the first time the opportunity to estimate the impact of trade facilitation measures on trade costs as well as differences in trade costs for landlocked and coastal economies. The index, launched in 2021, allows users to monitor the evolution of global trade costs by economy and sector.

> **Trade is the missing part of the puzzle for more ambitious, more effective climate action.**
> DG Okonjo-Iweala

Mathilde Muñoz, winner of the 2022 WTO Essay Award.

WTO Essay Award for Young Economists

The winner of the 2022 WTO Essay Award for Young Economists was Mathilde Muñoz of James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Center on Wealth and Income Inequality at the University of California, Berkeley. Her paper is entitled "Trading Non-Tradables: The Implications of Europe's Job Posting Policy". She was presented with her prize of CHF 5,000 at the annual meeting of the European Trade Study Group in Groningen (the Netherlands) in September 2022.

The selection panel gave an honourable mention to Torsten Søchting Jaccard of the University of Toronto for his paper, "Who Pays for Protectionism? The Welfare and Substitution Effects of Tariffs".

Mathilde Muñoz's paper explores the implications of "job postings" on labour market outcomes and welfare. Job posting is an increasingly important offshoring transaction whereby workers move temporarily to a foreign country to perform a contracted task (e.g., plumbing services) but remain employed and paid in their home country.

Basing her work on evidence in the European Union, Ms Muñoz shows that the use of job postings has triggered large economic gains in employee-exporting low-wage economies but hurt low-paid workers in high-wage economies where the tasks are undertaken.

In the view of the selection panel, Ms Muñoz's essay is a novel and creative paper that addresses an issue of great relevance to world trade and the WTO. It is also an area that has been largely neglected by existing literature.

Mathilde Muñoz is a French national. She received her Ph.D. from the Paris School of Economics in 2022. Currently a post-doctoral fellow, she will join the faculty of the University of California, Berkeley in July 2023 as an Assistant Professor of Economics.

Selection panel

The selection panel for 2022 was comprised of Beata Javorcik (Professor of Economics, University of Oxford), Robert Koopman (Director, Economic Research and Statistics Division, WTO), Robert Staiger (Professor of Economics, Dartmouth University) and Alberto Trejos (Professor of Economics, INCAE Business School). Roberta Piermartini (Chief of Trade Cost Analysis, Economic Research and Statistics Division, WTO) coordinated the work of the panel.

Statistics activities

- **WTO statisticians monitored the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in international trade and global supply chains.**
- **The "World Trade Statistical Review", the WTO's flagship statistical publication, tracked trade recovery after COVID-19. It was complemented by two other annual statistical publications, "Trade Profiles" and "World Tariff Profiles".**
- **A joint WTO-World Bank report, "Trade Therapy", provided the first estimates on trade in medical services under the four modes of supply of the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).**

Background

The Economic Research and Statistics Division supports WTO members and the WTO Secretariat with data on economic and trade policy issues, technical advisory services on market access negotiations and the maintenance of goods schedules. The division is the principal supplier of WTO trade statistics and information on tariffs and non-tariff measures. It provides technical assistance for trade policy courses and local workshops and contributes to inter-organizational statistical activities.

Statistical developments related to post-COVID-19

WTO statisticians monitored the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic on international trade and global supply chains, providing reports and analytical insights.

In 2022, the WTO issued a note on "Trade in intermediate goods" to monitor the effects of COVID-19 on international supply chains. It also updated the "Joint Indicative List of Critical COVID-19 Vaccine Inputs", a project developed in cooperation with other international organizations and the private sector. In addition, it published a study on trade in medical goods as part of tracking COVID-19 trade developments.

A joint WTO-World Bank report, "Trade Therapy", provided the first estimates on trade in medical services under the four modes of supply of the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). The report surveys the evolving policy landscape and proposes an action plan to improve trade policies and deepen international cooperation to deal with future pandemics.

Statistical publications and data tools

The "World Trade Statistical Review 2022", the WTO's flagship statistical publication, provides insights into the uneven trade recovery from the COVID-19 health crisis. "Trade Profiles 2022" contains a series of key indicators on trade in goods and services while "World Tariff Profiles 2022" provides information on tariffs and non-tariff measures.

The 2022 version of the "Trade in Value Added (TiVA) and Global Value Chains" statistical profiles shows the value-added content in 66 economies' exports and gives insights into their participation in global value chains. The latest profiles include, for the first time, reports for Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

The WTO launched the WTO Stats Dashboard, a new data visualization tool that provides users with quick, at-a-glance information on trade and tariff data. It offers graphical presentations of merchandise

DG Okonjo-Iweala announcing the WTO trade forecast at a press conference on 5 October.

trade data, trade in commercial services, and market access data.

A "Trade Connectivity Heatmap" was published in June, providing an online tool with overviews of trade relationships between various economies and across different product categories. Available via the Stats Dashboard, the "Heatmap" utilizes bilateral trade flow data from more than 180 economies aggregated into around 70 product groups.

Statistical capacity-building and international cooperation

Further statistical training and technical assistance were provided under a joint WTO-OECD-UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) project, launched in 2020, to expand the coverage of Africa in TiVA databases.

The WTO Secretariat participated in various workshops on the measurement of digital trade as part of an ongoing revision – with the OECD, IMF and UNCTAD – of the "Handbook on Measuring Digital Trade", first published in 2020.

WTO statisticians contributed to joint online courses and webinars with UNCTAD, the United Nations, and regional and local statistical agencies in developing economies, exchanging knowledge on best practice in data collection, compilation and analysis of merchandise trade, trade in services statistics and digital trade.

Online tools to disseminate market access information and trade statistics were regularly presented in thematic, regional and trade policy courses and in seminars tailored to local needs.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Trade Monitor, launched by the WTO, UNCTAD and the ITC in 2020, was kept updated. The monitor aims to improve understanding of the relationship between trade and development in the SDG agenda.

The WTO launched the WTO Stats Dashboard, a new data visualization tool that provides users with quick, at-a-glance information on trade and tariff data.

Cooperation with academic institutions

- **The WTO Chairs Programme (WCP) now covers 36 institutions, spread across six regions, substantially strengthening its ability to inform local and regional trade policymaking.**
- **The Annual WCP Conference in July focused on the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) so that Chairs can align their work with the priorities of WTO members in implementing MC12 outcomes.**
- **DG Okonjo-Iweala urged Chairs to come up with new ideas for tackling unresolved issues. "You are the intellectual powerhouses who can help us to think a little bit out of the box," she said.**

Background

The WTO Chairs Programme (WCP), launched in 2010, aims to promote research relating to international trade by academics that responds to the needs of policymakers in developing economies and least-developed countries. Chair-holders are selected through a competitive process. The main objectives of the WCP are to create a network fostering research on trade issues, to provide teaching support for the development of courses on trade policy, to organize outreach activities to disseminate research, and to provide policy advice to governmental and other stakeholders. The WCP is funded by the WTO's Global Trust Fund, with contributions from France, Austria, the Republic of Korea and Australia.

Global and regional academic networks

The Chairs network, which now covers 36 institutions spread across six regions, has substantially strengthened these institutions' ability to undertake regional activities and to inform local and regional trade policymaking. Selected at the end of 2021, the latest cohort includes institutions from Cameroon, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Lesotho, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Rwanda, Chinese Taipei, Tanzania, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

Launch events were held throughout the year at the new WTO Chair institutions in partnership with the respective governments, often in tandem with discussions focusing on the latest WTO issues and areas for collaboration between the Chairs and policymakers. Speaking at a launch event at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade in New Delhi in September, DDG Xiangchen Zhang said the Chairs network "provides a unique opportunity for the dissemination of the best negotiating, research and outreach practices."

The Annual Conference of the WCP in Geneva brought together new and existing Chairs and WCP Academic Advisory Board members in July. It focused on MC12 outcomes so that the Chairs can align their work with the priorities of WTO members in

DG Okonjo-Iweala opens the WTO Chairs Programme Annual Conference on 25 July in Geneva.

