

Spotlight:

Global Review of Aid for Trade 2017

The WTO hosted the sixth Aid for Trade Global Review on “Promoting Trade, Inclusiveness and Connectivity for Sustainable Development”. Some 1,500 trade and development professionals attended the 11-13 July conference, which underlined the important part played by trade – and the key role of Aid for Trade – in delivering growth, reducing poverty and achieving the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.



Among the topics debated was the importance of empowering women by removing barriers to their participation in global trade.

Aja Fatoumatta Jallow Tambajang, Vice President of the Gambia, opened the Global Review by outlining how building trade capacity, improving competitiveness and strengthening public-private partnership is a high priority for the Gambia. Her emphasis on the need to promote trade inclusiveness for sustainable development was echoed by many of the more than 40 ministers, vice-ministers and heads of international organizations who attended.

The biennial event provides a platform for high-level discussions on the Aid for Trade initiative, which aims to develop the trading capacity of developing countries and least-developed countries (LDCs – see page 148). A total of 55 sessions were held over the three days, reflecting the broad range of topics that the initiative and its work programme address. Among the topics debated by the more than 1,500 participants was the importance of empowering women by removing barriers to their participation in global trade (see page 108).

The 2016-17 Aid for Trade work programme focuses on helping developing countries connect to export markets, following up on the key message of the Fifth Global Review that high trade costs create substantial obstacles to trade.

Sessions highlighted successful examples of trade facilitation reforms. A live video link was made with the Busia one-stop border post between Kenya and Uganda, where customs procedures that previously took up to 18 days now take a matter of hours. A case study competition underlined the importance of trade facilitation, with joint prize winners announced from Zambia and Jamaica for their success in, respectively, reducing border goods inspections and promoting public-private cooperation in improving competitiveness.

The review also showcased the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development through sessions highlighting the important economic contribution made by this sector to LDC trade.





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DG Azevêdo

Promoting connectivity

At the opening plenary, Mukhisa Kituyi, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Secretary-General, highlighted the constraints faced by developing countries and LDCs in participating in trade, particularly online. Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, noted that trade facilitation and offline infrastructure for trade – roads, ports and bridges – “are ever more important in the digital world.”

Director-General Roberto Azevêdo said: “Many factors inhibit connectivity and inclusiveness – whether it’s poor infrastructure, high trading costs, or gender discrimination ... Work to bring down these barriers can go a long way to connect more people and improve more lives.” Connectivity is the focus

of the *Aid for Trade at a Glance* publication, launched jointly at the review by the OECD and the WTO (see page 181).

Trade’s benefits and efforts to enhance connectivity must also reach women, International Trade Centre Executive Director Arancha González told the opening session. “Despite the proliferation of mobile phones, there are still far too many, especially women, who are unconnected to the information grid,” she said.

Sweden’s Minister for European Union Affairs and Trade, Ann Linde, underlined the importance of bridging the digital divide for women. “Gender equality doesn’t only improve women’s lives, it’s fundamental for economic growth and development,” she told a high-level plenary on gender and trade.



Enhanced Integrated Framework

- **The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) accelerated its roll-out of projects, approving 23 new projects to help least-developed countries (LDCs) use trade as a tool for growth.**
- **Pledges to phase two of the EIF programme stand at US\$ 115 million.**
- **The EIF had invested in 176 projects by the end of 2017, with over US\$ 222 million committed to supporting 51 of the poorest countries in the world.**

Background on the Enhanced Integrated Framework

The EIF is the only global Aid for Trade programme dedicated exclusively to addressing the trade capacity needs of LDCs. It is supported by a multi-donor trust fund and provides financial and technical support to build trade capacity in LDCs to help them use trade as a tool for economic growth and poverty reduction. The EIF is a partnership of LDCs, donors and partner agencies, including the WTO, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the UN Development Programme, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the International Trade Centre, the UN World Tourism Organization and the UN Industrial Development Organization. The WTO houses the EIF.

Twenty-three new EIF projects were approved in 2017 to help LDCs develop their trading capacity and to provide policy framework support. New projects were launched in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Haiti, Mauritania, Nepal, Samoa, South Sudan, Solomon Islands, Uganda and Vanuatu.

