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 Kangvalkulki 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 Diplomatie, 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 Diplomatie. 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 Diplomatie 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.