

Our year

The WTO's Ninth Ministerial Conference, held in Bali at the end of 2013, concluded with ministers approving the "Bali Package", a series of decisions covering trade facilitation, agriculture and development. The Conference also saw ministers agree to Yemen joining the WTO. Earlier in the year, Laos and Tajikistan completed their accession processes, bringing the WTO's total membership to 159. In September, Roberto Azevêdo began his term of office as the WTO's sixth Director-General, succeeding Pascal Lamy.

Trade negotiations

Trade negotiations reached a significant milestone in 2013 with the agreement of the "Bali Package", a selection of issues from the broader Doha Round negotiations. The Package was agreed by ministers at the end of the WTO's Ninth Ministerial Conference, held in Bali in December 2013. It comprises 10 ministerial decisions/declarations covering trade facilitation, agriculture and development.

The Trade Facilitation Agreement aims to streamline trade by cutting "red tape" and simplifying customs procedures. It contains special provisions for developing countries to help them implement the Agreement. Benefits to the world economy are estimated to be between US\$ 400 billion and US\$ 1 trillion.

On agriculture, ministers decided to give temporary protection to food stockholding programmes used for food security purposes and agreed to "exercise utmost restraint" in using all forms of export subsidy and other measures with similar effects. They agreed to improve how tariff rate quotas are managed and to add some rural livelihood and land-use programmes of special interest to developing countries to the list of those that can be freely subsidized. They also committed to making progress in addressing cotton within the agriculture negotiations.

On development, ministers decided to establish a monitoring mechanism to analyse and review all aspects of the implementation of "special and differential treatment" provisions for developing countries contained in multilateral WTO agreements. They also took a number of decisions relating to least-developed countries (LDCs). These included improving the transparency of preferential rules of origin so that LDCs can better use the preferences accorded to them, and improving the implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access for imports from LDCs. Ministers also addressed the putting into operation of the waiver allowing WTO members to grant preferential market access to LDC services and service suppliers.

In the lead-up to Bali, an intensive consultative process took place at WTO headquarters in Geneva. This process was stepped up in September, when newly-appointed Director-General Roberto Azevêdo took over as Chair of the Trade Negotiations Committee. At the General Council meeting at the end of November, DG Azevêdo presented to WTO members, as a package, 10 texts representing the state of play in the

negotiations. As not all work had been finished at that point in all areas, he said that none of the texts could be understood as fully agreed. He said he would use them to brief ministers in Bali on progress made in Geneva but not as texts agreed for adoption.

At the Ministerial Conference, ministers expressed their collective desire for a successfully negotiated outcome. DG Azevêdo therefore held round-the-clock consultations from 4 December until the meeting closed on 7 December, with agreement finally being reached on the outstanding issues. This led to the adoption of the "Bali Package", the first major agreement among WTO members since the WTO was formed in 1995.

A Ministerial Declaration issued at the end of the Conference called for a clearly defined work programme on the conclusion of the remaining Doha Development Agenda issues to be completed by the end of 2014.



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16 ministerial decisions/declarations were taken at the WTO's Ninth Ministerial Conference.



Implementation and monitoring

Various WTO councils and committees seek to ensure that WTO agreements and rules are being properly implemented. The General Council is the WTO's highest-level decision-making body in Geneva.

In 2013, the General Council oversaw the process for the selection and appointment of a new Director-General to succeed Pascal Lamy, whose mandate expired on 31 August 2013. The process started at the end of 2012 with the nomination of nine candidates and concluded, after several rounds of consultations with WTO members, with a General Council decision on 14 May to appoint Roberto Azevêdo, then Brazil's Ambassador to the WTO, as the new WTO Director-General for a four-year term from 1 September 2013.

The General Council Chair led a preparatory process to define both the substantive and the organizational aspects of the WTO's Ninth Ministerial Conference, which was held in Bali, Indonesia, on 3-7 December, and submitted a number of recommendations for decision to the Ministerial Conference.

Other WTO councils and committees continued to monitor the implementation of WTO agreements in 2013. The WTO's Committee on Agriculture held further consultations on improving the submission and quality of WTO members' notifications of agricultural measures, which provide key

information for its work. The Committee also published a new online database which lets users analyse notifications as well as questions and answers provided by WTO members in the context of the Committee's review process.

The WTO's Trade Policy Review Body held 15 meetings in 2013 to review the trade policies and practices of 20 WTO members.

The WTO Secretariat prepared four reports on global trade developments in 2013. For the 12 months to mid-November 2013, a total of 407 new trade restrictions were recorded, up from 308 measures listed in the previous overview. These new restrictive measures covered around US\$ 240 billion of merchandise imports, slightly more than 1.3 per cent of the world total.

In 2013, the WTO received 35 new notifications of regional trade agreements (RTAs), down from 37 in 2012. The Americas was the region with the highest number of notifications – 12, followed by Europe with seven. This brings the total number of RTA notifications to 581, as of the end of the year. All WTO members except Mongolia are members of one or more RTAs, with some members belonging to as many as 30.



See pages 40-79

159 The WTO has 159 members following the accession of Laos and Tajikistan in early 2013.

20 The WTO conducted 20 trade policy reviews of WTO members in 2013.

4 The WTO Secretariat prepared four reports on global trade developments in 2013.



Dispute settlement

WTO members bring disputes to the WTO if they think their rights under trade agreements are being infringed. Settling disputes is the responsibility of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB).

WTO dispute settlement had a demanding year in 2013, with adjudicating bodies examining 28 disputes or arbitrations on issues from green energy production to the banning of seal products. In addition, the DSB received 20 "requests for consultations", the first stage in the WTO's dispute settlement process. Although less than the record 27 in 2012, it is still the third-highest number of requests filed in the last ten years.

Developing countries launched nine of these new requests, with Latin America particularly active. Argentina was the most active from the region with two complaints. Russia, which acceded to the WTO in 2012, was also an active participant. Cuba initiated its first-ever dispute, a complaint against Australia's measures on plain packaging for tobacco products. This brings to five the number of complaints brought by WTO members against Australia's plain packaging requirements. By the end of 2013, 474 requests for consultations had been filed since the WTO's creation in 1995.