Impact of the WTO Chairs Programme

“ Hailing from diverse and dynamic regions around the world, the Chairs serve as the eyes and ears on the ground for all of us here in Geneva. We are counting on the WCP Network’s research and outreach activities to shine a beacon of light on the needs and interests of countries and regions, which will chart the course of the multilateral trading system.”

Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

“ The work of the Chairs, experts in the field, will encourage political decision makers to think outside the box and facilitate the endorsement of innovative positions that will lead us to concrete results at the WTO.”

Cassandre Nonque, Deputy Head of International Trade & Investment Rules Unit at the Ministry of the Economy and Finance of France

“ It is because we have confidence in the vision and potential of the WTO Chairs Programme to serve as an intellectual compass that supports WTO members, particularly developing countries, that Korea decided to join in supporting the Programme as its latest donor country this year.”

Sarah Ahn, Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea

“ We do devour, digest, read and learn from the WCP Network as much as I hope the Chairs learn from us. Their work is extremely valuable as we seek to put it into practice both here in Geneva and in capitals.”

Jeremy Green, Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia to the WTO

“ An independent external evaluation of the Programme in 2019 reported that government officials and trade policymakers were able to rely on the Chairs Network to inform policy formulation and implementation. The programme has greatly boosted its presence in previously under-represented areas across Africa, Asia and Latin America.”

Ambassador Usha Chandnee Dwarka-Canabady of Mauritius, Chair of the WTO Committee for Trade and Development

“ I’m really very happy that the Chairs listen to the views of delegations – we believe that the Chairs programme is an important and necessary tool in the WTO’s technical assistance and capacity toolbox.”

Ambassador Cheryl K. Spencer of Jamaica, Coordinator of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries Group

“ Technical assistance through the Chairs Programme leads students and future negotiators to cultivate a passion in making trade more effective for developing and least developed countries.”

Ambassador Eheth Salomon of Cameroon, Coordinator of the Africa Group

DDG Zhang welcomes Kathmandu University School of Management to the WTO Chairs Programme.

implementing MC12 decisions, particularly on public health, agriculture and food security, and trade and sustainability.

DG Okonjo-Iweala called on the Chairs to come up with new ideas for tackling unresolved issues. "You are the intellectual powerhouses who can help us to think a little bit out of the box," she said. The Chairs and board members also met with WTO ambassadors from various WTO trade groups to discuss members' priorities for research, customized training and targeted outreach.

Activities of the Chairs Programme

Thanks to the academic diversity of the Chairs and their teams, the network has generated wide-ranging legal and economic analysis, supporting policymaking both at the local and regional levels. Several Chairs have convened advisory committees, including representatives of government, civil society and the business sector, to help define areas of research and outreach activities.

In 2022, the Chairs' advice to governments spanned different issues linked to the outcomes of MC12, including sustainable development and the blue economy, global and regional value chains, food security, e-commerce, trade and women's economic empowerment, and regional integration in Africa.

Academic support programmes

In 2022, five students from Lesotho, Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo participated in the WTO's PhD support programme. The programme is intended to contribute to the enlargement of academic expertise in developing economies on WTO-related matters, to improve the quality of research undertaken and to establish links between PhD students and Secretariat staff and Geneva delegations.

The WTO co-hosted the final round of the 20th anniversary edition of the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition on WTO Law, which took place between 28 June and 2 July (see page 135).

In November, the DG received an honorary doctorate from Nyenrode Business University in the Netherlands, a country which has been a long-standing sponsor of the WCP.

36

institutions are participating in the WTO Chairs Programme

Universities participating in the WTO Chairs Programme

Phase I and II chairs established in 2010 and 2014

1 Argentina
Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences

2 Barbados
University of the West Indies

3 Benin
University Abomey-Calavi

4 Brazil
Getulio Vargas Foundation, Sao Paulo School of Economics

5 China
Shanghai University of International Business and Economics

6 Chile
University of Chile

7 Indonesia
Universitas Gadjah Mada

8 Jordan
University of Jordan

9 Kenya
University of Nairobi

10 Mauritius
University of Mauritius

11 Mexico
Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México

12 Morocco
Mohammed V University Souissi

13 Oman
Sultan Qaboos University

14 Russian Federation
St Petersburg State University

15 Senegal
Cheikh Anta Diop University

16 Singapore
National University of Singapore

17 South Africa
North-West University

18 Tunisia
University of Tunis, Tunis Business School

19 Türkiye
Istanbul Bilgi University

Phase I and II chairs established in 2010 and 2014

Phase III chairs established in 2021

Phase III chairs established in 2021

20 Cameroon
Université de Yaoundé II

21 China
University of International Business and Economics

22 Colombia
Universidad de los Andes

23 Costa Rica
Universidad Nacional

24 Ecuador
Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar Sede

25 Egypt
Cairo University

26 Ethiopia
Addis Ababa University

27 India
Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

28 Lesotho
National University of Lesotho

29 Nepal
Kathmandu University School of Management

30 Pakistan
Lahore School of Economics

31 Peru
Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru

32 Rwanda
University of Rwanda

33 Chinese Taipei
"National Taiwan University"

34 Tanzania
Trade Policy Training Centre in Africa

35 Uzbekistan
The University of World Economy and Diplomacy of Uzbekistan

36 Viet Nam
Foreign Trade University

A "Meet the Author" session with James Bacchus at the 2022 Public Forum.

Knowledge management

- **In 2022, the Knowledge Management Division developed a handover guide and toolkit to mitigate costs of losing knowledge when employees depart or move internally.**
- **The division collaborated in 21 knowledge-sharing events to support capacity building on trade and negotiation topics.**

In 2022, the Knowledge Management Division (KMD) focused on initiatives to promote the sharing, retention and transfer of knowledge, including the development of a handover guide and toolkit. The initiative aims to mitigate the costs of losing knowledge through employee departures or internal transfers. KMD also designed a knowledge codification template to help document the knowledge, skills and expertise of staff leaving the WTO.

In collaboration with DDG Paugam, the Human Resources Division and the WTO Staff Welfare Office, the Knowledge Management Section (KMS) delivered a presentation on the importance of knowledge retention and transfer at a WTO pre-retirement seminar in December 2022.

In 2022, KMS collaborated in 21 knowledge-sharing events to support capacity building on trade and negotiation topics and to give staff an opportunity to strengthen their skill set. The focus was on reducing silos of knowledge, supporting collaboration and strengthening the WTO's knowledge base.

Four "Road to MC12" sessions for WTO staff introduced key negotiating issues and challenges ahead of the 12th Ministerial Conference in June 2022. After MC12, six "*Entre nous*" sessions provided an opportunity for WTO experts to share their reflections on the behind-the scenes dynamics, challenges and lessons learned from negotiations during MC12.

Three seminars were held on the WTO's contribution to the UN's High Level Political Forum annual review of the Sustainable Development Goals while three "Thinkers Thursdays" sessions focused on staff experiences in enhancing knowledge sharing within their areas of expertise. Finally, four strategic thinking webinars were held on various aspects of organizational strategy.

KMS worked with other divisions to coordinate the Presidential Lecture delivered by the Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley (see page 156). It also developed a guide on best practices for high-level events.

Records and archives management

The Records and Archives Management Section (RAMS) continued its implementation of an electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) across the WTO Secretariat. EDRMS implementation is a key aspect of the 2023 digital transformation workplan, which aims to integrate electronic documents and records management seamlessly into work processes to increase operational efficiency.

EDRMS has a vital function in accelerating work Secretariat-wide and in providing digitalized records for the organization and for members. It also assists WTO committee work, negotiations, joint initiatives and technical assistance.

In 2022, RAMS enhanced tools and processes that support the capture, classification and use of records and archives.

WTO Library

With the digital transformation of all library materials essentially complete, visits to the library website continued to rise significantly, with users accessing resources from 184 economies, up from 171 in 2021.

The Library contributed to the work of the Multilateral Leaders Task Force on COVID-19 (see page 12). Its contribution included procuring and coordinating the data from external sources required to better understand the evolution of COVID-19 vaccine production and dissemination.

