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The WTO maintains regular dialogue with the business community, non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, other international organizations, the media and the general public to enhance cooperation and raise awareness of trade issues.
Business backs reform of the global trading system

At a high-level session at the WTO Public Forum (see page 150) in October, the ICC and the B20, the business arm of the G20 economies, spelled out their expectations for an outcome at MC12. Business representatives also put forward ideas on changes they would like to see to the functioning of the WTO. The session was attended by DG Azevêdo, who welcomed the business community’s support for strengthening the trading system.

The WTO’s 2019 Public Forum drew more than 350 business representatives — almost 50 per cent more than in 2018 — to its debates and meetings on the theme of “Trading Forward: Adapting to a Changing World”. The business community organized 25 sessions during the four-day event, covering topics such as sustainability, e-commerce, services, millennials’ expectations from trade, digitalization and the future trade agenda.

ICC Secretary General John Denton presented a paper entitled: “Reforming the multilateral trading system – The outcomes we want for people and planet”, with a set of recommendations on enhancing the functioning of the WTO. These include strengthening WTO governance and accountability, updating the existing WTO rulebook and accelerating new rule-making. He also invited business representatives to express their views in the online “Trade Dialogue”, a digitally enabled platform, launched by the ICC in May 2019 to facilitate debate on an achievable outcome for MC12.

Other contact with businesses

Throughout the year, WTO officials 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 (see page 34), trade tensions and the Appellate Body impasse (see page 122).

In a speech at the launch of the Association of Bilateral Chambers of Commerce on 29 October 2019 at the WTO, DG Azevêdo highlighted the role of chambers of commerce in bringing the voice of businesses to the trade debate. The DG also attended the centenary summit of the ICC in Paris on 28 May and a meeting organized in Paris by the Mouvement des Entreprises de France and the ICC, also in May.
On 6 May, the WTO facilitated the first “Trade Dialogue” with consumer organizations, bringing together consumer groups and private sector representatives.

Consumer groups expressed support for multilateral trade.

Consumers focused on the challenges and opportunities provided by e-commerce and how the WTO can help address consumers’ concerns.

Background on Trade Dialogues

The “Trade Dialogues” initiative was launched in 2016 to bring together a wide range of stakeholders, including consumer bodies, business and academics, to discuss trade concerns. Events were held at the WTO in May 2016, June 2018 and May 2019. Each of these meetings identified pressing issues and resulted in recommendations that were presented to WTO members.

The Trade Dialogue initiative aims to bring together a wide range of stakeholders, including consumer bodies, business and academics, to discuss trade concerns. The first dialogue was held in 2016.

At the opening session, the consumer organizations sent a strong message of support for the WTO and the multilateral trading system. They stressed the importance of ensuring consumers’ concerns are taken into account in trade negotiations and policy-making. Participants expressed interest in the ongoing work at the WTO, in particular in the negotiations on fisheries and agriculture.

“Consumers are central to the success of trade and it is in everyone’s interests that their voices are heard in the development of trade rules … These trade dialogues are a good start towards an open process that will allow consumer advocates to engage with negotiators and ensure the consumer perspective is heard,” Consumers International Director-General Helena Leurent told the opening session.

In his address, DG Azevêdo said: “We are very conscious of the duty we have to consumers, and the need to ensure that trade functions in a way that is good for all. The voices of consumers must, therefore, be heard in the trade debate – especially at this crucial moment where trade tensions are rising, and governments are discussing potential reforms to the trading system.”

The opening session was followed by a discussion on the work of the WTO on e-commerce, led by Helena Leurent. Consumer groups noted that there will be more than 2 billion online consumers by 2021. The ongoing discussions on e-commerce at the WTO (see page 59) are a window of opportunity to put policies in place that make the world fair, safe and sustainable for them, participants said.

At the final session, also attended by WTO members, the consumer organizations presented their priorities for e-commerce and their recommendations for how these should be addressed at the WTO. Among them is the need for transparency in the negotiations, with consumer groups asking to be informed about proposals and included in consultations with their respective governments to ensure their interests are represented. In addition to reducing prices and enhancing choice, consumer groups would also like the e-commerce negotiations to address steps to strengthen consumer protection.
Relations with non-governmental organizations

- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) arranged 42 sessions at the 2019 Public Forum, twice as many as in 2018. NGOs were the third-largest group at the Forum after business and academia.

- NGOs were kept informed of WTO work through regular WTO Secretariat briefings and workshops.

Background on relations with NGOs

The WTO maintains regular dialogue with civil society organizations to enhance cooperation and increase their awareness of WTO activities and the multilateral trading system. Maintaining and strengthening the relationship with civil society remains important for increasing transparency and increasing public awareness of the work of the WTO.

In 2019, NGOs attended regular WTO Secretariat briefings on trade negotiations and other WTO work. Six briefings were held following meetings of the Trade Negotiations Committee and the General Council. In 2019, 18 local NGOs (61 individuals) had WTO-NGO badges, which facilitate participation in events at the WTO that are public or dedicated to NGOs, such as WTO Secretariat briefings.