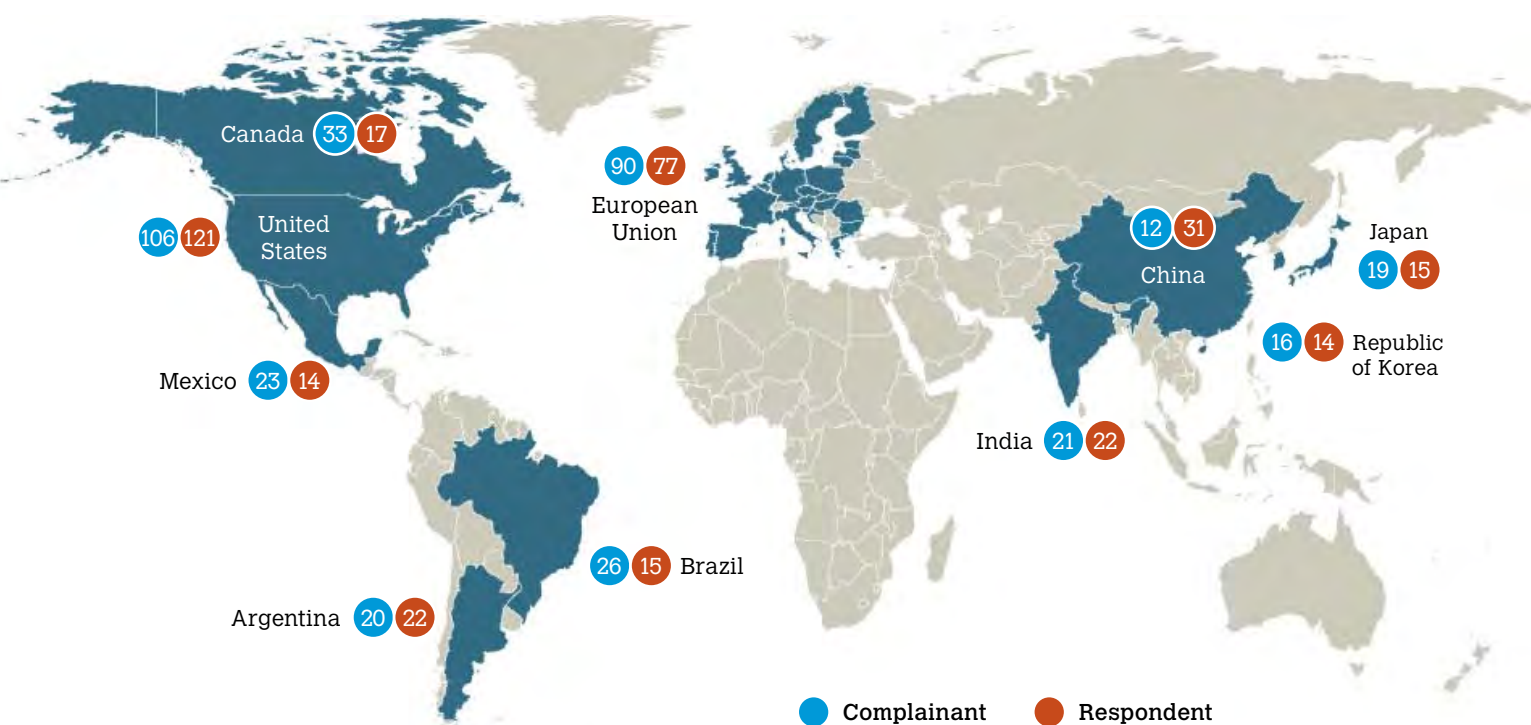
The DSB established 12 new panels in 2013 to adjudicate 14 new cases. Fifteen panels were active during the year, covering 20 different complaints. The greatest number of disputes, eight in total, concerned either local content requirements in subsidies and investment measures or trade remedies, such as anti-dumping and countervailing duties.

For the first time since 2009, the DSB referred two disputes to a compliance panel in order to determine whether the losing party is in compliance with the DSB's recommendations and rulings. These disputes are the Canadian and Mexican complaints against US labelling requirements for meat products and China's complaint against EU anti-dumping measures on steel fasteners. The DSB referred to arbitration a request by Indonesia to take trade retaliation measures against the United States in a dispute over flavoured cigarettes.

The DSB adopted four panel reports and two Appellate Body reports. Panels issued reports in disputes concerning Chinese anti-dumping duties on EU x-ray scanners, Chinese anti-dumping and countervailing measures on US broiler products, and Canada's measures related to Ontario's renewable energy sector in disputes brought by the European Union and Japan. The Appellate Body reports concerned the same disputes over Ontario's renewable energy measures.

WTO members most involved in disputes, 1995 to 2013

 See pages 80-95



Building trade capacity

The WTO aims to help developing countries build their trade capacity so that they can participate more effectively in the multilateral trading system.

At the Bali Ministerial Conference in December, ministers agreed – as part of the Bali Package – to a Monitoring Mechanism to analyse the implementation of “special and differential provisions” for developing countries in WTO agreements as well as in Ministerial and General Council decisions. One of the key features of the Mechanism is its ability to make recommendations if a problem is detected. Section II of the Trade Facilitation Agreement approved in Bali contains special and differential treatment provisions for developing countries aimed at helping them implement the provisions of the Agreement.

The Bali Package also contains a number of decisions relating to least-developed countries (LDCs) to further assist their integration into the multilateral trading system (see above).

Ministers in Bali also decided to continue the work programme on e-commerce which aims to enhance economic and development opportunities, especially in developing countries and LDCs. Ministers called on the General Council to hold periodic reviews based on the reports submitted by the WTO bodies entrusted with implementing the programme.

In 2013, Aid for Trade continued to mobilize international resources to support developing countries. Although commitments slipped 14 per cent to US\$ 41.5 billion in 2011, they are still 57 per cent above the 2002-05 baseline period. The Fourth Global Review of Aid for Trade, which took place at the WTO on 8-10 July, focused on the theme “connecting to value chains”. At the Bali Ministerial Conference, ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the Aid for Trade initiative.