In collaboration with the Information and External Relations Division, the Library organized and filmed four "Meet the Author" sessions at the 2022 Public Forum (see page 162), making the transcribed recordings searchable via the library website.

DG Okonjo-Iweala meets with a group of WTO members in the WTO Library during MC12 to explore the establishment of a coalition of trade ministers on climate issues.

4

Who we are

The WTO is run by its member governments. All major decisions are made by the membership as a whole, either by ministers (who meet at least once every two years) or by their ambassadors or delegates (who meet regularly at the WTO's headquarters in Geneva). Decisions are normally taken by consensus. The WTO Secretariat coordinates the activities of the WTO.

A meeting of the General Council in early 2023.

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Who we are

Director-General

Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala took office as WTO Director-General on 1 March 2021. She is the first woman and the first African to serve as Director-General.

Membership

The WTO has 164 members, accounting for 98 per cent of world trade. All members have joined the system as a result of negotiations and therefore membership means a balance of rights and obligations. Over 20 countries are currently negotiating to join the organization.

How the organization is structured

Unlike some other international organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, power is not delegated to a board of directors or the organization's head. The WTO's main decision-making body is the Ministerial Conference, which meets usually every two years.

The General Council, which meets several times a year in Geneva, is the highest decision-making body outside of ministerial conferences. It meets as the Dispute Settlement Body to oversee procedures for settling disputes between members and as the Trade Policy Review Body to discuss members' trade policies and practices. Numerous councils, committees, working groups and working parties deal with the individual WTO agreements and other specific issues, such as the environment, development and membership applications.

WTO Secretariat

The WTO has approximately 630 staff on its regular budget and is headed by a Director-General. The main duties of the Secretariat are to support the WTO's various councils and committees, to provide technical assistance to developing economies, to monitor developments in world trade, to disseminate information about WTO activities and to organize ministerial conferences. The Secretariat also provides legal assistance in the dispute settlement process and advises governments wishing to join the WTO.

Secretariat staff include individuals representing 85 nationalities. It is composed mostly of economists, lawyers and specialists in international trade policy, communications, statistics, language services and other areas. The working languages of the WTO are English, French and Spanish.

Budget

The WTO derives most of the income for its annual budget from contributions by its members. These contributions are based on a formula that takes into account each member's share of international trade.

WTO Secretariat

- **In February 2022, DG Okonjo-Iweala established the Transformation Office to strengthen the WTO Secretariat's capacity to meet future work needs.**
- **As of 31 December, the WTO employed 623 staff members on fixed-term and regular contracts, slightly down from 627 the year before. Of the professional staff, 48 per cent were women, up from 47 per cent in 2021.**
- **The WTO's recruitment activity remained high, with 39 fixed-term vacancies filled in 2022.**

In February 2022, DG Okonjo-Iweala established the Transformation Office to strengthen the Secretariat and ensure that it is equipped to meet future work needs. Initial transformation work addressed specific subjects of concern and work processes that could be improved, as identified by staff and external consultants McKinsey and Company during a diagnostic phase conducted in 2021 (see below).

The WTO's recruitment activity remained high, with 39 fixed-term vacancies filled in 2022.

Background

As international civil servants, WTO staff members are required to discharge their duties solely with the interest and objectives of the WTO in view. Staff members may neither seek nor accept any instruction relating to the performance of their duties from any government or other entity or person external to the WTO. The recruitment policy of the WTO aims to attract and retain staff with the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity.

As of 31 December, the WTO employed 623 staff members on fixed-term and regular contracts, down slightly from 627 in 2021. Professional staff account for 63 per cent of the total regular budget staffing, and support service staff for 37 per cent. Women continue to outnumber men at the WTO, by 340 to 283 (see Figure 1). Of the professional staff, 48 per cent are female and 52 per cent male (see Figure 2), compared to 47 and 53 per cent, respectively, in 2021. Male staff members outnumber females at director levels (see Figure 1).

WTO Secretariat staff come from 85 different WTO members, up from 81 in 2021, showing the widening geographical diversity of WTO staff (see Figure 4).

Figure 1: WTO staff on regular budget by grade and gender, as of 31 December 2022

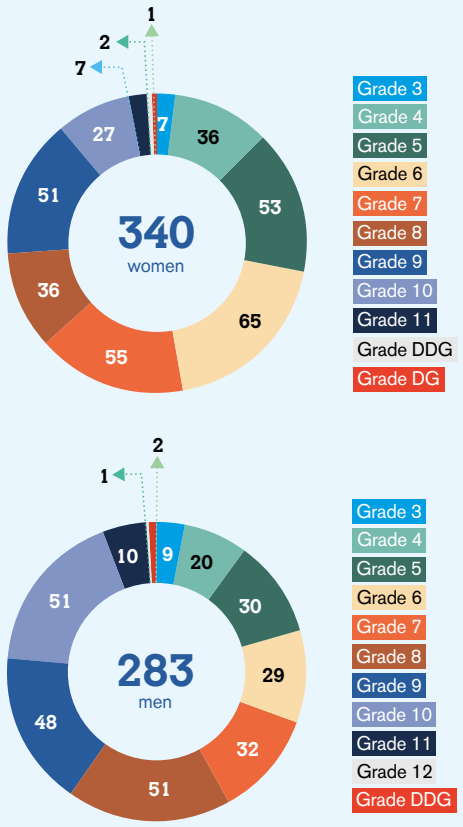
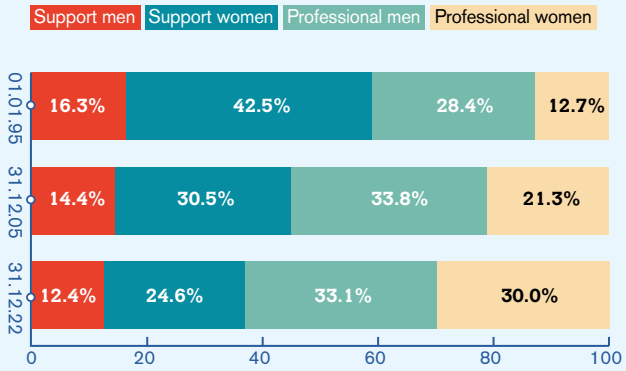


Figure 2: Percentage of WTO staff by professional/support category



Positions continued to be systematically advertised through social media outlets, such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, to attract a deep pool of qualified candidates. On average, there were 160 applicants for every external vacancy in 2022.

Fourteen young professionals joined the Young Professionals Programme (YFP) in January 2022 (see page 149). The group included professionals from Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Georgia, Ghana, Kenya, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, Viet Nam and Zambia. They were selected from more than 7,000 candidates following a competitive selection process. The programme was established in 2016 as part of the Secretariat's efforts to broaden diversity and increase the number of professionals from under-represented members from developing economies and least-developed countries.

The implementation of a cloud-based HR/payroll platform called "Workday" continued during 2022, incorporating human resources core activities of recruitment, absence, payroll, benefits and compensation. A second phase is planned, involving learning and development, performance management and other areas.

Learning and development programme

The Learning Service programme in 2022 took account of recommendations from the

New recruit

Aichetou Ba

Economic Affairs Officer – Standards and Trade Development Facility

Nationality:
Mauritanian
Joining date:
1 November 2022

I started out at the WTO in 2021, joining the Agriculture and Commodities Division (AGCD) as a Young Professional. I assisted the division in its work on cotton and in supporting the Committee on Agriculture.

Prior to the WTO, I worked on monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and project management at the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation based in Wageningen, the Netherlands, which aimed to foster food security and fight poverty in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

I now have the privilege to be a part of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), where I support STDF's MEL work and projects to improve food safety and animal and plant health to facilitate safe trade.

As a woman and an African, I feel honoured to be at the WTO under the leadership of the current DG, who is a true source of inspiration. I am thrilled to work with so many talented colleagues on enhancing agriculture trade which respects international norms and standards and pays close attention to issues such as gender equality and environmental sustainability in developing economies.

