2021 Trade and public health virtual course webinar:
Delivering Medical Technologies and Vaccines to End Users
Trade in Goods during Pandemic Times

26 May 2021 - 13:00 to 15:00 (CET)
WTO - rules and transparency

Facilitating Measures:

Restrictions

Trade

Content
Trade in COVID-19 related goods

• Trade in medical goods in the context of tackling covid-19: developments in the first half of 2020 (Link)

  - World trade -14%
  - Medical goods trade 16%

• Interdependency: Largest exporters are also largest importers in goods critical to combatting COVID-19

• Difficult to identify relevant goods in the HS classification
Trade in essential medical products suffered an unprecedented *triple whammy*

1. Demand shock  
   - Restrict exports

2. Supply shock  
   - Facilitate imports

3. Disruption of global transport services  
   - Charter planes

*The perfect storm for global supply chains?*
Export Restrictions

GATT Article XI: *all* quantitative restrictions are prohibited in principle, unless they can be justified under a specific exception (e.g. Art. XI:2, XX etc.).

Summary of notified export restrictions and trade facilitating measures relating to the COVID-19 pandemic ([Link](#))

- 56 Members to prohibit/restrict trade in direct relation to COVID-19 have been notified to the WTO’s Committee on Market Access

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Face and eye protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protective garments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gloves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanitizers/ Disinfectants</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmaceuticals</td>
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<td>Other medical supplies</td>
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<td>Medical devices and equipment</td>
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<td>COVID-19 Test kits</td>
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<td>Vaccines</td>
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Trade Facilitating Measures

**Transparency**: ensure that trade operators know what’s happening (*e.g.* websites, publications, enquiry points, helpdesks, etc.)

(“How do we make sure that traders have all the information they need?”)

**Reduction/elimination of tariffs, taxes and other charges**

(“How do we reduce the cost of these essential goods?”)

**Simplification/elimination of** (*But is this really necessary?”*)

import licensing procedures, origin and labelling requirements
WTO Transparency Provisions

• **Notification**: obligation to inform the other WTO Members on certain measures

• Notifications related to COVID-19 on trade in goods include:
  • Agreement on Agriculture (Export restrictions and Domestic Support)
  • SPS Agreement
  • TBT Agreement
  • QR Decision (2012)
  • Trade Facilitation Agreement

Members can, and have, provided more information!

But, not in all cases!
As a consequence of COVID-19:

- Trade decreased, but medical goods trade increased
- Countries are interdependent in the provision of critical goods to fight the pandemic
- Countries adopted measures to:
  - Restrict Exports
  - Facilitate Trade
- Measures get notified to the WTO for transparency and to show non-violation of WTO rules
Thank you!

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