The WTO implemented 281 technical assistance activities in 2013 for government officials from developing countries. The training covered a wide variety of trade subjects, from general courses on the WTO to more specialized courses on particular trade agreements. African countries benefited from 23 per cent of these capacity-building activities, Asia from 15 per cent and Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia 10 per cent each. LDCs benefited from approximately 49 per cent of all technical assistance activities, compared with 41 per cent in 2012.



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Outreach

The WTO maintains regular dialogue with non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, other international organizations, the media and the general public to enhance openness and transparency.

The major outreach event of the year was the Public Forum, which attracted about 900 participants, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and business representatives, to discuss the theme “expanding trade through innovation and the digital economy”. Later in the year, nearly 350 NGOs from 66 countries were accredited for the Bali Ministerial Conference.

Over 300 Members of Parliament came to Bali for the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO. The meeting, held during the WTO’s Ministerial Conference, facilitated interaction with senior WTO officials, the Chair of the General Council and heads of international organizations. In the run-up to Bali, the WTO organized – in partnership with the Temasek Foundation – a regional workshop for Asian parliamentarians in Singapore which attracted 42 highly ranked MPs.

In 2013, the WTO cooperated with a variety of intergovernmental organizations. The WTO launched, with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a joint database on trade in value-added terms, and co-published

with the World Health Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization a study of the linked roles that public health policies, intellectual property and trade can play in advancing medical technology and ensuring it is available equitably to all who need it.

The WTO maintained regular contact with over 2,000 journalists in many countries, who have registered to use the media newsroom on the WTO website. The WTO held several training activities for journalists, including a seminar for English-speaking journalists and a regional workshop in Geneva as well as regional workshops in Jakarta, Indonesia, and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The WTO held its first dedicated regional seminar for the private sector in the Arab states in Kuwait in 2013. It also launched on its website an area dedicated to the business community.

The WTO website attracted over 1.8 million visits a month in 2013, and total page views exceeded 40 million, a 14 per cent increase on 2012. During the Ministerial Conference in December, the average number of visits per day reached over 90,000. The WTO also made increasing use of social media.



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349

The WTO welcomed 349 NGOs at its Ninth Ministerial Conference.

900

The WTO Public Forum 2013 attracted about 900 participants.

1.8

The WTO website regularly attracts over 1.8 million visits a month.



Bali Ministerial Conference

At the WTO's Ninth Ministerial Conference, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 3 to 7 December 2013, ministers adopted the "Bali Package", a range of issues covering trade facilitation, agriculture and development. A Ministerial Declaration called for a clearly defined work programme on the remaining Doha Development Agenda issues to be concluded by the end of 2014. The Conference also saw ministers accept Yemen as a new member of the WTO.

After intensive negotiations in Geneva and round-the-clock consultations during the Ministerial Conference, ministers adopted the so-called Bali Package, the first multilateral trade deal since the WTO was established in 1995.

The Bali Package consists of 10 decisions:

Trade facilitation

- Agreement on Trade Facilitation

Agriculture

- General services
- Public stockholding for food security purposes
- Understanding on tariff rate quota administration provisions of agricultural products, as defined in Article 2 of the Agreement on Agriculture
- Export competition

Cotton

- Cotton

Development and LDC issues

- Preferential rules of origin for least-developed countries (LDCs)

- Activating the waiver concerning preferential treatment to services and service suppliers of LDCs
- Duty-free and quota-free market access for LDCs
- Monitoring mechanism on special and differential treatment

The **Trade Facilitation Agreement** will cut red tape and streamline customs procedures to ease cross-border trade. Implementation of the Agreement will reduce costs and improve the speed and efficiency of customs procedures. It will be a legally binding agreement and is one of the biggest reforms of the WTO since its establishment. It is expected to make a substantial contribution to the world economy. Section II of the Agreement contains special and differential treatment provisions for developing and least-developed countries aimed at helping them implement the provisions of the Agreement. A Preparatory Committee, established by the Ministerial Decision of 7 December in Bali, is tasked with ensuring the entry into force of the Agreement.

In **agriculture**, ministers gave temporary protection to food stockholding programmes under which countries stockpile staple food crops for food security purposes. This means that, within certain boundaries, WTO members cannot be legally challenged under the Agriculture Agreement even if they



16 ministerial decisions/
declarations

103 ministers





3,500⁺

participants

breach agreed limits on farmer support subsidies. This interim solution will exist until a permanent one is agreed, with a work programme set up to produce a permanent solution in four years.

Ministers added some rural livelihood and land-use programmes of special interest to developing countries to the list of those deemed to cause little or no trade distortion, and which can therefore be freely subsidized. In addition, they took steps to improve the use of tariff rate quotas, which allow import volumes inside a quota to carry a lower duty. Finally, they confirmed that export competition should remain a priority issue for the post-Bali work programme. They also agreed to “exercise utmost restraint” in using all forms of export subsidy and export measures with equivalent effects and to ensure to the maximum extent possible that actual levels of export subsidies remain significantly below permitted levels.

Members also reaffirmed their commitment to make progress in addressing **cotton** ambitiously and expeditiously within the agriculture negotiations.

On **development**, ministers agreed to a Monitoring Mechanism to analyse the implementation of special and differential treatment provisions for developing countries in the WTO agreements as well as in Ministerial and General Council decisions. One of the key features of the Mechanism is its ability to make recommendations if a problem is detected (see page 33). Ministers also addressed other issues of particular interest to LDCs – namely, the implementation of duty-free quota-free market access for imports from these countries, guidelines to improve the transparency of preferential rules of origin for LDCs with the aim of helping LDCs better utilize the preferences accorded to them, and the putting into operation of the services waiver allowing WTO members to grant LDCs preferential access to their services markets.

Director-General Azêvedo told ministers that “people all around the world will benefit from the package you have delivered here today” and said it was “an important stepping stone towards the completion of the Doha Round”. To maintain the momentum, the Ministerial Declaration instructed the Trade Negotiations Committee to prepare within the next 12 months a clearly defined work programme for the remaining issues in the Doha Round negotiations.

WTO members welcomed Yemen as a new member (see page 20). Yemen will officially become a WTO member 30 days after it has ratified the membership deal. The Ministerial Conference also adopted five decisions on the WTO's regular work, covering intellectual property, electronic commerce, small economies, Aid for Trade and transfer of technology.