New recruit

Kotaro Okada

Paralegal,
Rules Division

Nationality:
Japanese
Joining date:
14 November 2022

In Japan, the WTO is well-known as a forum to adjudicate international trade disputes, with wins and losses and subsequent policy changes that could affect the life of ordinary people being reported in the media.

Prior to joining the WTO, I worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism before coming to Geneva to join Japan's WTO mission. During my time working for the Government, I researched and advised on trade remedies, subsidies and other trade measures and was part of a team representing the Government in dispute settlement proceedings. When I was looking for a new opportunity to pursue my passion for trade law, the WTO was a natural path.

In my current role as a paralegal, my main responsibilities involve providing panels with secretarial and technical support and assisting the panel composition process. I am looking forward to the privilege of being able to work on many different cases together with wonderful colleagues.

In Japan, the WTO is well-known as a forum to adjudicate international trade disputes

transformation exercise, especially in the areas of performance management, leadership and managerial capabilities and innovation. In the "Leadership, Innovation and Change" learning programme, Secretariat staff interacted with leaders of innovation from various international organizations. Emphasis continued to be placed on diversity, equity and inclusion. The first-ever workshop on racism was conducted in 2022, with the aim of ensuring an inclusive, safe and productive working environment.

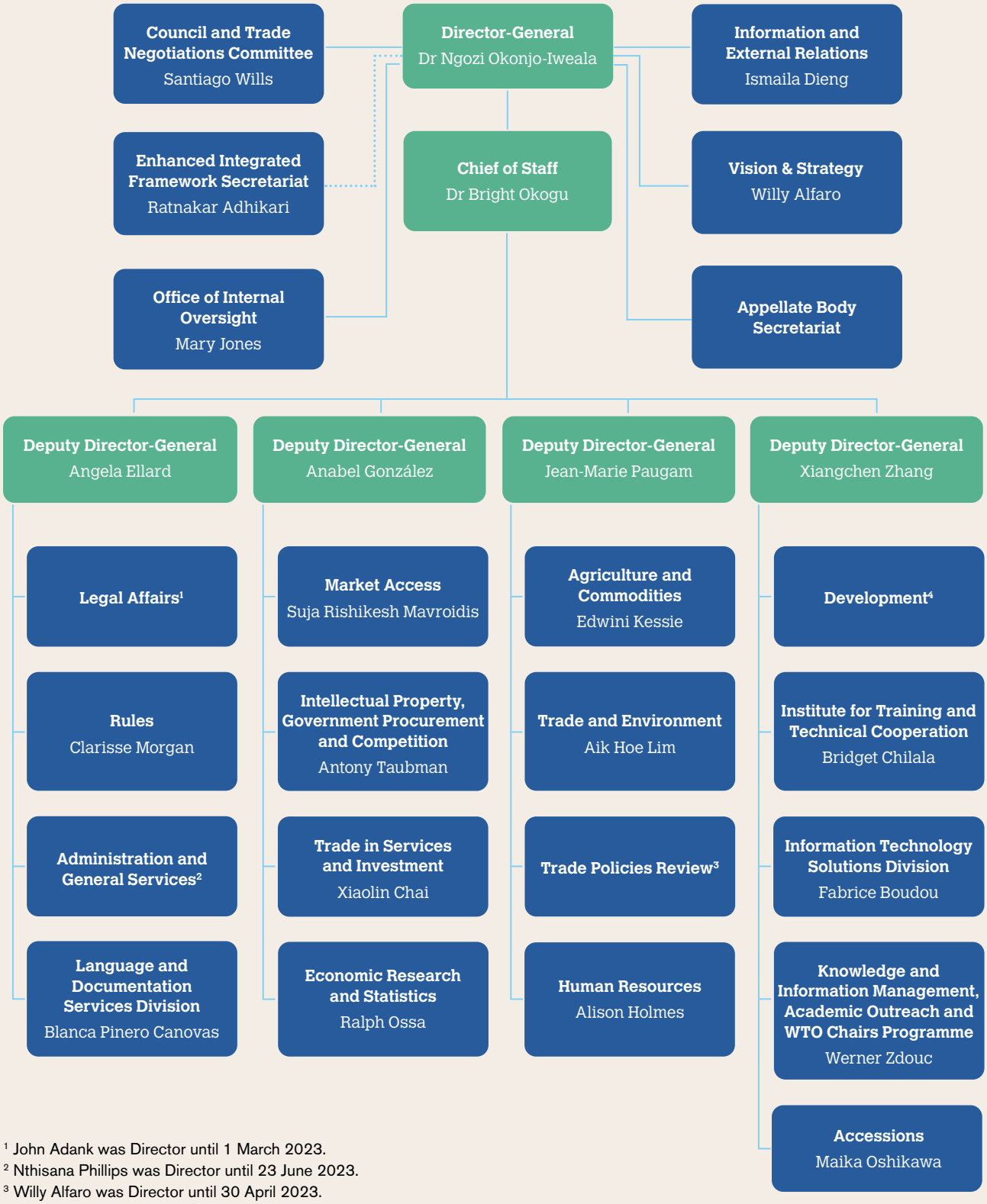
Digitalization initiatives

In 2022, WTO members continued to make use of virtual platforms that allow them to participate remotely in WTO meetings with simultaneous interpretation. They also benefited from the dispute online registry application (DORA), which permits the filing of submissions in ongoing disputes remotely through a secure portal. These tools, which were not available prior to COVID-19, have particularly benefitted delegates working from capitals. In 2022, over 2,500 WTO meetings were conducted via conferencing platforms – Interprefy, Zoom or Webex – with over 112,000 participants.

The Secretariat launched a new platform for WTO members' notifications of trade measures – the WTO Notifications Portal. The portal displays the status of notifications by WTO agreement and by member. The eAgenda, which supports information exchanges among members ahead of meetings on topics such as specific trade concerns, was extended to the Import Licensing Committee. In addition, the Secretariat implemented an updated version of ePing, allowing traders to register to receive alerts on changes to technical requirements for the export of goods. The platform also contains trade concerns discussed in the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee and Technical Barriers to Trade Committee.

Cybersecurity remains a core area of attention, notably in view of emerging cyber threats related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The WTO is closely monitoring the threat of cyber-attacks to prevent or mitigate the potential impact on its operations.

Figure 3: WTO Secretariat organizational chart, as of end-May 2023



[1] John Adank was Director until 1 March 2023.
[2] Nthisana Phillips was Director until 23 June 2023.
[3] Willy Alfaro was Director until 30 April 2023.
[4] Shishir Priyadarshi was Director until 31 December 2022.

New recruit

Roberta Allport

Economic Affairs Officer, Development Division

Nationality: Dominican
Joining date: 1 August 2022

Early in my career, I worked for a non-profit and advocacy group that interviewed farmers across the Caribbean and advocated on their behalf with national governments and international organizations. Many of the farmers' problems stemmed from barriers to international trade.

I decided to deepen my knowledge with a Masters in Global Affairs from Yale University. It was there, during a course on international trade law, that I became aware of the WTO and its role in governing multilateral trade.

Currently, I help organize meetings of the Informal Group of Developing Countries, a forum where developing members can share experiences and perspectives on current negotiations. I also coordinate work related to monitoring achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Agenda for Financing for Development and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries. Finally, I assist in the organization of Geneva Week.

Working with Development Division colleagues has expanded my understanding of trade and development policy, and I enjoy benefiting from their many years of expertise.

Many of the farmers' problems stemmed from barriers to international trade.

Transformation Office

The overall goals of the transformation exercise are to ensure that the Secretariat is equipped with the skills, experience and tools needed to serve members' needs effectively and be able to modernize as those needs evolve. The objective is to develop a more agile and collaborative Secretariat, where information and best practices are shared and where staff are fully engaged in fulfilling the WTO's mandate, with the opportunity to build rewarding careers.

The exercise is driven by the Transformation Office, which is overseen by the Transformation Steering Committee. Staff at all levels are encouraged to get involved in the design and implementation work. The Steering Committee is chaired by the DG and composed of the Chief of Staff and the four DDGs.