In partnership with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), the WTO held a three-day regional dialogue in Johannesburg, South Africa, in October for civil society and the media. The 54 participants discussed the WTO’s scope, functions and work, with specific focus on issues relevant to Africa, including the African Continental Free Trade Area, agriculture, the digital economy and the joint initiatives (see page 48).

NGOs could also attend seven dispute hearings at the WTO related to six cases, including three on US steel and aluminium products, brought individually by Switzerland, Norway and the European Union, and another involving the European Community and certain member states in a compliance complaint over large civil aircraft brought by the United States.

At the 2019 Public Forum, NGOs organized 42 sessions (over double the number in 2018) and accounted for 12 per cent of over 2,500 participants – the third-largest group after business and academia (see page 150).
Contact with parliamentarians

- A parliamentary session was held during the Public Forum on the role of parliamentarians in digital trade.
- The 10th edition of the Asia Pacific Regional Parliamentary meeting took place in Singapore, with a message from DG Azevêdo.

Background on contact with parliamentarians
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.

The steering committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on WTO matters met in March in Brussels and October in Geneva during the WTO Public Forum (see page 150). Deputy Director-General Yi Xiaozhun, senior WTO staff and Geneva-based ambassadors briefed legislators on important issues facing the multilateral trading system. The IPU is the international organization of parliaments.

A parliamentary session was held during the Public Forum on “What role for parliamentarians in digital trade?”. Participants included the Speaker of the Parliament of Zimbabwe, Jacob F. Mudenda, the Speaker of the Parliament of Namibia, Margaret Mensah-Williams, members of the European Parliament and the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, Isabelle Durant.

Regional workshops and meetings
The 10th edition of the Asia Pacific regional parliamentary meeting took place in Singapore. In a videoed message to the meeting, DG Azevêdo flagged the importance of the joint work of regional parliamentarians in challenging times. The Speaker of the Singapore Parliament, Tan Chuan-Jin, said: “Given the complex interdependence of economies around the world, abuse and neglect of the multilateral trading system will benefit few.”

During the year, DG Azevêdo also spoke at the French Assemblée Nationale and the Mexican Senate about challenges facing the WTO. In his address in Paris in May, DG Azevêdo stressed the importance of maintaining and strengthening the multilateral trading system so that it can continue to respond effectively to the challenges of today’s world.

He told the parliamentarians that they play a particularly important role in the WTO’s work “through your advocacy on trade issues, through debating and ratifying WTO agreements, and through the pressure that you apply to your governments to engage on the key issues”. Parliamentarians also “help connect the WTO as an organization to your constituents – to the people you represent. This is a very important link. It helps to ensure inclusivity in the global trading system, so that we can ensure that the benefits of trade reach everyone,” he said.

The WTO organized two regional workshops for parliamentarians: in Vienna (co-organized with the Joint Vienna Institute) and at the parliamentary meeting in Singapore. The WTO participated in the parliamentary assemblies of the IPU in Geneva and of the parliamentary assembly of the Mediterranean in Belgrade and Milan.

In an address to the French National Assembly in Paris in May 2019, DG Azevêdo highlighted the important role of the multilateral trading system in supporting growth and development.
Spotlight: Public Forum 2019

Under the theme “Trading Forward: Adapting to a Changing World”, the 2019 Public Forum was the largest ever in terms of sessions held and running time. Taking place over four days, it attracted over 2,500 participants from 126 countries and featured 140 sessions. High-level sessions examined how countries, businesses and traders can best adapt to change, including threats to the environment, and discussed the increasing importance of services in global trade. A high-level panel of millennials and Generation Z looked at what they expect from global trade.

Keynote speakers at the opening plenary addressed the importance of a rules-based multilateral trading system in uncertain times and how to ensure that global trading rules work in sync with environmental policies to ensure that trade contributes positively to sustainable development.

The enthusiastic response to the Public Forum, the WTO’s largest public outreach event, was “reassuring,” DG Azevêdo told the plenary. “It means we’re asking the right questions – and that we are working together to find answers.”

Adapting to a changing environment

DG Azevêdo stressed the need for all participants in global trade – including the WTO – to recognize and adapt to a trading environment that is undergoing rapid technological change. “We need to change because technology advances, more services become tradeable, and rising generations join the workforce,” he declared.

New technologies have the potential to expand human capabilities and enable inclusive prosperity, said DG Azevêdo, or they could fuel unemployment, inequality and years of instability and unrest. “The future we get will be shaped by the policies we choose, at the domestic and international levels.”

Agreement for a sustainable future

Another high-level panel called for the urgent need to end harmful fisheries subsidies (see page 44). Sir David Attenborough, renowned conservationist, voiced his support, noting via video message that a WTO agreement is vital for the sustainable future of the oceans.

Launch of the World Trade Report

The 2019 edition of the WTO’s World Trade Report (see pages 158 and 162) was launched at the Forum and highlighted the increasing and dynamic role of services in international trade and the need for cooperation to support this expansion. The Forum also debated how statistics can better capture trends in trade.