At a meeting of the parties to the WTO's Government Procurement Agreement held in Bali during the Conference, ministers anticipated that the revised Agreement would come into force in the first quarter of 2014.



Background on the Ministerial Conference

The Ministerial Conference of the WTO consists of representatives of all WTO members. It is the highest decision-making body of the organization and usually meets every two years. Ministerial conferences review ongoing work, give political guidance and direction to that work, and set the agenda for further work.

349

NGOs

175

delegations

Understanding the WTO

There are a number of ways of looking at the World Trade Organization. It is an organization for trade opening. It is a forum for governments to negotiate trade agreements. It is a place for them to settle trade disputes. It operates a system of trade rules. It helps developing countries build their trade capacity. Essentially, the WTO is a place where member governments try to sort out the trade problems they face with each other.

Who we are

The WTO was born out of negotiations aimed at progressively reducing obstacles to trade. The bulk of the WTO's current work comes from the 1986-94 negotiations called the Uruguay Round and earlier negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The WTO is currently the host to a new round of negotiations, under the "Doha Development Agenda" launched in 2001.

Where countries have faced trade barriers and wanted them lowered, the negotiations have helped to open markets for trade. But the WTO is not just about opening markets, and in some circumstances its rules support maintaining trade barriers – for example, to protect consumers or prevent the spread of disease.

At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations. These documents provide the legal ground rules for international commerce. They are essentially contracts, binding governments to keep their trade policies within agreed limits. Although negotiated and signed by governments, the goal is to help producers of goods and services, exporters, and importers conduct their business, while allowing governments to meet social and environmental objectives.

The system's overriding purpose is to help trade flow as freely as possible – so long as there are no undesirable side effects – because this is important for stimulating economic growth and employment. That partly means removing obstacles. It also means ensuring that individuals, companies and governments know what the trade rules are around the world, and giving them the confidence that there will be no sudden changes of policy. In other words, the rules have to be "transparent" and predictable.

Trade relations often involve conflicting interests. Agreements, including those painstakingly negotiated in the WTO system, often need interpreting. The most harmonious way to settle these differences is through a neutral procedure based on an agreed legal foundation. That is the purpose behind the dispute settlement process written into the WTO agreements.

The system's overriding purpose is to help trade flow as freely as possible ... because this is important for stimulating economic growth and employment.



What we stand for

The WTO agreements are lengthy and complex because they are legal texts covering a wide range of activities. But a number of simple, fundamental principles run throughout all of these documents. These principles are the foundation of the multilateral trading system.

Non-discrimination

A country should not discriminate between its trading partners and it should not discriminate between its own and foreign products, services or nationals.

More open

Lowering trade barriers is one of the most obvious ways of encouraging trade; these barriers include customs duties (or tariffs) and measures such as import bans or quotas that restrict quantities selectively.

Predictable and transparent

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

More competitive

Discouraging “unfair” practices, such as export subsidies and dumping products at below normal value to gain market share; the issues are complex, and the 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.

More beneficial for less developed countries

Giving them more time to adjust, greater flexibility and special privileges; over three-quarters of WTO members are developing countries and countries in transition to market economies. The WTO agreements give them transition periods to adjust to the more unfamiliar and, perhaps, difficult WTO provisions.

Protect the environment

The WTO's agreements permit members to take measures to protect not only the environment but also public health, animal health and plant health. However these measures must be applied in the same way to both national and foreign businesses.

In other words, members must not use environmental protection measures as a means of disguising protectionist policies.

What we do

The WTO is run by its member governments. All major decisions are made by the membership as a whole, either by ministers (who usually meet at least once every two years) or by their ambassadors or delegates (who meet regularly in Geneva). While the WTO is driven by its member states, it could not function without its Secretariat to coordinate the activities. The Secretariat employs over 600 staff, and its experts – lawyers, economists, statisticians and communications experts – assist WTO members on a daily basis to ensure, among other things, that negotiations progress smoothly, and that the rules of international trade are correctly applied and enforced.

Trade negotiations

The WTO agreements cover goods, services and intellectual property. They spell out the principles of liberalization, and the permitted exceptions. They include individual countries' commitments to lower customs tariffs and other trade barriers, and to open and keep open services markets. They set procedures for settling disputes. These agreements are not static; they are renegotiated from time to time and new agreements can be added to the package. Many are now being negotiated under the Doha Development Agenda, launched by WTO trade ministers in Doha, Qatar, in November 2001.

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 that 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, each review containing reports by the country concerned and the WTO Secretariat.

Dispute settlement

The WTO's procedure for resolving trade disputes under the Dispute Settlement Understanding is vital for enforcing the rules and therefore for ensuring that trade flows smoothly. Countries bring disputes to the WTO if they think their rights under the agreements are being infringed. Judgements by specially appointed independent experts are based on interpretations of the agreements and individual countries' commitments.

Building trade capacity

WTO agreements contain special provision for developing countries, including longer time periods to implement agreements and commitments, measures to increase their trading opportunities, and support to help them build their trade capacity, to handle disputes and to implement technical standards. The WTO organizes hundreds of technical cooperation missions to developing countries annually. It also holds numerous courses each year in Geneva for government officials. Aid for Trade aims to help developing countries develop the skills and infrastructure needed to expand their trade.

Outreach

The WTO maintains regular dialogue with non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, other international organizations, the media and the general public on various aspects of the WTO and the ongoing Doha negotiations, with the aim of enhancing cooperation and increasing awareness of WTO activities.



