

CHINA WTO ACCESSION INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME ALUMNI STORY

Ashwini, please tell us...



Where are you from, and what have you studied before joining the China Programme?

I am from India. I completed my LL.B from National Law University, Jodhpur in 2015. After working as a lawyer in India, I was accepted at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, where I obtained my Master in Development Studies in 2020.

Why did you apply?

International trade has always interested me. My major in law school was International Trade and Investment Law. I chose undergraduate and postgraduate courses which equipped me with the theoretical knowledge of international trade, the multilateral trading system, and the WTO. During my Master's degree at the Graduate Institute, I worked on a [Capstone Project](#) with the WTO, on the concept of "Trade for Peace". The project examined the role of trade in peace-building in the Horn of Africa region. I spearheaded the research, analysis, and writing of the report. My meetings with the Division captured my interest in their work. The people in the Division were warm, enthusiastic and driven. So, when I came to know of the China Programme Internship, I knew I had to apply. Besides, it was a great opportunity to see the theoretical knowledge I had gained being put to practice, as well as to work with international trade practitioners and experts.

What kind of work were you assigned to during your internship?

- I was the Co-Secretary for the Accession dossiers of: Bhutan, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uzbekistan, Timor Leste, and Eritrea. I supported the drafting of WTO accession related documents; supported organisation of meetings, consultations, and capacity

- building activities; and researched on significant political, social and economic developments in these countries.
- I assisted the Director and Professional Staff of the Division in attending meetings and preparing minutes, reports and summaries, and in preparing the WTO Senior Management and WP Chairpersons by drafting background briefings, talking points, speeches, and other documents.
 - I assisted, wrote, researched, designed communication materials, and gave logistical support for:
 - i. G7+ WTO Accessions Group
 - ii. Training on Accession in Agriculture
 - iii. Editorial Board of the Accessions Newsletter
 - iv. Trade for Peace Programme:
 - Assisting in the organisation of the Trade for Peace Week;
 - Assisting in the creation of Trade for Peace Network;
 - Production of the Trade for Peace Podcast (script writing, editing, carrying out background research on guests, drafting promotional material) ;
 - Conducting research work on the Trade-Peace linkage;
 - Proposing and facilitating changes to the Trade for Peace Webpage.

Looking back, what do you think of your work experience at the WTO, and as participant of the China Programme?

The China Programme has fulfilled one of my dreams of working at the WTO, alongside professionals from different cultural and educational backgrounds. WTO was able to harness my unique combination of my training as a lawyer and my knowledge in development and public policy.

My internship was enjoyable and one which has left me with a better understanding of the functioning of the WTO as well as issues related to trade.

I particularly like that the Accessions Division is more "risk taking" in terms of trying out new ideas and concepts such as starting a podcast or undertaking other such unique outreach activities. I also like that the Division entrusted me with significant and important projects and tasks, which is proof of the trust they had in my skills, abilities and quality of work. The Division genuinely sought and truly valued my inputs. I was regularly appreciated by the senior management as well as everyone in the Division.

Everyone was a pleasure to work with. My co-interns were the cherry on the cake – they were cooperative, collaborative and enthusiastic. Thus, this internship has not only enriched my professional life but also my personal life – by giving me many friends for life!

What have you done since?

COVID-19 has taught me the fleeting nature of human life. I am currently spending some long-pending, much needed quality time with my family in India.



This internship was a unique experience that has helped me carve out a niche for myself in the international trade, development and public policy sector. I am excited to take on new opportunities in international trade policy-making and socio-economic development.

Thank you, Ashwini!