Youth

Thirty-one sessions were held under the sub-theme “The Next Generation – What do Millennials & Gen Z Want to See from Global Trade”. A high-level panel of millennials and Generation Z, who will soon account for over half of the world’s population, brought together young entrepreneurs to discuss with DG Azevêdo how global trade can reflect youth values and address the challenges facing young people.
In the panellists’ view, the current paradigm has to change and institutions and governments need new ideas that respond to new ways of doing business. “The theme of the conference is how we need to adapt to the trading environment of 2030, 2040 and 2050, and the millennials and Generation Z are the ones who are going to be trading,” DG Azevêdo told the high-level session.

Of the 14 exhibitors at the Forum, several were millennials showcasing how they are using new technologies to address challenges including those related to the environment, education and poverty. A photo exhibition, “Youth Voices on Trade”, highlighted the hopes and expectations of youth around the world for the future of global trade. The photos were made available to a wider audience through a dedicated webpage on the WTO website.

A high-level youth panel looked at their expectations for world trade.

A Meet the Author session at the Public Forum.
Cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations

- G20 leaders recognized the contribution of the multilateral trading system to economic growth and called for reform to improve its functioning.
- DG Azevêdo attended the G20 and G7 summits and took part in events organized by the UN, the World Bank, the IMF, the OECD and others.
- The WTO worked closely with other international organizations to promote the Sustainable Development Goals and to assist developing countries in maximizing the benefits of trade.
- UN Secretary-General António Guterres addressed the WTO General Council in May, underscoring the importance of revitalizing multilateral trade cooperation.

Background on cooperation with other international organizations

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.

DG Azevêdo participated in a G20 meeting in Osaka, Japan, in June 2019.

G7
In August, DG Azevêdo attended a summit of leaders of the G7 group of industrialized countries in Biarritz, France, together with the heads of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). At a session on “Fighting Inequalities”, the DG said that the trading system could help improve inclusiveness and promote a wider distribution of the benefits of trade and the modern economy. “Reform of the WTO provides an opportunity to focus the agenda of work on issues that make trade and trade rules more responsive to the demands of today’s economy in an inclusive way,” he said.

G20
The G20 declared in Osaka, Japan, in June that international trade and investment are important engines of growth, productivity, innovation, job creation and development. The summit of leading developed and developing countries reaffirmed its support for “the necessary reform” of the WTO to “improve its functions”. DG Azevêdo joined Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzō Abe and other G20 leaders at a side event to discuss the importance of the digital economy and ongoing negotiations at the WTO (see page 48). The Osaka Declaration committed signatories to promote international rule-making and urged progress on e-commerce at the WTO.
The WTO also contributed to G20 trade discussions in meetings of G20 sherpas, the G20 Working Group on Trade and Investment and G20 agriculture ministers. It also continued to monitor food crop policies under the G20 Agriculture Market Information System initiative (G20-AMIS), which aims to increase transparency in international commodity markets and improve policy coordination.

With the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the OECD, the WTO continued to publish six-monthly reports on trade and investment measures in G20 countries. The November report noted that the share of global trade covered by trade-restricting measures has soared (see page 108).

High-level meetings

At a WTO-IMF-World Bank event in Washington in April, DG Azevêdo, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde and World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva called for renewed efforts to leverage trade to reduce poverty. DG Azevêdo warned that current trade tensions risked undermining recent progress. “Despite the current situation, we cannot lose focus of the urgent need to tackle poverty and to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals,” he said. The three leaders were speaking at an event held alongside the World Bank-IMF spring meetings.

In October, DG Azevêdo took part in a meeting hosted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin to discuss ways to strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation in order to improve prospects for inclusive and sustainable growth. The heads of the ILO, IMF, OECD and the World Bank also attended. “Reform is underway to make the WTO faster, more flexible and responsive to members’ needs, and ensure that it can respond to the current global challenges,” he said after the meeting.
OECD

DG Azevêdo told the OECD Ministerial Council in May that the WTO has seen growing interest in discussing e-commerce. “Ultimately, the test of our success in responding to this revolution will be the extent to which we use it as a force for greater inclusion,” he said.

The OECD and the WTO cooperate in a wide range of areas, including in the trade in value-added (TiVA) database and in improving the measurement of digital trade (see page 164). They are also working together on the development of trade facilitation indicators, with an interactive web tool covering 152 countries.

Together, they launched the publication “Facilitating Trade through Regulatory Cooperation: The Case of the WTO’s TBT/SPS Agreements and Committees” in July (see page 159).

United Nations

UN Secretary-General António Guterres addressed the WTO General Council in May. A rules-based, non-discriminatory and equitable trading system is essential to preserving the interests of the poorest and most vulnerable economies, he said.

DG Azevêdo attended 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 CEB spring meeting was held at the ILO in May to mark the 100th anniversary of the organization. At a ceremony at the WTO’s headquarters, ILO Director-General Guy Ryder presented the WTO with a sculpture by Belgian artist Constantin Meunier. The sculpture had previously been housed at the Centre William Rappard, which was the ILO’s headquarters until 1975.