In 2022, work focused on various talent-management policies and practices, such as reforms in staff rewards, mobility, promotions and career pathways. A second focus was improving ways of working in specific areas - for example, risk management, procurement and recruitment. A digital transformation effort was also begun, aiming to optimize efficiency and leveraging opportunities related to data, technology and innovation.

The Steering Committee endorsed proposals for several new policies and practices. The Transformation Office and small teams of staff volunteers are working to implement the approved changes, engaging with experts and consulting with directors and staff focus groups. Work completed in 2022 led to the adoption of new policies on staff recognition and rewards and on procurement. The Transformation Office also held consultations with members on their experiences with Secretariat digital tools, such as the "docs online" search facility for WTO documents, the dispute settlement registry, eAgenda and ePing.

WTO members receive updates on progress in the transformation exercise through regular reports to both the General Council and the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration.

Table 1: Allocation of posts by division, as of 31 December 2022 (number of posts)*

	Grades 1-10	Senior Management and Directors	Total
Senior Management (DG, DDGs and their assistants)	9.0	6.0	15.0
Accessions Division	8.0	1.0	9.0
Administration and General Services Division	67.6	1.0	68.6
Agriculture and Commodities Division	30.8	1.0	31.8
Council and TNC Division	12.0	1.0	13.0
Development Division	18.8	1.0	19.8
Economic Research and Statistics Division	35.5	0.0	35.5
Executive Secretariat for the Enhanced Integrated Framework	9.0	1.0	10.0
Human Resources Division	25.8	0.0	25.8
Information and External Relations Division	26.8	0.0	26.8
Information Technology Solutions Division	33.5	1.0	34.5
Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation	37.5	1.0	38.5
Intellectual Property, Government Procurement and Competition Division	13.5	1.0	14.5
Knowledge and Information Management, Academic Outreach and WTO Chairs Programme	15.8	1.0	16.8
Language and Documentation Services Division	90.5	1.0	91.5
Legal Affairs Division	29.0	1.0	30.0
Market Access Division	22.0	1.0	23.0
Office of Internal Oversight	3.0	0.0	3.0
Office of the Director-General	12.8	1.0	13.8
Rules Division	34.0	1.0	35.0
Trade and Environment Division	16.0	1.0	17.0
Trade in Services and Investment Division	13.4	1.0	14.4
Trade Policies Review Division	50.6	1.0	51.6
Total	**614.9**	**24.0**	**638.9**

*Includes posts not yet filled. Figures in decimals indicate staff members who work a percentage of the working week (e.g. 80 per cent).

Figure 4: WTO staff on regular budget by member and gender as of 31 December 2022

85

WTO staff come from 85 different countries

North America

Member	Women	Men	Total
Canada	4	10	14
Mexico	2	5	7
United States	17	9	26
Total	**23**	**24**	**47**

340

Women

283

Men

Total

623

Latin America and the Caribbean

Member	Women	Men	Total
Argentina	5	3	8
Bolivia	0	2	2
Brazil	6	7	13
Chile	2	1	3
Colombia	2	5	7
Costa Rica	2	1	3
Dominica	1	0	1
Ecuador	2	1	3
El Salvador	1	0	1
Guatemala	2	0	2
Honduras	2	0	2
Jamaica	1	0	1
Paraguay	1	0	1
Peru	3	4	7
Saint Lucia	0	1	1
Trinidad and Tobago	2	0	2
Uruguay	0	3	3
Venezuela	0	3	3
Total	**32**	**31**	**63**

Europe

Member	Women	Men	Total	Member	Women	Men	Total
Austria	2	2	4	Lithuania	0	1	1
Belgium	3	2	5	Netherlands	0	4	4
Bulgaria	2	4	6	Norway	0	1	1
Croatia	1	0	1	Poland	3	1	4
Czech Republic	1	0	1	Portugal	0	4	4
Denmark	1	1	2	Romania	3	0	3
Estonia	1	0	1	Russian Federation	5	1	6
Finland	3	2	5	Spain	33	12	45
France	94	65	159	Sweden	2	2	4
Germany	8	13	21	Switzerland	10	12	22
Greece	4	2	6	Ukraine	1	0	1
Hungary	1	3	4	United Kingdom	34	12	46
Ireland	11	0	11	**Total**	**235**	**158**	**393**
Italy	12	14	26				

Africa

Member	Women	Men	Total
Benin	0	3	3
Botswana	1	0	1
Burundi	0	1	1
Cameroon	1	0	1
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	2	2	4
Egypt	3	1	4
Gambia	2	0	2
Ghana	1	0	1
Guinea	0	1	1
Kenya	3	0	3
Malawi	0	1	1
Mauritius	0	3	3
Morocco	1	3	4
Nigeria	1	1	2
Rwanda	0	1	1
Senegal	0	1	1
South Africa	0	1	1
Tanzania	2	0	2
Tunisia	2	2	4
Uganda	1	1	2
Zambia	1	0	1
Zimbabwe	2	0	2
Total	**23**	**22**	**45**

Asia

Member	Women	Men	Total
Bangladesh	0	1	1
China	8	6	14
India	2	11	13
Japan	2	4	6
Jordan	1	0	1
Korea, Republic of	4	0	4
Malaysia	0	2	2
Nepal	0	1	1
Pakistan	0	3	3
Philippines	6	7	13
Singapore	0	1	1
Sri Lanka	2	0	2
Tajikistan	0	1	1
Türkiye	1	3	4
Total	**26**	**40**	**66**

Oceania

Member	Women	Men	Total
Australia	1	7	8
New Zealand	0	1	1
Total	**1**	**8**	**9**

Budget, finance and administration

- **The Committee endorsed the revised WTO financial regulations.**

The Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration endorsed the revised WTO financial regulations, transfers between budgetary sections during 2021 and the 2021 WTO audited financial statements, which were subsequently approved by the General Council. The Committee also endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group on Coherence in the Establishment of Trust Funds.

The General Council approved the 2023 scale of assessed contributions to the WTO budget upon recommendations of the Committee.

The Committee recommended to the General Council that the Secretariat use the CHF 6 million surplus from 2021 to address emergency and mandatory expenses in 2023, but one member did not join in the consensus in the General Council to adopt the recommendation.

The Committee also took note of the 2021 WTO Pension Plan audited financial statements and the external auditors' reports for the WTO's and WTO Pension Plan's financial statements.

It noted outstanding contributions to the WTO budget from WTO members and observers and invited the General Council to urge those under administrative measures to liquidate their arrears.

The Committee took note of the establishment of the Fisheries Funding Mechanism (see

Background

The Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration monitors the WTO's budgetary and financial matters. It considers issues concerning human resources management, hears progress reports on the WTO pension plan and deals with financial and administrative matters concerning the WTO Secretariat. The Committee reports to the General Council.

wto.org/budget

page 58) providing targeted technical assistance to developing economies as a new trust fund under financial regulation 19.

The 2022 WTO salary survey and dependency allowances were presented to the Committee. Quarterly financial reports were considered by the Committee and taken note of, as were updates from the Chair of the WTO Pension Plan Management Board. The Committee also took note of actuarial valuations of the WTO Pension Plan as at the end of 2020 and 2021 and a draft reform proposal addressing the Pension Plan's funding gap.

The Committee reviewed the status of the WTO medical insurance plan and After Service Health Insurance, the status of implementation of internal and external audit recommendations, the annual strategic facilities plan, the annual report on diversity, the annual report on grading structure and the learning and development programme for 2021.