By the end of 2017, the EIF had invested in 176 projects, with over US\$ 222 million committed to supporting 51 of the world's poorest countries across Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Pacific. This compares with 142 projects and commitments worth US\$ 202 million at the end of 2016.

So far, US\$ 115 million has been secured for the second phase of the EIF, which runs from 2016 to 2022, and efforts will continue to meet the target of at least US\$ 274 million. One of the aims of the EIF has been to help women benefit more directly from trade opportunities. To date, EIF projects have ensured that 35,000 women can earn a regular income through trade.

In 2017, the European Union pledged EUR 10 million to the EIF while the United Kingdom agreed to provide US\$ 21 million. The EIF also received contributions from Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia and Sweden. Strategic partnerships

were established with the Islamic Development Bank Group and with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

EIF Executive Director Ratnakar Adhikari said the commitments will help LDCs ready themselves for paradigm shifts in the global economy, including the growing trend in e-commerce. The EIF's success so far "does not mean that the work is done. Rather, it is a reminder of how important this work is – and how much more focus it deserves".

Examples of EIF projects

Equatorial Guinea is undertaking a diagnostic trade integration study as it seeks to move away from dependence on oil. These studies help countries identify and address constraints to trade, economic growth and sustainable development.

Likewise, Vanuatu is updating its National Trade Policy Framework with support from the EIF. The EIF is also assisting South Sudan in producing its first national trade policy and is supporting the country's WTO accession process. In addition, the EIF is financing the preparation of e-trade readiness assessments in Liberia, Nepal, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

EIF capacity-building projects are targeting the breakthrough of LDC exports into new markets, the adoption of new technologies and increases in LDCs' level of production and national



The EIF has invested over US\$ 222 million to support 51 of the world's poorest countries.

incomes. New projects have been approved in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Djibouti and Guinea to finance the development of pharmaceutical products, electronic commerce, tourism and quality standards.

Results from the investments so far include the doubling of processed mango exports from Burkina Faso and a threefold increase in rice exports from Cambodia.

In Malawi, an EIF project is generating almost US\$ 800,000 in income for 3,500 smallholder farmers. Through better farming practices, farmers are able to receive double the market price for their products and increase their exports by working collectively. Increased incomes are helping to support improvements to the education of children and the construction of houses and small businesses.

An EIF project has supported over 1,600 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Uganda, bringing almost 500 small businesses into the formal sector and leading to the registration of over 700 production cooperatives.

Collaboration and partnerships

The EIF has partnered with the International Trade Centre to support better mainstreaming of environmental

objectives into trade projects. Investments in honey production in Zambia, for example, are helping to preserve the biodiversity of the country's forests.

In 2017, the EIF joined forces with FAO to bring together the trade and agriculture ministries from four African countries to give additional impetus to the mainstreaming of trade into agricultural development policies. The initial results of this initiative were showcased at the Global Review of Aid for Trade in July.

The EIF published a joint study with the Standards and Trade Development Facility on how sanitary and phytosanitary issues are addressed in trade diagnostic studies. In addition, the EIF works regularly with WTO divisions in following up on members' trade policy reviews and in providing training activities and other support. The EIF has also worked to ensure there is a strong LDC voice in the new Global Trade Professionals Alliance, which seeks to build networks of trade professionals and develop their skills, and has strengthened cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank to promote exports of LDCs.

During 2017, the EIF launched "Trade for Development News" (<http://trade4devnews.enhancedif.org>), to raise awareness of Aid for Trade projects across the LDCs.



Standards and Trade Development Facility

- **In 2017, the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) committed US\$ 4.2 million to help developing countries meet international standards for food safety, plant and animal health and access global markets.**
- **Together with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the STDF began a project aimed at helping developing countries send and receive phytosanitary certificates electronically.**
- **Since 2004, over US\$ 43 million has been provided through STDF funding and other mobilized resources to support projects in least-developed and other low-income countries.**

Background on the Standards and Trade Development Facility

The STDF is a global partnership that helps developing countries build their sanitary and phytosanitary capacity and their ability to gain and maintain market access. The STDF contributes to broader sustainable development goals, such as enhanced economic growth, poverty reduction, food security and environmental protection. Established by the WTO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Organisation for Animal Health, the World Bank Group and the World Health Organization, the STDF is financed by voluntary contributions. The WTO houses the Secretariat and manages the STDF trust fund.