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 related to food security and to sustainable agriculture and food systems.

DG Azevêdo and the Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), José Graziano da Silva, jointly chaired the International Forum on Food Safety and Trade in April at the WTO (see page 62).

Anniversaries

In September, DG Azevêdo attended the 25th anniversary of the Punta del Este Conference that launched the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. He also attended in Washington in October the 75th anniversary of the Breton Woods Conference, which laid the groundwork for a new era of global economic cooperation embedded in the IMF, the World Bank and the multilateral trading system.

UNCTAD, ITC and UN regional commissions

UNCTAD, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the WTO jointly produce the annual World Tariff Profiles (see page 158) and quarterly and annual statistics on international trade in services. They also combine in statistical capacity-building activities, 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 least-developed countries (LDCs) that are “graduating” from LDC status to adapt to their changing situation (see page 130) and in helping developing countries to prepare for ministerial conferences.
Contact with the media

- The media team addressed increasing demand from journalists for information on the WTO’s work against a background of trade tensions.
- Journalists representing African, Asian and Latin American news outlets attended seminars on the WTO, which highlighted challenges facing the organization.

With trade tensions making headlines, the WTO media team was kept busy addressing increasing demand from journalists for information about the WTO’s work and its role in safeguarding the multilateral trading system.

Twenty-six press briefings were held, almost half of them on dispute settlement. Additional briefings followed General Council and Heads of Delegation meetings, the fisheries subsidy negotiations and accessions meetings. In April, DG Azevêdo held a press conference on the WTO’s annual trade outlook. Then in July, he was invited by the Geneva Association of UN Correspondents (ACANU) for an exchange with its members. He also briefed the press after the final General Council meeting of the year.

The media team assisted journalists with coverage of major 2019 events at the WTO, including the Public Forum (see page 150), the Aid for Trade Global Review (see page 134) and the first World Cotton Day (see page 88).

The WTO received just over 200 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 1,887.

Outreach

On 13-17 May, 14 newspaper and television journalists representing outlets in Africa and Asia attended a seminar organized in Geneva by the WTO and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. The seminar highlighted the challenges facing the WTO and the importance of the multilateral trading system.

Seventeen journalists from 16 Latin-American countries were invited in June for a week-long seminar at the WTO. The programme touched on the new challenges of international trade, including WTO reform. The WTO also organized a workshop for Southern African journalists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Johannesburg, South Africa, in October (see page 148).

In June, 17 journalists from Latin America took part in a week-long seminar at the WTO.
Contact with the public

- The website attracted 2.7 million monthly visits, 17 per cent more than in 2018.
- The WTO launched a new video series “Let’s Talk Trade”, in which WTO staff talk about trade topics in everyday language.
- The WTO’s three institutional Twitter accounts have close to 400,000 followers. Its page on Weibo has more than 620,000.
- The WTO issued 52 publications and regularly updated the WTO iLibrary, which contains over 400 titles published by the WTO.

WTO website
The WTO website attracted over 2.7 million monthly visits in 2019, over 17 per cent per cent more than the year before. Russia accounted for the most visits, with 16.5 per cent, followed by the United States (15.6 per cent), China (9.3 per cent), the United Kingdom (4.0 per cent) and India (3.8 per cent). Total page views rose to 72.6 million from 60.8 million in 2018. Over 460 news items were published on the site in 2019.

The most downloaded files were the WTO’s flagship publications, the World Trade Statistical Review 2018 (over 225,000 downloads), the World Trade Report 2018 (over 85,000) and the Annual Report 2019 (27,000). WTO videos were viewed over 195,000 times in 2019. The most popular video, with 9,934 views, was the “Let’s Talk WTO” video about why the WTO was created and how it works.

Some 77,000 people have registered to receive email alerts for WTO news items (see Figure 2). The largest numbers of registrations are from India (10.5 per cent), followed by the United States, Mexico, Colombia, France and Peru.

Figure 2: People registered to receive email alerts, as of end-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Registrations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business representatives</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government officials</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO representatives</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentarians</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students (high school)</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students (university)</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University professors</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accredited media</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other academics</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other journalists</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other journalists</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visitors to the website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7m monthly visits to the WTO website in 2019

17% increase over 2018
Most of the presentations were given in English (139), while 31 were given in French, 24 in Chinese, 12 in German, three each in Italian, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Swedish, two each in Arabic and Portuguese, and one each in Finnish and Ukrainian.

### WTO publications

The WTO issued 52 publications in 2019 and added interactive apps of the Annual Report and the World Trade Statistical Review to its app library. Five books were launched at the WTO by DG Azevêdo, including co-publications with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Finance Corporation.

Most WTO publications can be downloaded from the WTO’s website in the organization’s three official languages, English, French and Spanish. Printed copies can be purchased from the online bookshop (https://onlinebookshop.wto.org/shop/). The WTO’s apps are available free from the App Store and Google Play. The WTO Publications’ Facebook page has over 50,000 followers and its Twitter page has over 70,000 followers. A digital newsletter, “Book News”, is regularly sent to 85,000 recipients.