How it all comes together

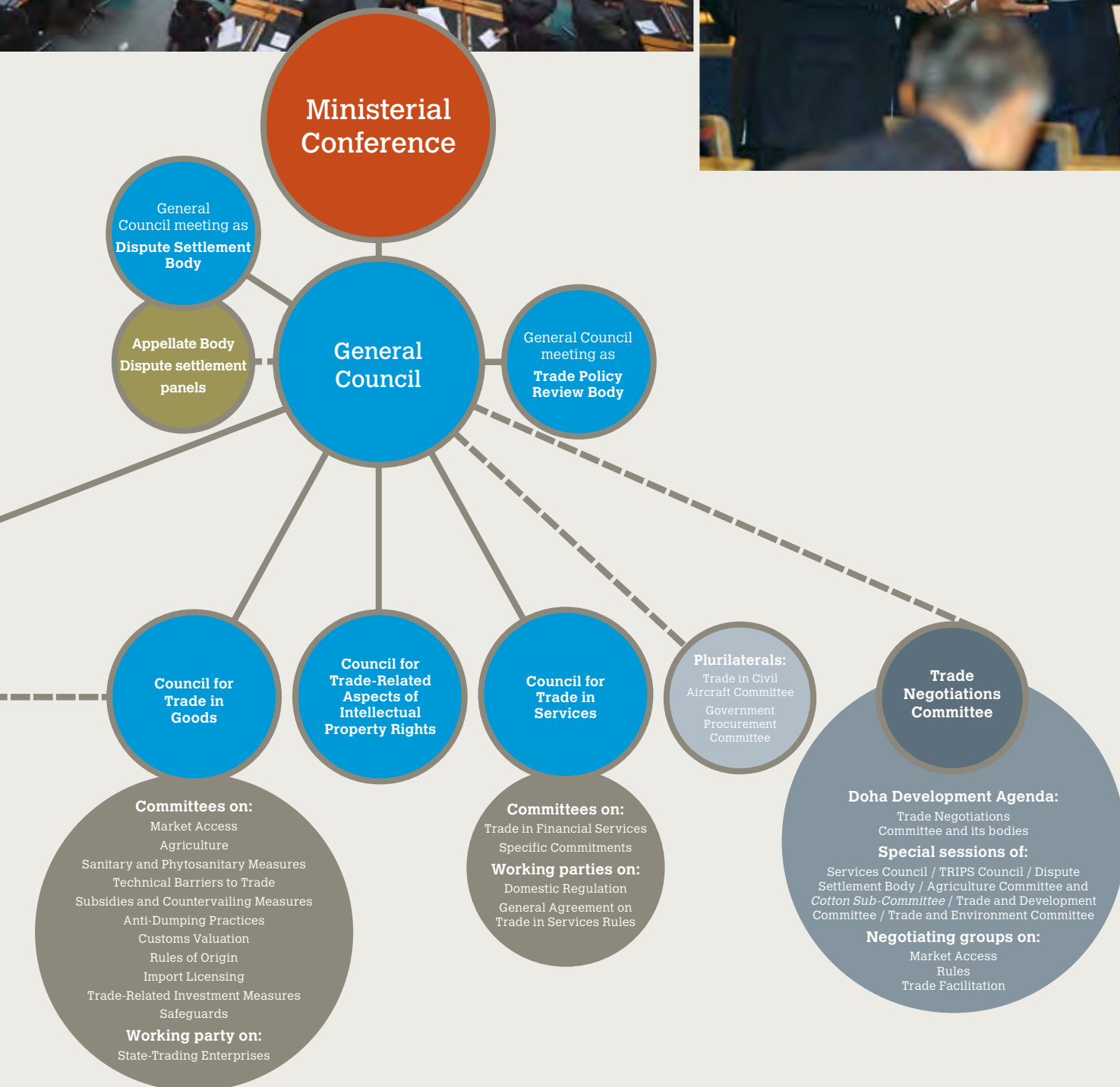
The WTO's top-level decision-making body is the Ministerial Conference, which usually meets every two years.

Below this is the General Council (normally ambassadors and heads of delegation in Geneva, but 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.

A brief history

The WTO began life on 1 January 1995 but its trading system is half a century older. Since 1948, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) had provided the rules for the system. Whereas GATT had mainly dealt with trade in goods, the WTO and its agreements now cover trade in services, and in traded inventions, creations and designs (intellectual property).



'94

April

Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO is signed.

September

Mike Moore (New Zealand) becomes WTO Director-General.

November

Third Ministerial Conference takes place in Seattle, US.

'96

December

First Ministerial Conference takes place in Singapore.

'97

December

70 WTO members reach a multilateral agreement to open their financial services sector.

'99

2000

January

Negotiations begin on services.

March

Negotiations begin on agriculture.

'01

November

Fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar. Doha Development Agenda is launched.



WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION

'95

January

The WTO is born on 1 January.



'98

May

Second Ministerial Conference takes place in Geneva.

May

Renato Ruggiero (Italy) takes office as WTO Director-General.

'02

September

Supachai Panitchpakdi (Thailand) is elected WTO Director-General.



'03

September

Fifth Ministerial Conference takes place in Cancún, Mexico.

'04

July

Ministerial discussions on the Doha Round take place in Geneva.

'05

September

Pascal Lamy (France) becomes WTO Director-General.

December

Sixth Ministerial Conference takes place in Hong Kong, China. Aid for Trade initiative is launched. Hong Kong Declaration is approved.



'06

June

Ministerial discussions on the Doha Round take place in Geneva.

September

First WTO Public Forum takes place in Geneva.



'07

January

Viet Nam becomes the WTO's 150th member.

November

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

'08

July

Cabo Verde joins the WTO.

Ministerial discussions on the Doha Round take place in Geneva.

'09

April

DG Pascal Lamy reappointed for second term of four years.

July

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

September

First WTO Open Day in Geneva.

November

Seventh Ministerial Conference takes place in Geneva.

'10

January

New "Chairs Programme" launched to support developing country universities.

September

Second WTO Open Day in Geneva.



'11

July

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

December

Eighth Ministerial Conference takes place in Geneva.

'12

April

Montenegro joins the WTO.

May

Samoa joins the WTO.

August

Russia and Vanuatu join the WTO.

'13

February

Laos joins the WTO.

March

Tajikistan becomes the 159th member of the WTO.



September

Roberto Azevêdo (Brazil) takes office as WTO Director-General.



December

Ninth Ministerial Conference takes place in Bali, Indonesia. "Bali Package" adopted.

Joining the WTO

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Laos) and Tajikistan formally joined the WTO in 2013, raising WTO membership to 159. The Bali Ministerial Conference in December adopted the accession terms of Yemen and cleared the way for the country to join the WTO. The WTO provided further technical assistance to acceding governments, including a five-day seminar in Geneva. The China Programme, which aims to strengthen the participation of least-developed countries (LDCs) in the WTO, was extended for a further year.

