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[Viet Nam joins WTO with Director-General's tribute for true grit](#)

Viet Nam joined the WTO on 11 January, taking the organization's membership to 150. "In the WTO, when people work hard, things happen – and Viet Nam is a good example of that," WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy told reporters after welcoming the Vietnamese. The political determination and technical quality of negotiators such as Viet Nam's team can help to produce results in the WTO, he said. Asked if he saw a similar picture for the Doha negotiations, he said the same qualities are needed. However, for the time being he said he remains cautious about the prospects because new numbers for cutting tariffs and subsidies have not appeared yet. "The water is heating, but not boiling yet," he said.

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[Regional agreements: the 'pepper' in the multilateral 'curry' – Lamy](#)



The world faces the prospect of 400 preferential trade agreements by 2010 and the challenge of ensuring they contribute to the health of world trade, Director-General Lamy told the Confederation of Indian Industries in Bangalore on 17 January.

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[Lamy urges Norwegian industries to help achieve rapid conclusion of Doha Round](#)

Speaking at the Annual Conference of the Norwegian Confederation of Industries in Oslo, 4 January, Director-General Lamy stressed that the Doha Round was a win-win deal for Norway given the country's substantial interests in the negotiations and the flexibilities available in the Doha agenda to accompany a genuine reform in agriculture.

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[Japan: Economic recovery but continued reform is needed.](#)

Japan's economic situation has improved since the previous Trade Policy Review in 2005 and the country seems to be getting out of deflation. Progress has been made in improving the competitive environment and in promoting structural reforms in the energy and services sectors, according to the WTO Secretariat report on the trade policies and practices of Japan. The report notes that Japan's inward Foreign Direct Investment is still low compared with other large economies, and measures are needed to increase its attractiveness to foreign investors. The report also notes the high level of government assistance in agriculture and the low labour productivity in this sector. Sustained recovery would appear to hinge on continued structural reforms including in the financial, corporate and public sectors, and in strengthening of competition policy and adopting further trade liberalization particularly in agriculture, according to the report. The report, along with a policy statement by the government of Japan, was the basis for the eighth Trade Policy Review of Japan by the Trade Policy Review Body of the WTO held on 31 January and 2 February 2007. The review was chaired by Amb. Claudia Uribe (Colombia) with Amb. Guillermo Valles Galmés acting as discussant.

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[Chad: Strong growth but reform of business environment is needed to attract investment](#)

Chad has experienced a succession of socio-political crises that have impeded its economic and social development, but the start of oilfield investment and the surge in world prices enabled Chad to achieve strong economic growth over 2001-2005, according to a WTO Secretariat report on the trade policies and practices of Chad. The report notes the need for Chad to diversify its economic base to ensure wide redistribution of the oil gains and thus a reduction of poverty. This diversification requires a reform of the business environment, including the simplification of restrictive administrative requirements and an overhaul of the present system of heavy taxation for imports and exports. The report calls for renewed assistance for Chad from its trading partners and stresses that the rapid introduction of trade reforms and the pursuit of structural reforms would create an environment that is both favourable for business and better capable of attracting the capital that Chad so badly needs. The report, along with a policy statement by the government of Chad, was the basis for the Trade Policy Review of Chad by the Trade Policy Review Body of the WTO held on 22 and 24 January 2007. The Review was chaired by Amb. Uribe, and Amb. Jean Feyder (Luxembourg) acted as discussant.

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Panel to examine olive oil dispute between the EU and Mexico



DEVELOPMENT [back to top](#)**39th and 40th Trade Policy Courses start**

Fifty-one Government officials from developing countries and economies in transition started on 15 January a three-month immersion into the WTO Secretariat at its Geneva Headquarters.

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New contributions to WTO technical assistance

The following members announced their contributions during the month to the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund:

- Lithuania (CHF46,087) > [More](#)
- Estonia (CHF15,000) > [More](#)
- France (EUR750,000) > [More](#)

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