The WTO iLibrary (www.wto-ilibrary.org), launched in 2018 in cooperation with the OECD, was expanded to include over 1,000 titles published by the WTO or co-published with Cambridge University Press, over 200 WTO working papers, comprehensive statistical data on world trade, and every dispute settlement report issued by the WTO. The Library is a dynamic research tool that brings together all the WTO’s key research material on global trade.

### Social media

The WTO maintains an active presence on social media. Some of the most popular posts were the video series “Let’s Talk Trade” on Facebook; Aid for Trade posts on Twitter; posts about the Young Professionals Programme (see pages 141 and 172) on LinkedIn; and the visit of UN Secretary-General António Guterres to the WTO in May on Instagram.

The WTO’s Instagram account almost tripled in size to about 12,000 followers. Twitter accounts in French and Spanish grew about 60 per cent. At the end of the year, the WTO’s three institutional Twitter accounts had close to 400,000 followers, its Facebook page had nearly 315,000 “likes” and its page on Weibo, a Chinese social media platform, had more than 620,000 followers (see Figure 3).

### WTO videos

WTO videos are used to inform the public and to bring trade content to a wider audience. In 2019, the WTO launched a series called “Let’s Talk Trade” aimed at explaining trade topics using metaphors and simple, everyday language. The series has been very well received by the general public and experts alike. Other popular videos showcased events such as World Cotton Day (see page 88) and the Aid for Trade Global Review (see page 134).

### Visiting groups

In 2019, the WTO welcomed 233 visiting groups – a total of approximately 6,660 people. Presentations mostly covered the WTO’s history, functions and current work. Some groups requested presentations on specific topics, primarily dispute settlement, agriculture, development and intellectual property rights.
Flagship publications

**Annual Report 2019**  
The Report contains a message from the Director-General, an overview of the past year and in-depth accounts of the WTO’s various areas of activity.

**Annual Report 2019 app**  
Free  
The app features an interactive quiz that tests users’ knowledge of the WTO and links to the full text of the report.

**World Trade Report 2019: The future of services trade**  
The Report examines how trade in services is evolving and why services trade matters (see pages 92 and 162).

**World Trade Statistical Review 2019**  
ISBN 978-92-870-4778-6 | CHF 50  
A comprehensive overview of the latest developments in world trade, covering both merchandise trade and trade in commercial services.

**World Trade Statistical Review 2019 app**  
Free  
The app features an interactive quiz on the latest trends in world trade and links to the full text of the review.

Other annual publications

**Trade Profiles 2019**  
Key indicators on trade in goods and services for 196 economies. Highlights each economy’s major exports and imports and its main trading partners.

**World Tariff Profiles 2019**  
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**  
In 2019, 12 Trade Policy Reviews were published, analysing the trade policies and practices of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Peru; Costa Rica; Suriname; North Macedonia; Canada; Trinidad and Tobago; Papua New Guinea; Samoa; Bangladesh; the East African Community (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda); and Ecuador (see page 104).

**Dispute Settlement Reports 2018**  
Ten volumes were produced in 2019, providing the full texts of panel reports, Appellate Body reports and arbitration awards issued by the WTO in 2018. Co-published with Cambridge University Press.
organized by multilateral development banks which case studies of the capacity-building programmes. It also presents Trade Organization and the International Finance of international organizations, such as the World regulatory compliance and describes the efforts of the global financial sector to engage in this gap and the reasons for the growing reluctance especially hard-hit by this trade finance gap. Small and medium-sized enterprises have been of local banks to provide credit to businesses to provide trade finance guarantees, particularly in increasingly important issue in the past few years. A showcase of international cooperation
The WTO welcomed close to 3,000 visitors to its headquarters on Sunday 14 June for the fifth WTO Open Day. Visitors enjoyed guided tours of the building, gained insights into the work of the WTO and sampled the national cuisine of a range of WTO members. One of the day’s key events was a special award presented by DG Azevêdo to Geneva’s diplomatic police.

WTO visitors gathered in the Council Room, the WTO’s main meeting room, for an opening ceremony, with addresses by DG Azevêdo, the Chair of the General Council Sunanta Kangvakuljik and representatives of the Swiss Confederation, the State Council and the City of Geneva. During the opening ceremony, a “Thank You” award was presented by the DG to the Brigade de Sécurité Diplomatique, the police officers in charge of protecting civil servants and diplomats working in Geneva.

“Thank You” award

DG Azevêdo said: “I am pleased to give this thank you award to the Brigade de Sécurité Diplomatique. Every day, each of us relies on your professionalism, skill and expertise to protect us, and also our families and loved ones. This includes WTO staff and those who work for the diplomatic missions to the WTO. Of course, it also includes all the other international organizations and missions in Geneva. And while much of your work is unseen, it is by no means overlooked, forgotten or taken for granted. So today we want to celebrate and recognize the exceptional job done.”