At the Ninth Ministerial Conference in Bali, ministers approved the accession of Yemen after 13 years of negotiations. Yemen will become a WTO member 30 days after notifying its acceptance and depositing the Instrument of Acceptance of its Accession Protocol with the WTO Secretariat. The accession will bring the WTO another step nearer its goal of universal membership. Several acceding governments are entering decisive stages of their accession negotiations. These include Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Serbia and the Seychelles.

Director-General Roberto Azevêdo issued the Fifth Annual Report on WTO Accessions in November 2013. The report provides

detailed information on work on WTO accessions, the benefits of WTO membership, policy issues and challenges in 2013, and a thematic focus on transparency obligations and notifications.

Stepping up technical assistance

Technical assistance was strengthened in 2013, with acceding governments invited to participate in over 100 technical assistance events.

In September, the WTO Secretariat organized a five-day seminar – the Global Seminar on WTO Accessions – on the theme of “Safeguarding and strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading system”. Held in Geneva, the seminar gave officials of

Membership of the WTO (as of 31 December 2013)

Member ¹	Year of accession	Member	Year of accession	Member	Year of accession
Albania	2000	Czech Republic	1995	Jamaica	1995
Angola	1996	Democratic Republic of the Congo	1997	Japan	1995
Antigua and Barbuda	1995	Denmark	1995	Jordan	2000
Argentina	1995	Djibouti	1995	Kenya	1995
Armenia	2003	Dominica	1995	Korea, Republic of	1995
Australia	1995	Dominican Republic	1995	Kuwait, the State of	1995
Austria	1995	Ecuador	1996	Kyrgyz Republic	1998
Bahrain, Kingdom of	1995	Egypt	1995	Latvia	1999
Bangladesh	1995	El Salvador	1995	Lao People's Democratic Republic	2013
Barbados	1995	Estonia	1999	Lesotho	1995
Belgium	1995	European Union	1995	Liechtenstein	1995
Belize	1995	Fiji	1996	Lithuania	2001
Benin	1996	Finland	1995	Luxembourg	1995
Bolivia, Plurinational State of	1995	France	1995	Macao, China	1995
Botswana	1995	Gabon	1995	Madagascar	1995
Brazil	1995	The Gambia	1996	Malawi	1995
Brunei Darussalam	1995	Georgia	2000	Malaysia	1995
Bulgaria	1996	Germany	1995	Maldives	1995
Burkina Faso	1995	Ghana	1995	Mali	1995
Burundi	1995	Greece	1995	Malta	1995
Cambodia	2004	Grenada	1996	Mauritania	1995
Cameroon	1995	Guatemala	1995	Mauritius	1995
Canada	1995	Guinea	1995	Mexico	1995
Cabo Verde	2008	Guinea-Bissau	1995	Moldova, Republic of	2001
Central African Republic	1995	Guyana	1995	Mongolia	1997
Chad	1996	Haiti	1996	Montenegro	2012
Chile	1995	Honduras	1995	Morocco	1995
China	2001	Hong Kong, China	1995	Mozambique	1995
Colombia	1995	Hungary	1995	Myanmar	1995
Congo	1997	Iceland	1995	Namibia	1995
Costa Rica	1995	India	1995	Nepal	2004
Côte d'Ivoire	1995	Indonesia	1995	Netherlands	1995
Croatia	2000	Ireland	1995	New Zealand	1995
Cuba	1995	Israel	1995	Nicaragua	1995
Cyprus	1995	Italy	1995	Niger	1996

¹ Members are mostly governments but can also be customs territories.

acceding governments and WTO members the opportunity to exchange views and share experiences and best practices on WTO accession negotiations. It also reviewed the results of 31 concluded Article XII accessions – countries that have joined since the establishment of the WTO in 1995.

The Secretariat continued with the implementation of China's LDCs and Accessions Programme (China Programme). The programme aims to strengthen LDC members' participation in the WTO and to assist acceding LDCs. From 15 to 18 October 2013, the second high-level roundtable was held in Luang Prabang, Laos, focusing on the "Future of the multilateral trading system: perspectives of least-developed countries and Article XII members". As part of the China Programme, five more interns were selected to participate in the internship scheme at the WTO Secretariat. At the Ninth Ministerial Conference, Director General Azevêdo and China's Trade Minister Hucheng Gao signed a new memorandum of understanding, extending the China Programme for another year.

The International Trade Centre (ITC) and the WTO Secretariat continued their work under the joint ITC-WTO programme in support of the private sector in acceding developing countries and LDCs. Working Party chairs visited several acceding governments to meet key domestic stakeholders to promote outreach, answer questions and improve understanding of WTO membership.

The Accessions Division also undertook briefings for newly designated Working Party chairs and new delegates as well as workshops for parliamentarians and civil society. Several post-accession technical assistance activities took place focusing on

implementation of the negotiated accession commitments and general membership obligations.

Transparency was further enhanced by regular meetings of the Informal Group on Accessions, through the WTO accessions newsletter, the Director-General's Annual Report on WTO Accessions and the annual accessions' outreach dialogue with WTO groupings. In 2013, this dialogue included the LDCs' Consultative Group, the Informal Group of Developing Countries, the Asian Group of Developing Members, the Latin American and Caribbean Group, the African Group and the Arab Group.



Background on joining the WTO

The WTO is open to states or customs territories with full autonomy over their external commercial relations. To join the WTO, a government has to bring its economic and trade policies in line with WTO rules and principles, and negotiate with interested, individual trading partners on guaranteed minimum levels of access to their domestic markets for goods and services. It can take many years to become a WTO member because it requires the full support and consensus of the existing membership. However, the accession process is designed to ensure that new members are able to participate fully in the multilateral trading system from the outset.

