

World Trade Organization

A brief history

The WTO began life on 1 January 1995, succeeding the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which had regulated world trade since 1948. Over the past 28 years, the WTO has made an important contribution to the strength and stability of the global economy, helping to boost trade growth, improve people's lives and support the integration of developing economies into the trading system. The following timeline looks back at some of the WTO's major achievements.



February
Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala becomes the first African and first woman to become Director-General.

October
 WTO hosts inaugural **World Cotton Day** to highlight central role of cotton in developing economies.

2021

2019

2022

June
12th Ministerial Conference results in an unprecedented package of decisions, including a landmark Fisheries Subsidies Agreement.

December
 Negotiations on **services domestic regulation** conclude successfully, with increased market access for service providers.

2020



November
 WTO marks its 25th anniversary.

2018

January
 WTO and UN Environment launch new dialogue on using trade to support **green growth**.



December
 First **World Trade Congress on Gender** takes place at the WTO.



January

Amendment to the **TRIPS Agreement** enters into force, easing access to medicines.



December

10th Ministerial Conference results in “**Nairobi Package**”, including abolition of agricultural export subsidies and expansion of **Information Technology Agreement**.



December

9th Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia, sees conclusion of negotiations on landmark **Trade Facilitation Agreement**.

2017

2015

2013

February

Trade Facilitation Agreement enters into force.

December

11th Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, sees launch of new areas of negotiations.



2014

April

Revised Government Procurement Agreement enters into force, adding new markets.

2012

November

Historic signing ends 20 years of **EU-Latin American banana dispute**, the longest-running dispute in WTO history.



WHAT WE STAND FOR



September
First WTO Open Day in Geneva.

September
First WTO Public Forum takes place in Geneva.



January
WTO Chairs Programme launched to support trade-related work of universities in developing economies.

2010



2007



2006

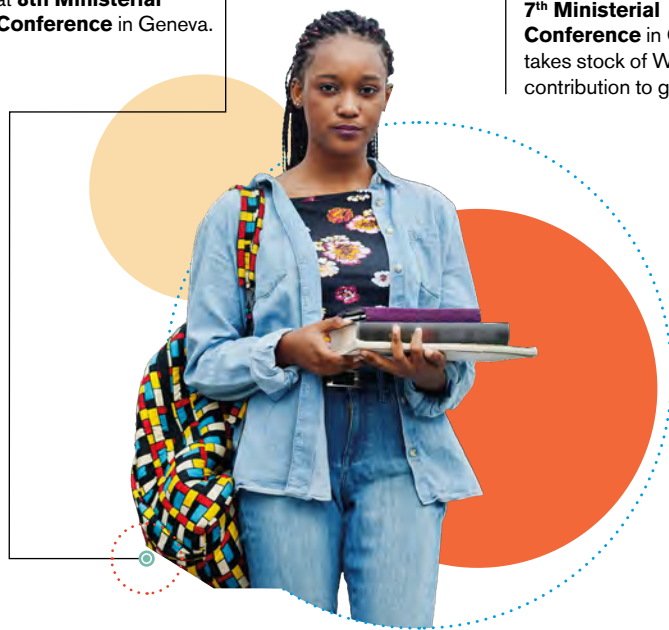
2011

December
Expansion of Agreement on Government Procurement agreed at **8th Ministerial Conference** in Geneva.

2009

November
7th Ministerial Conference in Geneva takes stock of WTO's contribution to growth.

November
First **Global Review of Aid for Trade** takes place in Geneva.





May
2nd Ministerial Conference in Geneva marks 50 years of the GATT.



December
WTO holds first Ministerial Conference in Singapore.

December
6th Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, China, sees launch of Aid for Trade initiative.

November
4th Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, sees launch of new round of trade negotiations known as the Doha Development Agenda.

2005

2001

1998

1996

2003



November
3rd Ministerial Conference in Seattle, United States, ends with breakdown in negotiations amid public protests. DG Moore reaffirms WTO commitment to **poverty alleviation**.

1997

July
Information Technology Agreement enters into force, slashing tariffs on IT goods

1995

January
 The WTO is born on **1 January**.



September
5th Ministerial Conference in Cancún, Mexico, welcomes Cambodia and Nepal as first least-developed countries to join WTO since its establishment.