Commander of the Geneva Police, Ms Monica Bonfanti, received the award on behalf of the diplomatic police. She said: “On behalf of all the employees of the Brigade de Sécurité Diplomatique of the Geneva Police, it is with pleasure and honour that I receive this award. The Brigade undertakes with great pride the task of protecting international Geneva.”
Guided tours and exhibitions

Through more than 20 guided tours, carried out by WTO staff, visitors had the opportunity to discover the rich history of the Centre William Rappard, the WTO’s headquarters, and its unique works of art. Visitors were able to view a photo exhibition of famous people in the history of the WTO along with pictures dating back to the signing of the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO. They could also explore a display on "Ways we gain from trade", consisting of case studies depicting how various countries benefit from trade.

The tours were conducted in the three official languages of the WTO – English, French and Spanish. The WTO’s team of interpreters explained what it is like to work as an interpreter and encouraged visitors to try out the interpretation booths.

A lakeside welcome

Visitors were also able to enjoy national food and drinks provided by a selection of WTO members who set up stalls overlooking Lac Léman. Younger visitors were able to enjoy story-telling, face-painting and a bouncy castle.
Economic research activities

- The WTO’s flagship World Trade Report said services have become the most dynamic component of global trade.
- A new report analyses the evolution of global value chains.
- The Global Trade and Blockchain Forum, held at the WTO, discussed the impact of blockchain on international trade.

Background on economic research activities

The WTO’s Economic Research and Statistics Division organizes regular seminars and conferences as well as online forums involving academics and researchers in Geneva and around the world. These activities include the Geneva Trade and Development Workshop programme. It is responsible for the WTO’s flagship publication, the World Trade Report, which aims to deepen understanding about trends in trade, trade policy issues and the multilateral trading system.

The WTO’s flagship publication, the World Trade Report, was launched by DG Azevêdo at the WTO’s Public Forum (see page 150) in October. The report finds that trade in services expanded faster than trade in goods between 2005 and 2017. It said that the share of the services sector in global trade could increase by 50 per cent by 2040. Trade costs in services are almost double those in goods, but these costs are falling mainly due to the impact of digital technologies. The report discusses how services trade can contribute to more inclusive growth and development.

“Services are a vitally important part of global trade. Promoting services trade creates meaningful welfare gains for society and can drive inclusiveness … But in order to seize the opportunities offered by the changes at play, new pathways will need to be found to advance global trade co-operation and make services a central element of trade policy.” DG Azevêdo said at the report’s launch.

The second edition of the Global Value Chain Development Report was launched in April 2019 at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) spring meetings. The report is a joint publication by the WTO, the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Research Center of Global Value Chains, headquartered at the University of International Business and Economics, the World Bank Group and the China Development Research Foundation.

The report finds that more than two-thirds of world trade now occurs through global value chains (GVCs). The report notes that technological advancements pose both opportunities and risks for countries participating in GVCs. To prepare their economies for a digital future, governments need to promote policies that are conducive to investment, that build the skills of local manufacturers and that nurture relationships between technology providers and local producers.

In December, the Economic Research and Statistics Division (ERSD), with the support of other divisions, organized a Global Trade and Blockchain Forum to discuss how blockchain technology is transforming international trade. Opening the forum, Deputy Director-General Yi Xiaozhun said that policy action and coordination among key stakeholders are necessary to fully realize the potential of blockchain technology to transform international trade. “Blockchain can accelerate the digitalization of international trade, but it can only do so if the legislative framework allows for transactions to be carried out through digital means and if those transactions are recognized as legal and valid,” he said. But “empowering developing countries and the smallest players to reap the benefits that this technology opens is also a must,” he added.

The 2019 edition of the World Trade Report was launched by DG Azevêdo in October.
In October, ERSD launched a new publication entitled “Making Globalization More Inclusive: Lessons from experience with adjustment policies”. Building on previous WTO work on the labour market effects of trade, the publication responds to the growing demand from policy-makers for further research on policies aimed at helping workers adjust to the impact of trade or technological changes. It includes an extensive review of the literature on adjustment policies and provides case studies written by experts from seven countries across four continents.

The contributions cover a broad range of policy measures taken to help labour markets adjust to the impact of globalization, including trade openness, using a variety of approaches. They provide valuable insights into those policies and useful information for all those interested in the social dimensions of globalization and technological change.

WTO Essay Award for Young Economists

The 2019 WTO Essay Award for Young Economists went to Jan Bakker of Oxford University for his paper on “International Trade and Regional Inequality” and Federico Huneeus of Princeton University for his paper on “Production Network Dynamics and Propagation of Shocks”. They were ranked joint first by the selection panel and shared the prize of CHF 5,000.

Jan Bakker’s paper documents how export participation is higher in more densely populated areas. To explain this, the paper outlines two potential mechanisms through which large cities in advanced economies benefit more from trade. First, firms in large cities are more productive. When trade opens up, it is the most productive firms which expand, and so does economic activity in large cities. Second, the more skill- and capital-intensive sectors are disproportionally located in large cities. In advanced economies, these sectors expand with improved market access. The paper shows that the increased productivity of firms in large cities is the most important mechanism. The paper has important policy implications for governments concerned with the income distribution effects of trade, as it shows that trade has different effects in large and small cities.

