



WORLD TRADE  
ORGANIZATION



# WTO Netherlands Trainee Programme

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Promoting trade for sustainable development



The WTO *Netherlands Trainee Programme* (NTP) supports trade officials from developing countries in gaining valuable experience in the economic and development aspects of trade policy, allowing them to participate in ongoing activities within the WTO Secretariat for a period of ten months. The objective is to familiarize participants with the work of the WTO and help them enhance their understanding of the multilateral trading system to better contribute to their country's economic and sustainable development.

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*“It is inspiring to see the dedication of the trainees to deepen their expertise on the job at the WTO, and to contribute with their enhanced understanding to promote trade as an engine for sustainable economic growth and job creation in their countries”.*

Marcel Vernooij, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN and WTO.

## Impact of the Netherlands Trainee Programme (NTP)

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In this brochure, alumni reflect on the impact the NTP has had on themselves and their countries, as well as on the importance of trade for sustainable development.



**H.E. Adamu Mohammed Abdulhamid**, NTP 2009,  
Nigeria's Ambassador  
to the WTO

*"When I was a capital-based official, I participated in various WTO Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Programmes, ranging from three months of Trade Policy Courses (TPC), Seminars/Workshops on Thematic Issues, and some Advance Courses on WTO and other Trade Related issues, but my participation in the Netherlands Trainee Programme (NTP) was the best. It exposed me to the practical aspects and theories of the Multilateral Trading System (MTS) and the technicality of the working system in the WTO Secretariat. In fact, the knowledge I gathered during the NTP Programme paved the way for me to become the head of the WTO Unit of the Ministry of Trade in Nigeria, being appointed the National Focal Person on various WTO matters, and subsequently being appointed as Nigeria's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the WTO."*

## The overall objectives of the NTP are:

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Contributing to an improved understanding of the functioning of the WTO and the multilateral trading system



Promoting sustainable capacity of trade officials and facilitating better-informed policy advice to government



Facilitating the implementation of commitments made within WTO, for example when it comes to notification requirements



**Choki Tshewang**,  
Bhutan, NTP 2022

*"The NTP provided the highest of learning opportunities. Getting to connect with WTO members and staff right at the center of the multilateral trading system is such a good opportunity for Bhutan to further its trade agenda. Being on top of trade policy issues is what every country wants."*



**Mamadou Sarr,**  
Senegal, NTP 2012

*"Due to its practical approach and immersion in WTO's day-to-day work, the NTP helped me to consolidate and deepen my knowledge. It was a golden opportunity to sharpen my skills and contribute to fulfilling my country's commitments at the WTO."*



**Brenda Bvalani,**  
Malawi, NTP 2021

*"I am now aware of the robust technical assistance available to Least Developed Countries and I have learned practical ways of using the flexibility provided by WTO agreements to allow developing countries to meet their commitments and enhance their participation in the multilateral trading system."*

Since 1998, the Netherlands has been supporting various WTO training programmes for trade officials from developing countries. In 2005, the NTP was launched. Over 200 women and men have since participated in the NTP and have gained valuable experience within the various divisions of the WTO Secretariat to which they were assigned.

## Concrete insights

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**Tso Teerra Hanz,**  
Cambodia, NTP 2022

*"With the Trade Policy Review of Cambodia coming up in 2024, working with the Trade Policy Review Division provides me with a better understanding of the review process, allowing me to properly inform my colleagues at home."*

*Trade benefits jobs and livelihoods not only through facilitating investment and increasing exports, but also through imports and having access to products and services that were previously not available."*



**Binita Lhadon Ghalley,**  
Bhutan, NTP 2020

*"The experience within the Development Division was very useful, given the relevance of this work to my country. This experience will enable me to contribute positively to my country's preparation for graduation from Least Developed Country Status and its integration into the global trading system."*



**Dilys Ankomah Bofo,**  
Ghana, NTP 2022

*"Working with the trade facilitation team of the WTO Secretariat, the NTP helps me to consolidate my knowledge on the Trade Facilitation Agreement and involve me in every step of the way on the implementation of the Agreement."*

## Cross-learning

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Trainees are encouraged to take part in the activities of other divisions or attend WTO committee meetings of their interest. Moreover, monthly meetings are organized in conjunction with the *French-Irish Mission Internship Programme* (FIMIP). During these monthly meetings, trainees make joint presentations on topics of mutual interest.