159 members (as of 2 March 2013)

Member	Year of accession	Member	Year of accession	States/customs territories seeking to join the WTO (as of 2 March 2013)
Nigeria	1995	Sri Lanka	1995	Afghanistan*
Norway	1995	Suriname	1995	Algeria
Oman	2000	Swaziland	1995	Andorra
Pakistan	1995	Sweden	1995	Azerbaijan
Panama	1997	Switzerland	1995	Bahamas
Papua New Guinea	1996	Chinese Taipei	2002	Belarus
Paraguay	1995	Tanzania	1995	Bhutan*
Peru	1995	Tajikistan	2013	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Philippines	1995	Thailand	1995	Comoros*
Poland	1995	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)	2003	Equatorial Guinea*
Portugal	1995	Togo	1995	Ethiopia*
Qatar	1996	Tonga	2007	Iran
Romania	1995	Trinidad and Tobago	1995	Iraq
Russian Federation	2012	Tunisia	1995	Kazakhstan
Rwanda	1996	Turkey	1995	Lebanese Republic
Saint Kitts and Nevis	1996	Uganda	1995	Liberia, Republic of*
Saint Lucia	1995	Ukraine	2008	Libya
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1995	United Arab Emirates	1996	São Tomé and Príncipe*
Samoa	2012	United Kingdom	1995	Serbia
Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	2005	United States of America	1995	Seychelles
Senegal	1995	Uruguay	1995	Sudan*
Sierra Leone	1995	Vanuatu	2012	Syrian Arab Republic
Singapore	1995	Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	1995	Uzbekistan
Slovak Republic	1995	Viet Nam	2007	
Slovenia	1995	Zambia	1995	
Solomon Islands	1996	Zimbabwe	1995	
South Africa	1995			
Spain	1995			

Countries that officially became WTO members in 2013

Lao PDR*	2 February 2013
Tajikistan	2 March 2013

Countries that completed their WTO accession negotiations in 2013

Yemen*	Date of approval of Accession Package**
	4 December 2013

* Least-developed country.

** Formal WTO membership is subject to the ratification of the Accession Protocol by Yemen's Parliament and the subsequent notification and deposit of the Instrument of Acceptance of the Protocol with the WTO Director-General.

Welcoming new members

In 2013, the Ninth WTO Ministerial Conference approved the accession package of Yemen. Formal membership is now subject to the ratification of Yemen's Accession Protocol by the Yemeni parliament and the subsequent notification and deposit of the Instrument of Acceptance of the Protocol with the Director-General of the WTO. The negotiated terms and conditions contain commitments covering all WTO rules.

The WTO accession process promotes the integration of new members into the global economy subject to binding and enforceable trade rules. Yemen undertook to liberalize its trade regime and accelerate its integration into the world economy. Yemen's accession package contains specific commitments binding it to WTO rules and includes, where necessary, specific transition periods, which have been negotiated to respond to particular needs in a given area. It contains negotiated concessions and commitments on market access for goods and services.

The Ministerial Conference approved Yemen's accession package on 4 December, after 13 years of negotiations. Yemen will become a WTO member 30 days after it notifies the WTO of its acceptance of the accession terms and conditions.

Yemeni Minister of Industry and Trade, H.E. Dr Saadaldeen Talib, said: "Sometimes, countries experience changing fortunes. But

the very essence of a country and the history and civilization of trade remain. Our country has been trading for at least five or six hundred years – in fact, since the Spice Route. As a member of the WTO, we aim to strengthen that role and to connect with everybody in the world. We want to share our history, our products and our culture, as we have done with Indonesia – the host of this Ministerial Conference – for so many centuries."

Director-General Roberto Azevêdo congratulated the Government of Yemen on its domestic reforms and said: "Yemen will be our 160th member – and our 35th LDC [least-developed country] member. It is a further, positive step towards universality."

During the accession process, WTO members have worked with Yemen to adapt its trade laws to WTO rules and train its government officials. WTO members are committed to continue to provide Yemen with required technical assistance in its post-accession process.





Yemen

Accession Working Party report

Number of paragraphs	287
Paragraphs with commitment language	28

Market access for goods

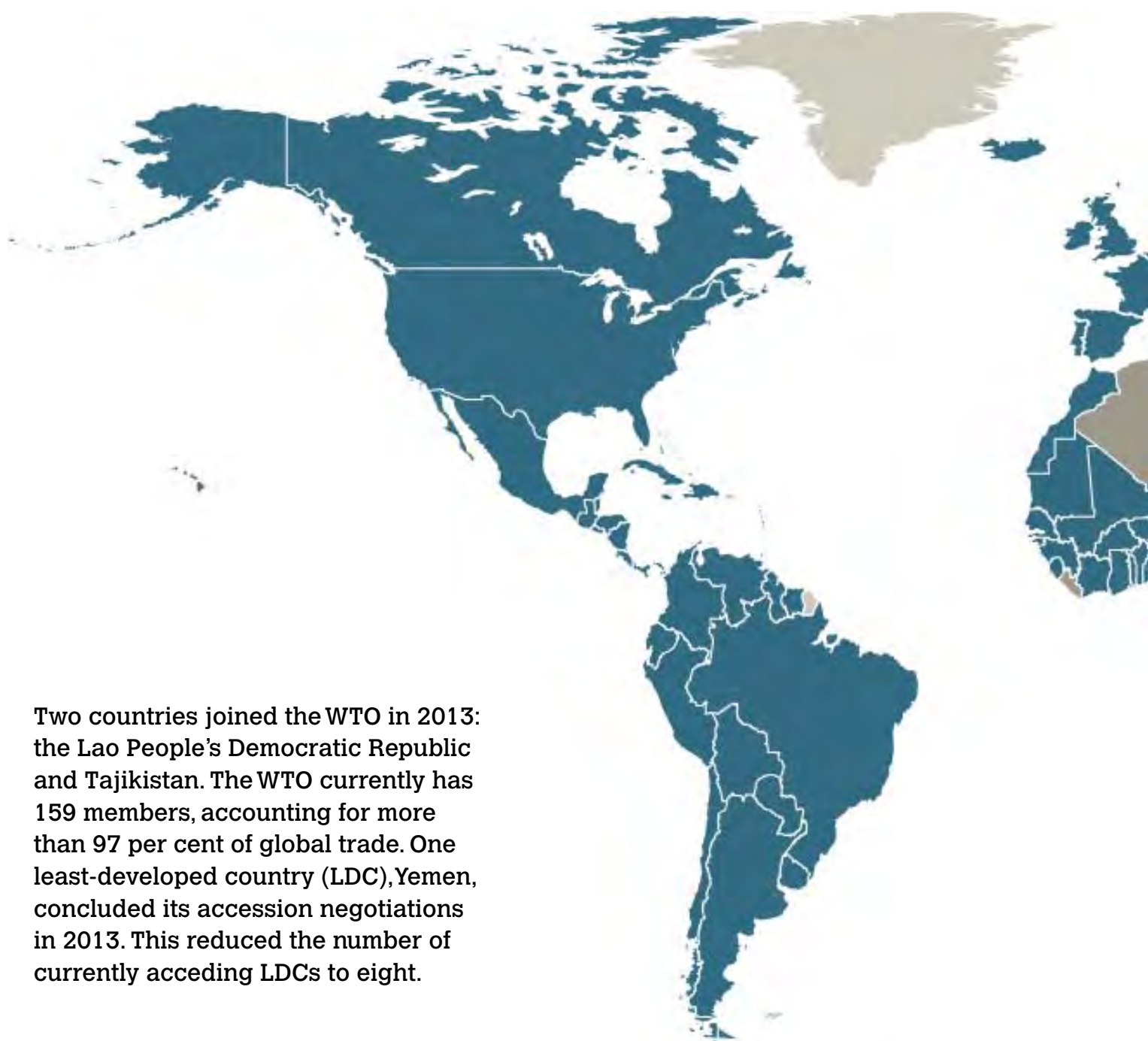
Average final bound tariff rates:	
All goods	21.1%
Agricultural goods	24.9%
Non-agricultural goods	20.5%

