14 November 2025

TRADE POLICY REVIEW OF GUATEMALA
12 AND 14 NOVEMBER 2025

Concluding Remarks by the Chairperson,
Ambassador H.E. Ms Clare Kelly
(Permanent Representative of New Zealand)

1 This fourth Trade Policy Review of Guatemala has given us an opportunity to better understand Guatemala's trade policies and practices and to have significant updates since its last Review in 2016. I would like to thank Vice-Minister Marroquín Mora, Ambassador Sperisen-Yurt, and the rest of the delegation for their productive and dedicated engagement throughout this review process. Let me also thank our discussant Ambassador Castillo – your insightful contributions have greatly enriched our dialogue.

2 During the 2016-2025 period, Members recognized that despite a challenging global environment, Guatemala was able to maintain macroeconomic stability through prudent monetary policy and fiscal discipline, generating confidence among economic operators. Nonetheless, they reiterated that reducing both poverty and inequality are essential for inclusive development. This includes the need to reduce Guatemala's overdependence on remittances. Against this backdrop, Members strongly encouraged Guatemala to intensify its efforts towards deeper participation in trade and fuller integration into global value chains. In this context, while they recognized that trade in services had become increasingly important, they observed that traditional exports –and markets– continued to account for a significant share of total exports. In this regard, they encouraged Guatemala to consider participating in the Joint Initiative on Services Domestic Regulation to provide more confidence to foreign investors. They also encouraged Guatemala to continue its efforts toward long-term structural transformation; an effort that should be pursued concurrently with advancing gender-inclusive trade policies; investments in human capital and infrastructure; and further development of R&D.

3 Members recognized Guatemala's strong commitment to an open, fair, inclusive, and rules-based multilateral trading system. They acknowledged Guatemala's support to the WTO reform and a fully functioning dispute settlement mechanism, and its active role as the coordinator of the Group of Small and Vulnerable Economies. Guatemala's recent endorsement of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies was welcomed, along with its active participation in various joint initiatives and dialogues. Nonetheless, Members encouraged Guatemala to enhance the timeliness and completeness of its notifications.

4 Regarding border protection, Members congratulated Guatemala for maintaining a fairly open trade regime. At the same time, some Members expressed concerns regarding the use of non-tariff barriers. These concerns were mostly related to the SPS regime. In this context, they encouraged Guatemala to fully implement the principle of recognizing pest- or disease-free zones and to align its import requirements with international standards.

5 On trade facilitation, Members welcomed the implementation of measures to improve efficiency of border operations, in line with both Guatemala's commitments under the Trade Facilitation Agreement and its regional integration process. Nonetheless, they advised to accelerate its efforts to fully comply with its TFA commitments by implementing the single window for trade. They also noted that physical infrastructure would require improvements to reduce bottlenecks. Along these lines, Members acknowledged the potential for further development in Guatemala's digital infrastructure to promote financial inclusion, which could significantly enhance e-commerce, unlocking more opportunities to empower underserved communities, and ensuring that the benefits of digital trade reach all segments of society.

6 During this Review, Members drew particular attention to several key aspects of Guatemala's trade-related policies. Members applauded the enactment of Guatemala's first competition law, which would contribute to improve economic competitiveness and efficiency. On government procurement, Members congratulated Guatemala for becoming an observer to the Government Procurement Agreement and encouraged Guatemala to take further steps toward full membership to increase transparency and accessibility for foreign suppliers. Guatemala's initiatives to digitalize IPR procedures were positively received. Nonetheless, Members expressed concerns about the protection of geographical indications (GI), the absence of dedicated legislation for plant varieties, and the overall weak enforcement of IPRs, including in the digital environment.

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7 As agriculture remained Guatemala's economic backbone, Members acknowledged the challenges posed by climate change to Guatemala's agricultural sector – and the economy as a whole. Members encouraged Guatemala to adopt sustainable best practices and to reduce its carbon footprint by using renewable energy sources. Members noted that Guatemala implemented support measures mainly to address inequalities and foster inclusion of rural women. Members invited Guatemala to consider the use of GI to boost rural economies.

8 I am pleased that 34 delegations actively contributed to the discussion during this Review meeting. This reflects the value Members attach to understanding Guatemala's trade and trade-related policies, as does the number of written questions submitted to Guatemala beforehand. By now, Guatemala has answered all the advance written questions. Members look forward to receiving replies to the follow-up questions, if any, within one month.

8.1. In closing, I would like to thank Guatemala for its active engagement during this Review and all other delegations for ensuring its success.

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