Table 2: Consolidated budget for 2023 (in CHF thousands)

Section	Total
Staff expenditure (including staff remuneration, pension and post employment benefits, health and invalidity insurance, family and international benefits)	131,565
Temporary assistance (including short-term staff, consultants and panellists)	17,575
General services (including telecommunications and post, contractual services and maintenance, energy and supplies, documentation and publications)	15,626
Travel and hospitality	7,607
Implementing partners (includes any activity or event partly/jointly/fully funded by the WTO but executed by a third-party organization)	213
Capital expenditure (including procurement of fixed assets and rental and leasing of equipment)	3,095
Financial expenditure (including bank and interest charges and building loan reimbursement)	2,080
Contributions to International Trade Centre and special reserves (including the Building Renovation Fund and Ministerial Conference Operating Fund)	19,443
TOTAL	**197,204**

The Office of Internal Oversight presented its report on internal audit activities for 2020-21 and reports on the status of implementation of the internal audit recommendations. Regular updates on the WTO Secretariat transformation exercise (see page 192) were provided at each Committee meeting by DDG Angela Ellard.

The Director-General presented the WTO 2022-23 mid-term budget review to the Committee, which discussed it extensively. The Committee deferred a decision until the next year.

WTO budget 2023

The WTO derives its income from annual contributions from its 164 members (see Table 3) and miscellaneous income.

The WTO's budget for 2023 is CHF 197,203,900, representing zero nominal growth since 2012 (see Table 2).

Table 3: WTO members' contributions to the consolidated budget 2023 (in CHF)

Member	2023 contribution CHF	2023 contribution %
Afghanistan	37,145	0.019%
Albania	44,965	0.023%
Angola	240,465	0.123%
Antigua and Barbuda	29,325	0.015%
Argentina	637,330	0.326%
Armenia	44,965	0.023%
Australia	2,531,725	1.295%
Austria	1,943,270	0.994%
Bahrain, Kingdom of	224,825	0.115%
Bangladesh	420,325	0.215%
Barbados	29,325	0.015%
Belgium	3,626,525	1.855%
Belize	29,325	0.015%
Benin	33,235	0.017%
Bolivia, Plurinational State of	87,975	0.045%
Botswana	60,605	0.031%
Brazil	2,111,400	1.080%
Brunei Darussalam	52,785	0.027%
Bulgaria	340,170	0.174%
Burkina Faso	39,100	0.020%
Burundi	29,325	0.015%
Cabo Verde	29,325	0.015%
Cambodia	168,130	0.086%
Cameroon	62,560	0.032%
Canada	4,658,765	2.383%
Central African Republic	29,325	0.015%
Chad	31,280	0.016%
Chile	662,745	0.339%
China	21,031,890	10.758%
Colombia	459,425	0.235%
Congo	64,515	0.033%
Costa Rica	172,040	0.088%
Côte d'Ivoire	109,480	0.056%
Croatia	244,375	0.125%
Cuba	101,660	0.052%
Cyprus	154,445	0.079%
Czech Republic	1,460,385	0.747%
Democratic Republic of the Congo	125,120	0.064%
Denmark	1,554,225	0.795%
Djibouti	33,235	0.017%
Dominica	29,325	0.015%
Dominican Republic	173,995	0.089%
Ecuador	199,410	0.102%
Egypt	502,435	0.257%
El Salvador	80,155	0.041%
Estonia	181,815	0.093%
Eswatini	29,325	0.015%
European Union[1]	0	0.000%
Fiji	29,325	0.015%
Finland	854,335	0.437%
France	7,387,945	3.779%
Gabon	46,920	0.024%
The Gambia	29,325	0.015%
Georgia	74,290	0.038%
Germany	14,058,405	7.191%
Ghana	189,635	0.097%
Greece	629,510	0.322%
Grenada	29,325	0.015%
Guatemala	142,715	0.073%
Guinea	43,010	0.022%
Guinea-Bissau	29,325	0.015%
Guyana	29,325	0.015%
Haiti	29,325	0.015%
Honduras	76,245	0.039%
Hong Kong, China	5,501,370	2.814%
Hungary	1,057,655	0.541%
Iceland	86,020	0.044%
India	4,576,655	2.341%
Indonesia	1,626,560	0.832%
Ireland	3,669,535	1.877%
Israel	907,120	0.464%
Italy	4,940,285	2.527%
Jamaica	50,830	0.026%
Japan	7,411,405	3.791%
Jordan	152,490	0.078%
Kazakhstan	432,055	0.221%
Kenya	123,165	0.063%
Korea, Republic of	5,350,835	2.737%
Kuwait, the State of	512,210	0.262%
Kyrgyz Republic	33,235	0.017%
Lao People's Democratic Republic	56,695	0.029%
Latvia	170,085	0.087%
Lesotho	29,325	0.015%
Liberia	29,325	0.015%

Member	2023 contribution CHF	2023 contribution %
Liechtenstein	66,470	0.034%
Lithuania	318,665	0.163%
Luxembourg	1,059,610	0.542%
Macao, China	230,690	0.118%
Madagascar	33,235	0.017%
Malawi	29,325	0.015%
Malaysia	1,837,700	0.940%
Maldives	29,325	0.015%
Mali	41,055	0.021%
Malta	158,355	0.081%
Mauritania	29,325	0.015%
Mauritius	50,830	0.026%
Mexico	3,935,415	2.013%
Moldova, Republic of	39,100	0.020%
Mongolia	64,515	0.033%
Montenegro	29,325	0.015%
Morocco	381,225	0.195%
Mozambique	60,605	0.031%
Myanmar	136,850	0.070%
Namibia	43,010	0.022%
Nepal	62,560	0.032%
Netherlands	5,778,980	2.956%
New Zealand	465,290	0.238%
Nicaragua	52,785	0.027%
Niger	29,325	0.015%
Nigeria	523,940	0.268%
North Macedonia	66,470	0.034%
Norway	1,178,865	0.603%
Oman	304,980	0.156%
Pakistan	373,405	0.191%
Panama	220,915	0.113%
Papua New Guinea	60,605	0.031%
Paraguay	109,480	0.056%
Peru	422,280	0.216%
Philippines	871,930	0.446%
Poland	2,537,590	1.298%
Portugal	817,190	0.418%
Qatar	633,420	0.324%
Romania	834,785	0.427%
Russian Federation	3,210,110	1.642%

(1) The European Union is not subject to contributions. However, its 27 members are assessed individually. The total share of members of the European Union represents 31.05% of the total assessed contributions for 2023.

Member	2023 contribution CHF	2023 contribution %
Rwanda	29,325	0.015%
Saint Kitts and Nevis	29,325	0.015%
Saint Lucia	29,325	0.015%
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	29,325	0.015%
Samoa	29,325	0.015%
Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	1,839,655	0.941%
Senegal	48,875	0.025%
Seychelles	29,325	0.015%
Sierra Leone	29,325	0.015%
Singapore	4,885,545	2.499%
Slovak Republic	795,685	0.407%
Slovenia	342,125	0.175%
Solomon Islands	29,325	0.015%
South Africa	856,290	0.438%
Spain	3,753,600	1.920%
Sri Lanka	179,860	0.092%
Suriname	29,325	0.015%
Sweden	2,023,425	1.035%
Switzerland	3,763,375	1.925%
Chinese Taipei	3,014,610	1.542%
Tajikistan	29,325	0.015%
Tanzania	80,155	0.041%
Thailand	2,387,055	1.221%
Togo	29,325	0.015%
Tonga	29,325	0.015%
Trinidad and Tobago	78,200	0.040%
Tunisia	172,040	0.088%
Türkiye	1,978,460	1.012%
Uganda	60,605	0.031%
Ukraine	523,940	0.268%
United Arab Emirates	2,963,780	1.516%
United Kingdom	7,274,555	3.721%
United States	22,808,985	11.667%
Uruguay	125,120	0.064%
Vanuatu	29,325	0.015%
Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	404,685	0.207%
Viet Nam	2,107,490	1.078%
Yemen	62,560	0.032%
Zambia	72,335	0.037%
Zimbabwe	46,920	0.024%
TOTAL	**195,500,000**	**100.000%**