Federico Huneeus’ paper looks at how external shocks propagate through production networks. The paper shows that costs to adjust links between firms in a supply chain generate important effects. Looking at how international trade shocks affected Chile during the great recession, it finds that without adjustment frictions in the networks output losses would have been 30 per cent lower.

The paper highlights the importance of stabilization policies over the business cycle to take firm-to-firm frictions into account. Questions about propagation and network dynamics are likely to become very important in a period of increased and unpredictable protectionism.

Federico Huneeus is a Chilean national. He received his PhD in Economics from Princeton University in 2019. He is currently a Postdoctoral Associate at the Cowles Foundation at Yale University.

Selection Panel

The selection panel comprised Dr Avinash Dixit (Emeritus Professor of Economics, Princeton University), Dr Robert Koopman (Director, Economic Research and Statistics Division, WTO), Dr Robert Staiger (Professor of Economics, Dartmouth College) and Dr Alberto Trejos (Professor of Economics, INCAE Business School). Dr Roberta Piermartini (Economic Research and Statistics Division, WTO) coordinated the work of the panel.
Statistics activities

- The WTO released new experimental data on global trade in services by mode of supply.
- The WTO issued updated country profiles showing countries’ participation in global value chains.
- WTO cooperation with the International Trade Centre and the UN Conference on Trade and Development has led to the development of an online portal for trade-related Sustainable Development Goals.

Background on statistics activities
The Economic Research and Statistics Division supports WTO members and the WTO Secretariat with data on economic and trade policy issues and with technical advisory services on market access negotiations and on 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 national workshops and contributes to inter-organizational statistical activities.

Statistical publications and data series
The WTO’s statistical flagship, the World Trade Statistical Review 2019, offered a detailed analysis of trends for world trade in goods and services and provided information on WTO members’ use of trade-restrictive and trade-facilitating measures (see page 158). In addition, Trade Profiles 2019 provided a series of key indicators on trade in goods and services while World Tariff Profiles 2019 displayed information on tariffs and non-tariff measures. Its special topic focused on “aligning trade and tariff policies with sustainable development”.

The WTO Data Portal, launched in November 2018, was improved with additional data series and an improved user interface. The portal can now be accessed through API (Application Programming Interface), which gathers in one place the documentation developers need to integrate WTO data into their webpages and applications.

The WTO launched a Services Trade Barometer in September as part of efforts to develop new insights into services trade. The barometer, which will be released twice a year, highlights turning points and changing patterns in world services trade.

Trade in value-added country profiles
The WTO released on 9 May updated profiles for 64 WTO members, revealing the share of domestic and foreign components in their exports and their participation in global value chains (GVCs). The profiles shed light on the contribution of the services sector to trade and the value of trade in intermediate products for each of the economies.

The profiles draw from data in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) trade in value-added (TiVA) database and provide an update to the profiles released three years ago.

Trade in services by mode of supply
The WTO produced an experimental dataset on trade in services by mode of supply (TISMOS), covering the period 2005 to 2017 for all economies. This dataset uses both official figures and estimates to give the first-ever comprehensive account of how much services are traded through the four modes of supply as defined in the WTO’s General Agreement on Trade in Services (see page 92). TISMOS also offers a worldwide FATS – foreign affiliates statistics – output dataset, covering 200 economies and 13 service sectors for the period.

Statistical capacity-building
The WTO held courses in collaboration with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations and regional statistical agencies for developing economies. They shared best practices in data collection, compilation and statistical analysis. The workshops blended online and face-to-face delivery for both merchandise trade and trade in services statistics.
The WTO also provided capacity-building on services trade statistics and on trade in value-added statistics as well as assistance to the African Union in the negotiation of requests and offers in the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Online tools to disseminate market access information are regularly presented in thematic and in regional and advanced trade policy courses.

**Outreach**

At the WTO Public Forum (see page 150), a trade statistics session explored users’ needs for more relevant trade statistics. Participants discussed how the WTO and other international organizations can generate statistics that can be useful in identifying and analysing current developments and future trends in global trade. Another session looked at “new evidence on preferential trade”, using a new dataset on the use of trade preferences by developing countries. It highlighted that most-favoured-nation (MFN) trade remains an anchor of the multilateral trade architecture.

**International cooperation**

The Expert Group on Measuring Digital Trade, meeting under the aegis of the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics (TFITS), finalized the first version of the Handbook on Measuring Digital Trade which includes a conceptual framework for digital cross-border transactions.

Cooperation with the International Trade Centre (ITC) and UNCTAD has led to enhanced collaboration on indicators for trade-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the development of a dedicated SDG trade online portal (https://sdgtrade.org/).

**I-TIP**

The WTO’s Integrated Trade Intelligence Portal (I-TIP) is regularly updated to increase the information available on non-tariff measures and on services trade policies. As of the end of 2019, more than 56,000 non-tariff measures on trade in goods had been included. For services, it now includes information for 68 economies, which is drawn from OECD’s database and from a survey carried out jointly with World Bank.