Improving trading capacity in developing countries

Nine project grants and seven project preparation grants (PPGs) were approved by the STDF in 2017, totalling US\$ 4.2 million.

These projects and PPGs aim to improve the capacity of the public and private sectors in developing countries to meet international standards for food safety, plant and animal health and to access international markets. They include projects to facilitate livestock exports from Ethiopia, to strengthen Zambia's capacity to export plant-based products, and to mainstream sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) investments in policy and planning frameworks in selected countries of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The Zambia and COMESA projects will benefit from co-financing provided by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (see page 156).

New PPGs include the preparation of a feasibility study to evaluate the

economic and technical viability for value addition in Sri Lanka's fruit and vegetable sector and the development of a project proposal to reduce aflatoxin contamination in maize in Burkina Faso.

Since 2004, the STDF has provided US\$ 44.9 million for projects aimed at building the SPS capacity of producers, traders and governments in developing countries. STDF funding has mobilized US\$ 25.3 million in additional resources. STDF project work mostly benefits countries in Africa, followed by Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean (see Figure 3).

Several "results stories" were disseminated in 2017, highlighting how STDF projects have contributed to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and building public-private partnerships. New videos show how the STDF has helped African countries comply with the international wood packaging standard for exports and how the STDF has helped improve aquaculture practices for shrimp farmers in Bangladesh.



Figure 3: Location of STDF projects and project preparation grants (number), 2004-17

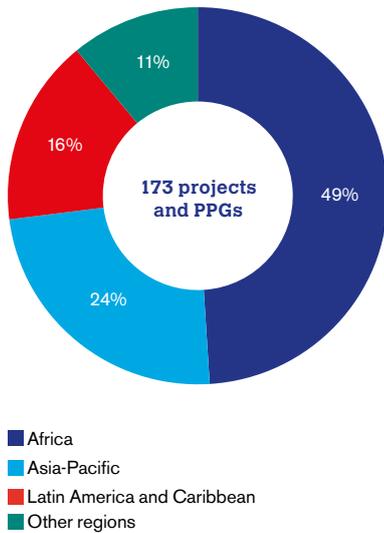
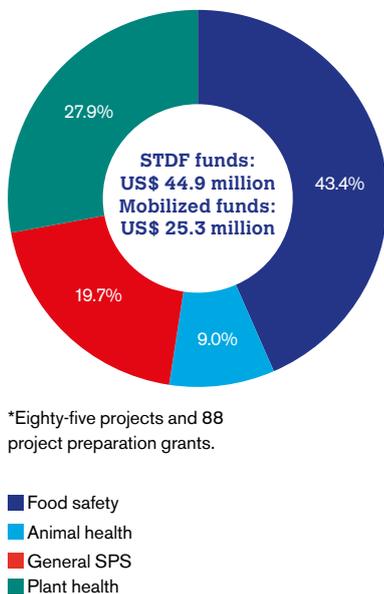


Figure 4: Coverage of STDF projects and project preparation grants (number), 2004-2017 (US\$ millions)*



*Eighty-five projects and 88 project preparation grants.

Electronic certificates

In 2017, a new STDF project (e-Phyto), implemented by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, started to help developing countries send and receive phytosanitary certificates electronically. The e-Phyto tool is setting up a harmonized system, providing an alternative to paper-based phytosanitary certificates and eliminating the need to negotiate electronic exchange agreements bilaterally.

Through enhanced security and traceability, e-Phyto will also reduce the exchange of fraudulent plant health information in international trade. Another new STDF project will look into the use of electronic certification for trade in animal and animal products.