Market access for services

Sectors	11
Sub-sectors	78



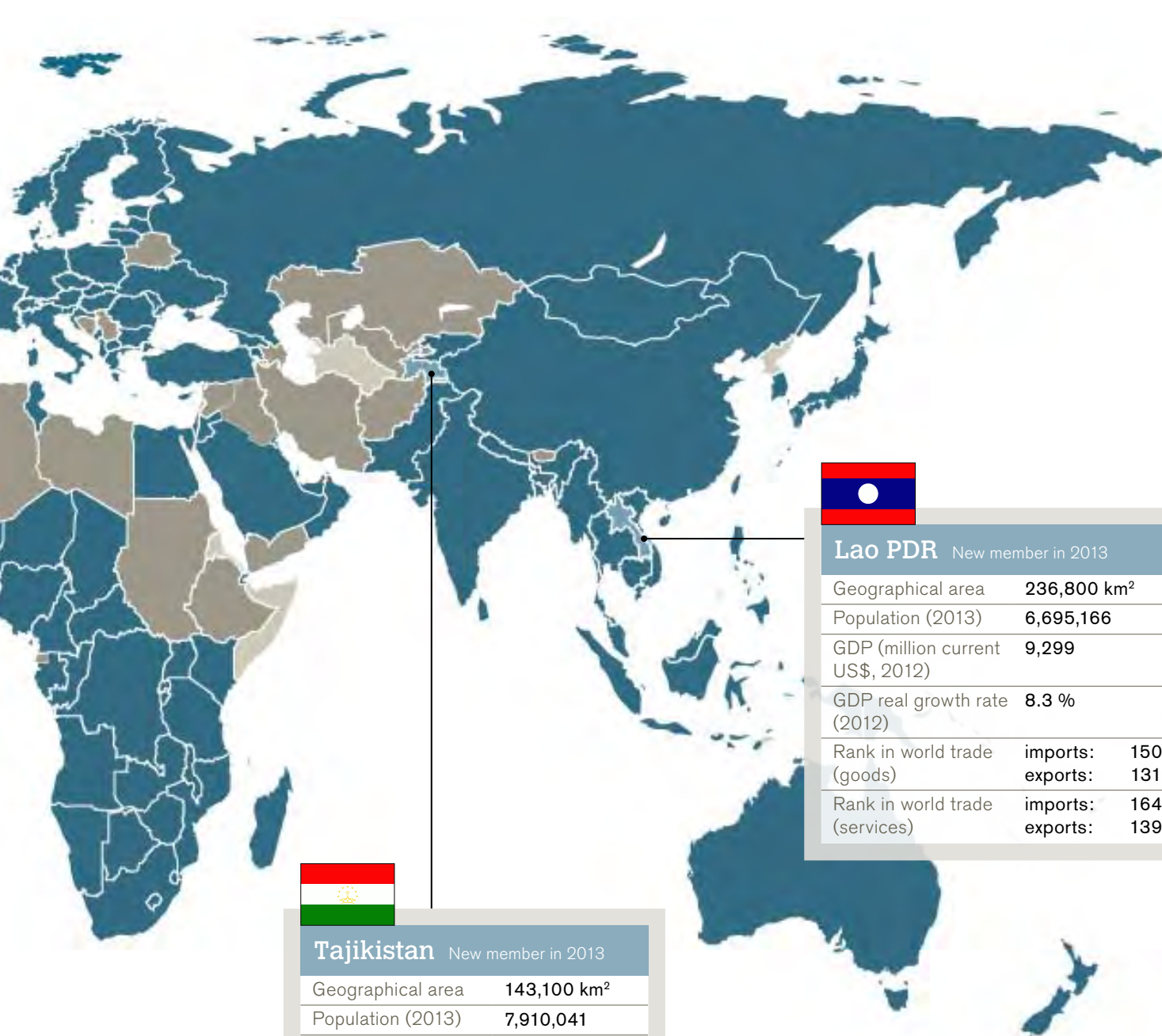
A global membership



Two countries joined the WTO in 2013: the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Tajikistan. The WTO currently has 159 members, accounting for more than 97 per cent of global trade. One least-developed country (LDC), Yemen, concluded its accession negotiations in 2013. This reduced the number of currently acceding LDCs to eight.

- WTO members
- New members in 2013
- Observers
- Non-members





Tajikistan New member in 2013

Geographical area	143,100 km²
Population (2013)	7,910,041
GDP (million current US\$, 2012)	6,987
GDP real growth rate (2012)	7.5 %
Rank in world trade (goods)	imports: 135 exports: 146
Rank in world trade (services)	imports: 134 exports: 132



Lao PDR New member in 2013

Geographical area	236,800 km²
Population (2013)	6,695,166
GDP (million current US\$, 2012)	9,299
GDP real growth rate (2012)	8.3 %
Rank in world trade (goods)	imports: 150 exports: 131
Rank in world trade (services)	imports: 164 exports: 139

Source: WTO and World Bank