

INITIATIVE

Keeping Pace with Trade Negotiations

ASSISTING SMALL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

About

Developing countries, particularly the smaller ones, face challenges in their effective participation in the WTO due to limited human, technical and financial capacities. They will need assistance not only for effectively negotiating towards the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference set for 2017, but also for their participation in regular WTO work as well as monitoring developments at the plurilateral level.

By participating in this initiative, LDC and Smaller Developing Country WTO delegates would: (i) Better **take advantage of regular work** at the WTO for their participation and trade; (ii) Be better informed participants in WTO Negotiations and Discussions, including on **new issues**; (iii) Keep pace with developments in related discussions/negotiations, e.g. **plurilateral**.

Negotiators' Forums

Taking Advantage of WTO Regular Work

Monitoring the proper implementation of negotiated agreements is an essential part of WTO members' work. Indeed, ensuring transparency of members' trade policies (e.g. SPS, TBT) is critical to ensure that the trading system remains fair, with all members respecting their commitments.

Yet, the participation of smaller developing countries in these committees has been limited. Their missions in Geneva are often understaffed, and they need to be better connected to institutions and stakeholders back home - particularly their private sector – to be able to identify and pursue their interests.

With this initiative, WTO delegates from a same region will hold **regular forums** to first identify and then pursue with our help their interests in the WTO Bodies on Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Standards (SPS), Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Trade Policy Reviews (TPR). **Country updates** will help them identify their interests, by compiling feedback from their private sector on the ground. They will also benefit from CUTS' expertise, through **technical papers** and **follow-up support** (e.g. diplomatic work, document drafting).

Research & Analysis

Better Understanding and Capacity on New Issues

The so-called “new issues”, which have been floating around for 20 years, are coming up again at the WTO. Although most developing countries clearly indicate that it is not yet time to engage in specific discussions and negotiations, they express interest in better understanding what precisely these “new issues” could be, and their own interests therein, so as to be prepared when the time comes.

This initiative will publish **research studies** on selected new issues, analysing the state of existing WTO work and its relevance today. Summarised into short **briefing papers**, lessons will be discussed at **seminars** with delegates.

Research & Analysis

Keeping Pace with Parallel Tracks

Besides their WTO work, Geneva-based delegates should also be able to keep pace with developments in plurilateral initiatives and negotiations so as to inform their capitals. Although most developing countries are not part of such plurilateral negotiations, these will have significant trade implications even for non-parties and delegates should already start monitoring them.

Here, CUTS will develop short **briefing papers** that review the state of play in selected plurilaterals, and their implications for selected smaller developing countries. Findings will be discussed at **seminars** with delegates for exchange of views and peer learning.

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CUTS' Expertise

CUTS International, Geneva is a policy-based NGO that catalyses the pro-trade, pro-equity voices of the Global South in international trade and development debates in Geneva. Through previous and on-going work, we have made a name for capacity building and linking people and issues in the world of multilateral trade with their counterparts in related policy areas.

We have also become a prime interlocutor of developing countries and international organisations in Geneva. Our relevant track record and expertise include:

- **Negotiators' Forums:** Establishing and servicing several informal forums for developing country WTO delegates in Geneva, e.g. for the EAC, SAARC and ECOWAS countries for their capacity building and strengthening Geneva-capitals linkages.
- **WTO Negotiators' Handbook:** Preparing and publishing – both in English and French – a Handbook that provides concise information and analysis of the main issues in the DDA.
- **Technical Papers:** Preparing several technical papers for ACP MTS programme to assist ACP countries in the WTO negotiations both pre- and post-Bali
- **Trusted by All:** Excellent relationships with several developed country delegates, many developing country and LDC negotiators, as well as NGOs and international organisations. We have observer status at the WTO and UNCTAD
- **MTS Projects:** Implementing several policy projects building capacities of relevant stakeholders for better integration of developing countries in the MTS, e.g. *“Fostering Equity and Accountability in the Trading System”* (FEATS), *“Support in Trade in Services Negotiations”*, *“Assisting LDCs in their Preparations for MC10”*, etc.
- **Research and Analysis:** Preparing and publishing a number of papers and publications on WTO negotiations, e.g. *“Mainstreaming Development in the WTO”*, *“Reforming the World Trade Organization”* etc.