SPS information exchange and awareness-raising

In March 2017, the STDF co-organized with Canada and France a session at the WTO which explained how STDF work has developed SPS capacity for cocoa producers and small-scale fish farmers in Francophone Africa. In July 2017, the STDF held a high-level session at the 2017 Aid for Trade Global Review (see page 154) on electronic certification, new technologies and supply-chain traceability and trade facilitation/single windows.

In November, findings from two PPGs on controlling foot and mouth disease in Tanzania and Zimbabwe were presented on the sidelines of the WTO's SPS

Committee. Challenges in setting up disease-free zones in developing countries and the need for more resources were highlighted.

In 2017, the STDF Secretariat shared experiences and lessons from the STDF's work at over 50 conferences and SPS capacity-building workshops worldwide. Presentations were given on electronic SPS certification, implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (see page 94) in relation to its SPS compliance, prioritizing SPS investments for market access and the impact of STDF work on poverty reduction, women's economic empowerment, food security and other cross-cutting issues.

New briefing notes showcasing synergies across STDF project and thematic work were disseminated. Topics addressed were public-private partnerships for SPS capacity building, electronic SPS certification and the use of SPS capacity evaluation tools developed by STDF partners in developing countries.

The STDF also conducted a survey on Good Regulatory Practice to identify opportunities to improve the development and implementation of SPS measures in developing countries. With further analysis, the findings will contribute to ongoing discussions on how to improve the development and implementation of SPS measures to ensure health protection and facilitate trade.



Technical cooperation and training

- **The WTO undertook 350 technical assistance activities in 2017, including e-learning, global and regional training courses, academic programmes and national and regional workshops.**
- **Least-developed countries (LDCs) participated in 61 per cent of all technical assistance activities.**
- **DG Azevêdo said recommendations in external evaluators' report will feed into the next technical assistance plan.**

Background on technical cooperation and training

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 national and regional level. The technical assistance programmes help WTO members better understand their rights and obligations in the multilateral trading system. This strengthens countries' capacity to benefit from participation in the system.

18,500

About 18,500 participants benefited from WTO training aimed at improving understanding of WTO agreements.

The WTO Secretariat undertook approximately 350 technical assistance activities in 2017 to help government officials gain a better understanding of WTO rules and the multilateral trading system. Approximately 18,500 participants benefited, a number almost unchanged from 2016.

Advanced courses for specialists were organized on various subjects, including trade-related intellectual property rights, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, agriculture, import licensing, dispute settlement, regional trade agreements and trade in services. Three Geneva-based advanced trade policy courses, each one lasting eight weeks, were held in 2017 for generalists. Courses for generalists and specialists were also offered at the introductory and intermediate levels, including in areas of specific interest to LDCs. Generalists are government officials, including Geneva delegates, who require a broad knowledge of many WTO subjects.

The WTO also organized regional activities. Eight-week regional trade policy courses were held for generalists in five regions: French-speaking Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Arab and Middle East countries. Specialist courses, sometimes involving partner organizations, included: a workshop on trade negotiations skills for English-speaking African countries;

preparatory workshops for the 11th Ministerial Conference for Asia-Pacific countries and for French-speaking African countries; a regional workshop for trade statisticians from Arab countries, jointly organized with the Arab Monetary Fund; a regional workshop on government procurement for Latin American countries; and a regional workshop on trade policy modelling for Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The WTO's training activities are mostly based on a biennial technical assistance and training plan approved by the Committee on Trade and Development. The 2016-17 plan followed a "results-based management" approach, measuring results to ensure that training is delivered in the most effective way. Courses are undertaken as part of a progressive learning strategy so that participants benefit from a step-by-step approach to improving their awareness of trade issues. Guidelines and benchmarks help to maintain a high standard (see below) of content for all training, consistent teaching methods and regular evaluation of all technical assistance activities delivered by the WTO.

The WTO continued to involve international and regional partners in technical assistance activities to ensure that a regional perspective was



Training activities held in Geneva are aimed at participants from all regions.



included in the design of the training programmes. Eighteen per cent of activities were for the benefit of Asia and the Pacific, 17 per cent for African countries, 11 per cent for Latin America, 9 per cent for Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 5 per cent for Arab and Middle East countries, and 2 per cent for the Caribbean (see Table 1). The remaining 39 per cent were “global” activities, mostly held in Geneva, aimed at participants from all regions. In line with the demand-driven approach, approximately 32 per cent of all activities were delivered at the national level in countries where a specific need was identified.