DG Azevêdo delivered the WTO’s forecast for global trade at a press conference in April 2019.
Cooperation with academic institutions

- The WTO Chairs Programme (WCP) generated substantial research on trade-related issues, including 92 published articles in peer-reviewed journals.
- An external evaluation assessed very positively the programme’s impact since its launch in 2010. The WTO is expected to decide on the WCP’s future in spring 2020.
- The WCP organized a session at the WTO Aid for Trade Global Review looking at “Economic Diversification and Empowerment for Inclusive, Sustainable Development”.

**Activities of the Chairs Programme**

In 2019, 78 new or updated courses and diploma programmes were proposed and developed under the WTO’s Chairs Programme (WCP). Chairs helped 94 PhD students develop their theses. They also organized a total of 122 outreach activities, almost double the 2018 figure of 62, attracting a significant number of participants, including policy-makers.

The research output of the WCP was again substantial. Chairs produced some 93 published articles in peer-reviewed journals, up from 67 in 2018, and 52 working papers on trade, WTO topics and subjects of importance to the WTO.

**Background on WTO Chairs Programme**

The WTO Chairs Programme, launched in 2010, aims to enhance knowledge and understanding of the trading system among academics and policymakers in developing countries. Chair-holders are selected through a competitive process. Its main objectives are to foster research on trade and WTO issues, to provide teaching support for the development and delivery of courses on trade policy and WTO-related matters and to organize public activities to disseminate research and promote discussion regarding international trade. The WCP is jointly managed by the WTO’s Economic Research and Statistics Division and the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation.

At the Aid for Trade Global Review (see page 134), the WCP organized a session on “Supporting Economic Diversification and Empowerment for Inclusive, Sustainable Development Through Aid for Trade”. The panel included WTO chairs and representatives from the Geneva trade-policy community as well as a minister from one of the countries with a university participating in the WCP.

The WTO Chairs Programme annual conference took place at the WTO in July.
WCP chairs contributed to and participated in many conferences, reaching out to government agencies, international organizations, the business community, media and other academics to underline the importance of trade. The WTO Secretariat participated in numerous technical assistance activities, academic conferences, seminars and specialized courses organized by chairs.

The WCP e-Platform, a dedicated WCP website launched in December 2017 and enhanced in 2019, continued to facilitate information-sharing, to encourage discussion and to promote networking among institutions and individuals associated with the programme. In 2019, the WCP e-Platform launched a WCP-recommended curriculum.

Concluding Phase II of the WCP
An external and independent evaluation of the WCP took place in 2019. The report pointed to the WCP’s efficiency and effectiveness. It saw three possible options for the future of the WCP, whose second four-year phase ended in 2018. The first, and preferred, is scaling up the programme, aligning it more strongly with other WTO activities and raising the number of chairs to 40 from the current 19 (see page 168). The second option is a continuation of the current programme and the third is to phase it out.

The WCP Advisory Board, an external body composed of experienced scholars, had already recommended a WCP Phase III, provided the review was positive. WTO management supports expanding the WCP, as long as some pre-conditions can be met, including the necessary funding. A decision is expected in spring 2020.

Academic Support Programme
Thirteen activities were implemented in 2019 under the Academic Support Programme (ASP), which engages with academic institutions from developing countries and least-developed countries that are not part of the WTO Chairs Programme. Activities over the year included lectures delivered by WTO staff for undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Almost one-third of the activities were related to supporting university competitions on WTO law and increasing knowledge of dispute settlement procedures among students and professors. The WTO provided staff to act as panellists in regional inter-university competitions and for the final round of the competition at the WTO (see page 121).

The ASP also organized presentations to academic audiences. In addition, the WTO continued encouraging universities to register academics as participants in online courses offered by the WTO’s E-campus.
Universities participating in the WTO Chairs Programme

- **Mexico**: Autonomous Institute of Technology, Centre for International Economic Law
- **Barbados**: University of the West Indies, Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services
- **Brazil**: Getulio Vargas Foundation, São Paulo School of Economics
- **Chile**: University of Chile, Institute of International Studies
- **Argentina**: Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO)
- **Turkey**: Istanbul Bilgi University
- **Tunisia**: University of Tunis, Tunis Business School
- **Morocco**: Mohammed V-Souissi University, Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences
- **Senegal**: Cheikh Anta Diop University, Faculty of Economics and Management
- **Benin**: University Abomey-Calavi
China
Shanghai Institute of Foreign Trade (SIFT), School of WTO Research and Education

Jordan
University of Jordan, Faculty of Business

Oman
Sultan Qaboos University

Kenya
University of Nairobi, School of Economics

Singapore
National University of Singapore, Faculty of Law

Russian Federation
St. Petersburg State University, Faculty of Economics, World Economy Department

Mauritius
University of Mauritius, Department of Economics and Statistics

Indonesia
Universitas Gadjah Mada, Centre for World Trade Studies

South Africa
North-West University

Cooperation with academic institutions
www.wto.org/chairprogramme