Presentations included topics "such as" Trade Facilitation, Regional Trade Agreements, and Trade and Gender. The monthly meetings allow trainees to engage with experts and peers alike on topics of interest.



**Esli Kim La Feuillie,**  
Saint Lucia, NTP 2021

*"My appointment with the WTO led me to appreciate the various trade related challenges that different countries and sub groupings are faced with within the WTO. For example, coming from a small island developing state, I would have never before taken note of the challenges faced by land-locked countries in navigating an extra layer of diplomatic and bureaucratic engagement through transit partners. Appreciation for their challenges and efforts only helps my country as we endeavor to overcome our own. It will also bring greater understanding to the positions of both land-locked developing countries and small island developing states during future deliberations."*



**Alice Nyambura Tumbo,**  
Kenya, NTP 2022

*"Being at the center of the multilateral trading system offers me the chance to learn not only from experts in the field but also from the other trainees that are part of the NTP and the way their countries further their trade agendas."*

*Sustainable trade is an engine towards economic growth, and enables countries to adapt to shocks, as became clear during the COVID-19 pandemic and for example now, to be more resilient to staggering food supplies."*



## Trade for women's economic empowerment

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**Marisa Pique,**  
Suriname, NTP 2020

*"Women's economic equality is good for business. Companies greatly benefit from increased employment and leadership opportunities for women, which is shown to increase organizational effectiveness and growth."*

*Greater empowerment of women enhances economic dynamism and leads to broader development outcomes. Encouraging women to participate in trade can benefit women and increase gender parity."*

*Governments have also an important role in the sense that trade barriers have to be removed. Moreover, businesses must include and empower women."*

## Multilateral trade policy – Clingendael

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An important component of the Netherlands Trainee Programme is a five-day study trip to the Netherlands Institute of International Relations: the Clingendael Academy. The aim of the study trip is to explore the links between international trade and development cooperation and provide insight into the interconnection between the public and private sector in developing a multilateral trade policy.



**Dilys Ankomah Boafo,**  
Ghana, NTP 2022

*"At Clingendael Institute, the presenters went a long way to make our learning experience spectacular—from their warm welcome and guidance on the site, to the lectures and site visits. This was a great time to sharpen our personal skills in the field of effective representation, negotiations in multilateral forums and also on the methods used by the Dutch private sector to protect their interests at the government level. It was such a privilege and honour to learn from them."*



NTP 2022 Trainees at Clingendael

## Trade for sustainable development

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**Esli Kim La Feuillie,**  
Saint Lucia, NTP 2021

*“Trade plays a critical role in promoting inclusive and sustainable development. Through trade, countries are able to focus economic activity into areas where there is already some strategic advantage. This encourages more efficient use of global resources and promotes increased opportunities for social and economic inclusion. Moreover, trade provides a gateway for the continued evolution of our development efforts in pursuit of sustainability.*

*Trade directly impacts all elements of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. It provides sources of foreign earnings, avenues for taxation leading to infrastructural and other development. Trade encourages job creation, supports food security objectives and it reduces the need for unsustainable drawdowns of natural resources to meet other needs.”*

## Benefits

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Feedback collected from former participants, their supervisors in capitals and permanent missions show that NTP capacity building has greatly benefited beneficiary countries. Beyond the sheer substantive knowledge, the skills acquired remained extremely valuable regardless of the topic at hand. Some respondents achieved a level of familiarity with WTO documents, databases and other sources of information that have proven extremely useful for their ongoing work.

Most of the alumni pursued their careers in public service after their traineeship. The increased knowledge of the WTO and the self-confidence gained to take on more and higher responsibilities in their institutions was a definite comparative advantage for them when it came to their future career progression.

Beyond taking leading roles in multilateral and bilateral negotiations, several alumni have also taken up positions at the WTO missions in Geneva.

## Applications

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NTP 2022 Trainees in Rotterdam

Following a letter of invitation sent by the WTO to eligible beneficiary countries, applications should be submitted electronically to the WTO Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC) as specified in the letter of invitation. The selection of the candidates will be conducted by the Secretariat, following the applications received. More information on the application and selection process can be found on the [WTO website](#).