The number of face-to-face training activities conducted by the WTO was relatively stable in 2017 in comparison with 2016, and the WTO Secretariat continued to implement a targeted approach to meet members’ needs. LDCs were invited to approximately 60 per cent of all technical assistance activities, maintaining a constant trend over the last two years. Nearly half of the participants accessed their training through e-learning resources on the WTO’s online platform.

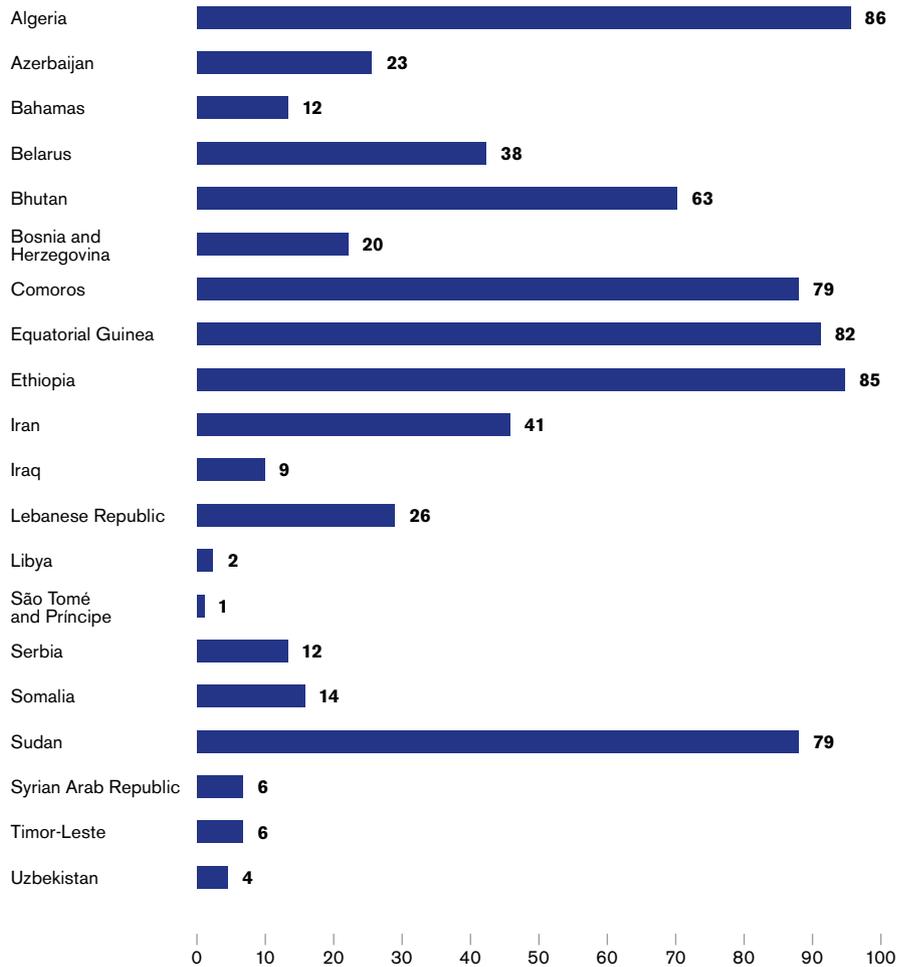
Table 1: Technical assistance activities by region in 2017*

Region	National		Regional		Global**		Other		Total	
Africa	30	30%	13	22%	–	0%	10	26%	53	17%
Asia Pacific	26	26%	22	37%	–	0%	7	18%	55	18%
Caribbean	3	3%	2	3%	–	0%	–	0%	5	2%
Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia	13	13%	9	15%	–	0%	5	13%	27	9%
Global	–	0%	–	0%	114	100%	9	23%	123	39%
Latin America	21	21%	8	14%	–	0%	6	15%	35	11%
Middle East	8	8%	5	8%	–	0%	2	5%	15	5%
Total	101	100%	59	100%	114	100%	39	100%	313	100%

* Totals may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

** Activities under the “global” category are not targeted at a specific region but include activities such as Geneva-based courses, distance learning, internship programmes and an advisory role on legal issues.