How the WTO is structured

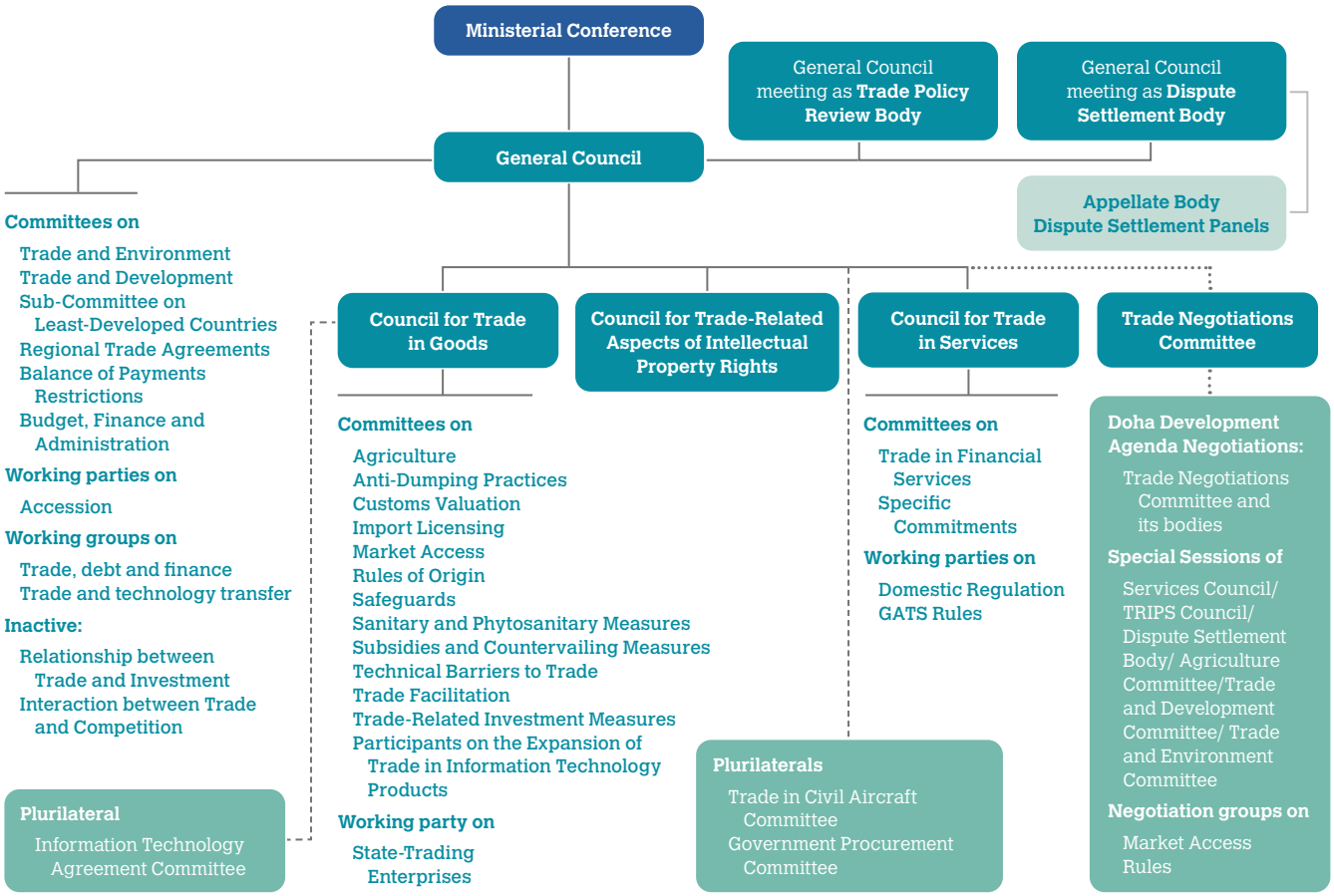
- **The WTO's top-level decision-making body is the Ministerial Conference, which usually meets every two years.**

Below this is the General Council (normally ambassadors and heads of delegation in Geneva, and sometimes officials sent from members' capitals), which meets several times a year in the Geneva headquarters. The General Council also meets as the Trade Policy Review Body and the Dispute Settlement Body.

At the next level, the Goods Council, Services Council and Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Council report to the General Council.

Numerous specialized committees, working groups and working parties deal with the individual agreements and other areas such as the environment, development, membership applications and regional trade agreements.

All WTO members may participate in all councils and committees, with the exceptions of the Appellate Body, dispute settlement panels and plurilateral committees.



Key

- Reporting to General Council (or a subsidiary)
- Reporting to Dispute Settlement Body
- Plurilateral committees inform the General Council or Goods Council of their activities, although these agreements are not signed by all WTO members
- Trade Negotiations Committee reports to General Council

WTO Chairpersons (as of 31 December 2022)

Chairpersons of the General Council and bodies reporting to it	
General Council	Ambassador Didier Chambovey (Switzerland)
Dispute Settlement Body	Ambassador Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme (Botswana)
Trade Policy Review Body	Ambassador Ángel Villalobos Rodríguez (Mexico)
Council for Trade in Goods	Mr Etienne Oudot de Dainville (France)
Council for Trade in Services	Ambassador Kemvichet Long (Cambodia)
Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights	Ambassador Lansana Gberie (Sierra Leone)
Committee on Trade and Environment	Ambassador Simon Manley (United Kingdom)
Committee on Trade and Development	Ambassador Usha Chandnee Dwarka-Canabady (Mauritius)
Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries	Ambassador Kirsti Kauppi (Finland)
Committee on Balance-of Payments Restrictions	Ambassador Saqer Abdullah Almoqbel (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
Committee on Regional Trade Agreements	Ambassador Taeho Lee (Republic of Korea)
Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration	Ambassador Bettina Waldmann (Germany)
Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology	Ambassador Luis Chuquihuara Chil (Peru)
Working Group on Trade, Debt and Finance	Mr Donatas Tamulaitis (Lithuania)
Trade Negotiations Committee	Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Chairpersons of bodies established under the Trade Negotiations Committee	
Negotiating Group on Market Access	Ambassador Didier Chambovey (Switzerland)
Negotiating Group on Rules	Ambassador Santiago Wills (Colombia)
Special Session of the Council for Trade in Services	Ambassador Zhanar Aitzhanova (Kazakhstan)
Special Session of the Council for TRIPS	Ambassador Alfredo Suescum (Panama)
Special Session of the Dispute Settlement Body	Ambassador Kokou Yackoley Johnson (Togo)
Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture	Ambassador Gloria Abraham Peralta (Costa Rica)
Sub-Committee on Cotton	Ambassador Gloria Abraham Peralta (Costa Rica)
Special Session of the Committee on Trade and Environment	Ambassador Leopold Samba (Central African Republic)
Special Session of the Committee on Trade and Development	Ambassador Kadra Ahmed Hassan (Djibouti)

Chairpersons of subsidiary bodies of the Council for Trade in Goods	
Committee on Agriculture	Mr Marcel Vernooij (Netherlands)
Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices	Mr Juan Carlos Estrella (Ecuador)
Committee on Customs Valuation	Mr Frank Rittner (Germany)
Committee on Import Licensing	Mr Jia Jie Loh (Singapore)
Committee on Market Access	Mr Kenya Uehara (Japan)
Committee on Rules of Origin	Ms Laura Gauer (Switzerland)
Committee on Safeguards	Ms. Maryam Abdulaziz Aldoseri (Kingdom of Bahrain)
Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures	Mr Tang-Kai Wang (Chinese Taipei)
Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures	Ms Sally Bardayán Rivera (Panama)
Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade	Mr Anwar Hussain Shaik (India)
Committee on Trade Facilitation	Ambassador Adamu Mohammed Abdulhamid (Nigeria)
Committee on Trade-Related Investment Measures	Ms Débora Ponce de Günther (Guatemala)
Working Party on State Trading Enterprises	Mr Agustín Navarro de Vicente-Gella (Spain)
Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products	Mr Hazrul Imran Azahar (Malaysia)

Chairpersons of subsidiary bodies of the Council for Trade in Services	
Committee on Trade in Financial Services	Mr Pedro Bravo (Peru)
Working Party on Domestic Regulation	Ms Anna Vitie (Finland)
Committee on Specific Commitments	Mr Danang Prasta (Indonesia)
Working Party on GATS Rules	Mr Petr Fiala (Czech Republic)

Chairpersons of Committees of Plurilateral Agreements	
Committee on Trade in Civil Aircraft	Mr Jean-Marie Meraldi (Switzerland)
Committee on Government Procurement	n/a

Directors-general
1995-2023

Seven directors-general have been appointed since the establishment of the WTO. The WTO's first Director-General was Peter Sutherland, who served from January to April 1995. He was succeeded by Renato Ruggiero (1995-99), Mike Moore (1999-2002) and Supachai Panitchpakdi (2002-05). Pascal Lamy, the longest-serving Director-General, held office from 2005 to 2013. Roberto Azevêdo took office on 1 September 2013 and served until 31 August 2020. The current and seventh Director-General, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, took office on 1 March 2021, becoming the first woman and the first African to take on this role. Her term of office will expire on 31 August 2025.

Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Nigeria), seventh WTO Director-General, as of 1 March 2021.

Roberto Azevêdo (Brazil), sixth WTO Director-General, September 2013 to August 2020.

Pascal Lamy (France), fifth WTO Director-General, September 2005 to August 2013.

Supachai Panitchpakdi (Thailand), fourth WTO Director-General, September 2002 to August 2005.

Peter Sutherland (Ireland), first WTO Director-General, January 1995 to April 1995.

Renato Ruggiero (Italy), second WTO Director-General, May 1995 to April 1999.

Mike Moore (New Zealand), third WTO Director-General, September 1999 to August 2002.

Membership of the WTO: 164 members (as of 31 December 2022)

Member*	Year of accession	Member*	Year of accession	Member*	Year of accession
Afghanistan	2016	Cyprus	1995	Israel	1995
Albania	2000	Czech Republic	1995	Italy	1995
Angola	1996	Democratic Republic of the Congo	1997	Jamaica	1995
Antigua and Barbuda	1995	Denmark	1995	Japan	1995
Argentina	1995	Djibouti	1995	Jordan	2000
Armenia	2003	Dominica	1995	Kazakhstan	2015
Australia	1995	Dominican Republic	1995	Kenya	1995
Austria	1995	Ecuador	1996	Korea, Republic of	1995
Bahrain, Kingdom of	1995	Egypt	1995	Kuwait, the State of	1995
Bangladesh	1995	El Salvador	1995	Kyrgyz Republic	1998
Barbados	1995	Estonia	1999	Latvia	1999
Belgium	1995	Eswatini	1995	Lao People's Democratic Republic	2013
Belize	1995	European Union	1995	Lesotho	1995
Benin	1996	Fiji	1996	Liberia	2016
Bolivia, Plurinational State of	1995	Finland	1995	Liechtenstein	1995
Botswana	1995	France	1995	Lithuania	2001
Brazil	1995	Gabon	1995	Luxembourg	1995
Brunei Darussalam	1995	The Gambia	1996	Macao, China	1995
Bulgaria	1996	Georgia	2000	Madagascar	1995
Burkina Faso	1995	Germany	1995	Malawi	1995
Burundi	1995	Ghana	1995	Malaysia	1995
Cambodia	2004	Greece	1995	Maldives	1995
Cameroon	1995	Grenada	1996	Mali	1995
Canada	1995	Guatemala	1995	Malta	1995
Cabo Verde	2008	Guinea	1995	Mauritania	1995
Central African Republic	1995	Guinea-Bissau	1995	Mauritius	1995
Chad	1996	Guyana	1995	Mexico	1995
Chile	1995	Haiti	1996	Moldova, Republic of	2001
China	2001	Honduras	1995	Mongolia	1997
Colombia	1995	Hong Kong, China	1995	Montenegro	2012
Congo	1997	Hungary	1995	Morocco	1995
Costa Rica	1995	Iceland	1995	Mozambique	1995
Côte d'Ivoire	1995	India	1995	Myanmar	1995
Croatia	2000	Indonesia	1995	Namibia	1995
Cuba	1995	Ireland	1995	Nepal	2004

Member*	Year of accession
Netherlands	1995
New Zealand	1995
Nicaragua	1995
Niger	1996
Nigeria	1995
Norway	1995
North Macedonia, Republic of	2003
Oman	2000
Pakistan	1995
Panama	1997
Papua New Guinea	1996
Paraguay	1995
Peru	1995
Philippines	1995
Poland	1995
Portugal	1995
Qatar	1996
Romania	1995
Russian Federation	2012
Rwanda	1996
Saint Kitts and Nevis	1996
Saint Lucia	1995
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1995
Samoa	2012
Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	2005
Senegal	1995
Seychelles	2015
Sierra Leone	1995
Singapore	1995
Slovak Republic	1995

Member*	Year of accession
Slovenia	1995
Solomon Islands	1996
South Africa	1995
Spain	1995
Sri Lanka	1995
Suriname	1995
Sweden	1995
Switzerland	1995
Chinese Taipei	2002
Tajikistan	2013
Tanzania	1995
Thailand	1995
Togo	1995
Tonga	2007
Trinidad and Tobago	1995
Tunisia	1995
Türkiye	1995
Uganda	1995
Ukraine	2008
United Arab Emirates	1996
United Kingdom	1995
United States	1995
Uruguay	1995
Vanuatu	2012
Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	1995
Viet Nam	2007
Yemen	2014
Zambia	1995
Zimbabwe	1995

Observers** (as of 1 February 2023)
Algeria
Andorra
Azerbaijan
Bahamas
Belarus
Bhutan
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Comoros
Curaçao
Equatorial Guinea
Ethiopia
Holy See
Iran
Iraq
Lebanese Republic
Libya
São Tomé and Principe
Serbia
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syrian Arab Republic
Timor-Leste
Turkmenistan
Uzbekistan

*Members are mostly states but can also be separate customs territories with full autonomy over their external commercial relations.

**With the exception of the Holy See, observers must start accession negotiations within five years of becoming observers.

Abbreviations

ADP	anti-dumping practices
CTD	Committee on Trade and Development
DSB	Dispute Settlement Body
DSU	Dispute Settlement Understanding
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	foreign direct investment
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	gross domestic product
GIs	geographical indications
GPA	Government Procurement Agreement
HS	Harmonized System
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITA	Information Technology Agreement
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITTC	Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
LDCs	least-developed countries
MC12	12th WTO Ministerial Conference
MC13	13th WTO Ministerial Conference
MEAs	multilateral environmental agreements
MFN	most-favoured nation
MSMEs	micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
NAMA	non-agricultural market access
NGO	non-governmental organization
NTMs	non-tariff measures
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PTAs	preferential trade arrangements
RTAs	regional trade agreements
SCM	Subsidies and Countervailing Measures
SG	Agreement on Safeguards
SPS	sanitary and phytosanitary measures
STDF	Standards and Trade Development Facility
SVE	small, vulnerable economy
TBT	technical barriers to trade
TNC	Trade Negotiations Committee
TPR	Trade Policy Review
TPRM	Trade Policy Review Mechanism
TRIMs	trade-related investment measures
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

0 is zero or became zero due to rounding.

Billion means one thousand million.

Minor discrepancies between constituent figures and totals are due to rounding.

Unless otherwise indicated, (i) all value figures are expressed in US dollars; (ii) trade figures include the intra-trade of free trade areas, customs unions, regional and other groupings.

Note This report covers the WTO's activities in 2022 and early 2023. The word "country" is frequently used to describe WTO members whereas a few members are officially "customs territories", and not necessarily countries in the usual sense of the word.

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General information about the WTO is available in the following publications, which may all be downloaded free of charge from the website:

WTO in Brief

WTO in Brief provides a starting point for essential information about the WTO. Concise and practical, this short brochure is an ideal introduction to the WTO.

10 things the WTO can do

This publication highlights some of the benefits of the trading system, but it does not claim that everything is perfect – otherwise there would be no need for further negotiations and for the system to evolve and reform continually.

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The Annual Report is also available in French and Spanish.

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