

**2014 was a momentous year for the WTO. We achieved a great deal, but we also faced a stern test as an organization. After the jubilant scenes at our Ninth Ministerial Conference in Bali at the end of 2013, WTO members went into the new year determined to implement the decisions that were taken there, with all the gains that this would bring for growth and development around the world, and to advance negotiations on the remaining elements of the Doha Development Agenda. However, the route ahead was not free of obstacles. Concerns were raised about the relative pace at which some elements of the Bali Package were moving forward and, as a consequence, a major milestone for implementation was missed in July.**

This impasse had a freezing effect on much of our work. I described it at the time as one of the biggest crises our organization has ever faced. At question was whether we could follow through on what we had agreed in Bali just a few months previously. But members rose to the challenge and worked hard to put our work back on track. In doing so, they showed a huge amount of commitment to the multilateral trading system, and by the end of the year a solution had been found. We were faced with a test – and we passed.

The breakthrough came in the form of three major decisions taken by members at a special meeting of the General Council in November. First, members clarified the process towards finding a permanent solution on the issue of public stockholding for food security purposes. Second, they formally added the Trade Facilitation Agreement to the WTO rulebook, thereby allowing domestic ratification processes to begin. Third, they committed to resuming all of the post-Bali work. Under this final decision, members agreed to engage constructively on the implementation of all Bali decisions, including those relating to least-developed countries and to cotton, and they set a new deadline of July 2015 for concluding a work programme to tackle the remaining issues of the Doha Development Agenda.

These decisions have set a clear agenda for the WTO's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Moreover, they allowed us to regain the all-important trust and momentum that success in Bali had injected into our negotiating work. This has been carried forward into 2015 and so far we have seen a very high level of engagement in the Doha issues, including in the big, tough areas of agriculture, industrial

goods and services which we have not seen for some years. There was progress in other negotiating areas during 2014, as work continued on expanding the Information Technology Agreement and negotiations were launched on an Environmental Goods Agreement. While these initiatives are being taken forward by groups of members, their benefits will apply to all. There was also positive news on the WTO's Government Procurement Agreement during 2014, as the revised agreement entered into force.

Of course, in addition to agreeing new trade rules, we also monitor members' adherence to existing rules and settle disputes between members over their application. This work continued apace throughout the year. The WTO reviewed the trade policies and practices of 21 members in 2014 and we published a number of reports on recent trade developments across the entire WTO membership. The number of newly introduced trade-restrictive

Our membership continued to evolve in 2014. We welcomed Yemen to the WTO as our newest least-developed member, and the General Council approved the accession of Seychelles as a new developing member. Seychelles formally joined the organization in April 2015, bringing our membership to 161.

2014 marked a significant year for the WTO's developing and least-developed members in a number of ways. We stepped up our technical assistance and training programmes during the year to help those countries improve their trading capacity. As a result, we delivered 324 technical assistance activities in 2014, compared with 279 the previous year, reaching more than 15,000 participants



**Protect the environment**

The WTO's agreements permit members to take measures to protect not only the environment but also public health, animal health and plant health. However these measures must be applied in the same way to both national and foreign businesses.

In other words, members must not use environmental protection measures as a means of disguising protectionist policies.

**> What we do**

The WTO is run by its member governments. All major decisions

**The WTO's top-level decision-making body is the Ministerial Conference, which usually meets every two years.**

Below this is the General Council (normally ambassadors and heads of delegation in Geneva, but sometimes officials sent from members' capitals), which meets several times a year in the Geneva headquarters. The General Council also meets as the Trade Policy Review Body and the Dispute Settlement Body.

At the next level, the Goods Council, Services Council and Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Council report to the General Council.

Numerous specialized committees, working groups and working parties deal with the individual agreements and other areas such as the environment, development, membership applications and regional trade agreements.

All WTO members may participate in all councils and committees, with the exceptions of the Appellate Body, Dispute Settlement panels and plurilateral committees.

General Council meeting as

**Dispute Settlement Body**

Appellate Body

Dispute settlement panels



**Plurilateral:**

Information Technology Agreement Committee

**Council for Trade in Goods**

**Committees on:**

- Market Access
- Agriculture
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
- Technical Barriers to Trade
- Subsidies and Countervailing Measures
- Anti-Dumping Practices
- Customs Valuation
- Rules of Origin
- Import Licensing
- Trade-Related Investment Measures
- Safeguards

**Working party on:**

State Trading Enterprises



- Committees on:**
- Trade and Environment
  - Trade and Development
  - Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries
  - Regional Trade Agreements
  - Balance of Payments Restrictions
  - Budget, Finance and Administration

**Working parties on:**

Accession

**Working groups on:**

Trade, debt and finance  
Trade and technology transfer

**Inactive**

Relationship between Trade and Investment  
Interaction between Trade and Competition Policy  
Transparency in Government  
Procurement

Ministerial  
Conference

**General  
Council**

General Council  
meeting as  
**Trade Policy  
Review Body**

**Council for  
Trade-Related  
Aspects of  
Intellectual  
Property Rights**

**Council for  
Trade in  
Services**

**Plurilaterals:**  
Trade in Civil  
Aircraft Committee  
Government  
Procurement

**Committees on:**

Trade in Financial Services  
Specific Commitments

**Working parties on:**

Domestic Regulation  
General Agreement on  
Trade in Services Rules

**Doha Development Agenda:**

Trade Negotiations  
Committee and its bodies

**Special sessions of:**

Services Council / TRIPS Council /  
Dispute Settlement Body / Agriculture  
Committee and Cotton Sub-Committee /  
Trade and Development Committee /  
Trade and Environment Committee

**Negotiating groups on:**

Market Access  
Rules  
Trade Facilitation

The WTO began life on 1 January 1995, succeeding the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade which had regulated world trade since 1948. Over the past 20 years, the WTO has made a major contribution to the strength and stability of the global economy, helping to boost trade growth, resolve numerous trade disputes and support the integration of developing countries into the trading system.

## 1994

April  
Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO is signed.

## 1995

January  
The WTO is born on 1 January.

May  
Renato Ruggiero (Italy) takes office as WTO Director-

● **2003**

September  
Fifth Ministerial Conference takes  
place in Cancún, Mexico.

● **2005**

September  
Pascal Lamy (France) becomes  
WTO Director-December

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