Figure 5: Participants in WTO technical assistance activities from countries seeking to join the WTO in 2017



Technical assistance was strengthened for countries seeking to join the WTO.

Participation levels

Approximately 18,500 participants undertook technical assistance activities in 2017, little changed from the previous year. In 2017, 11,491 participants from 146 countries enrolled for e-learning courses, with Africa providing 34 per cent of participants, followed by Asia and the Pacific with 31 per cent, Latin America with 23 per cent, Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia with 6 per cent, the Caribbean with 4 per cent and the Arab and Middle East region with 2 per cent. Some 61 per cent of participants undertook the online course in English, 21 per cent in Spanish and 18 per cent in French.

Women represented 45 per cent of participants for all WTO technical assistance activities in 2017, virtually the same as in 2016. Roughly 62 per cent of participants undertook technical

assistance in English, 20 per cent in Spanish and 15 per cent in French.

Technical assistance was strengthened for countries seeking to join the WTO (see page 39 and Figure 5 above), with government officials invited to participate in approximately 140 technical assistance events.

Internship programmes

WTO internship programmes offer government officials hands-on experience in WTO activities. The Netherlands Trainee Programme, the French and Irish Missions Internship Programme, the Regional Coordinator Internship Programme and the Accession Internship Programme give priority to applicants from Africa and LDCs, to small, vulnerable economies, and to countries in the process of joining the WTO.



In 2017, the majority of officials completing the WTO internship programmes were from LDCs and other low-income countries in Africa and the Asia and Pacific regions. Fifteen candidates completed the French and Irish Missions Internship Programme, 16 candidates completed the Netherlands Trainee Programme, five candidates completed the Regional Coordinator Internship Programme and seven the Accession Internship Programme.

Young Professionals Programme

The Young Professionals Programme was launched by DG Azevêdo in 2016 to increase the representation of professionals from nationalities under-represented at the WTO, with the aim of improving their chances of being recruited by the WTO and/or other regional and international organizations.

Five young professionals – two from the Dominican Republic and one each from Chile, Chinese Taipei and Montenegro – became the first participants in the programme in January 2017 (see page 193). Following the success of the programme, the WTO expanded the intake to 15 participants in 2018. The intake was from Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Cameroon, El Salvador, Georgia, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Mongolia, Panama, Paraguay, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Thailand and Togo. The young professionals remain at the WTO for one year.

Five young professionals became the first participants in the Young Professionals Programme in 2017.



Financing technical assistance

The bulk of the technical assistance programme is financed by the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund, which receives voluntary contributions from WTO members. The financial position of the fund remains fairly strong due to the balance carried forward from 2016 and funds received for 2017. The Fund received CHF 6.2 million for 2017, contributed by 12 WTO members, a decline of 10 per cent from the CHF 6.9 million received in 2016.

Other funding sources include the WTO's regular budget for Geneva based courses and national technical assistance activities – approximately CHF 4.5 million for 2017 – and contributions from other trust funds (such as the French and Irish Missions Internship Programme, the Netherlands Trainee Programme and the China Programme), which totalled CHF 2.2 million for 2017.

External evaluation of WTO technical assistance

The Committee on Trade and Development discussed an external evaluation of the WTO's training activities at a meeting in January 2017. The report, issued in October 2016, notes the success of the training programme in helping developing countries improve their capacity to trade and makes recommendations on how to further improve the programme by making it even more transparent, targeted and accountable.

"When the WTO was created over two decades ago, technical assistance was not a major part of our work. Fast-forward to today and it constitutes one of the biggest outputs of the organization. It has become, unquestionably, a central element of the WTO's activities. This is a real shift in the culture of the organization and it is a priority for me," DG Azevêdo told the Committee. He stressed that the independent evaluators' recommendations will feed into the next technical assistance plan.

