

# Notes on World Trade and the WTO

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## TRADE AND FAIR TRADE RELATED WEB SITES:

The British Association for Fair  
Trade Shops at

<http://www.bafts.org.uk/>;

CAFOD at

<http://www.cafod.org.uk/>;

Christian Aid Trade Campaign at

<http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/>;

Equal Exchange at

<http://www.equalexchange.com/>;

Fair Trade at

<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>;

the Fair Trade Federation at

<http://www.fairtradefederation.com/>;

Fair Trade Expo at

<http://www.fairtradeexpo.org/>;

Fair Trade Resources at

<http://www.fairtraderesource.org/>;

Global Exchange, Coffee at

<http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/coffee/>;

The International Fair Trade Association at

<http://www.ifat.org/>;

the Lutheran World Foundation at

<http://www.lwr.org/fairtrade/index.asp>;

Make Trade Fair at

<http://www.maketrade.com/en/index.htm>;

New Internationalist at

<http://www.newint.org/issue322/contents.htm>;

Friend of the Earth at

[http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/global\\_trade/issues/fair\\_trade\\_future/](http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/global_trade/issues/fair_trade_future/);

Trade Craft at <http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/>;

the Trade Justice Movement at

<http://www.tjm.org.uk/>;



TransFair USA at

<http://www.transfairusa.org/>;

the Trade Justice Movement at

<http://www.tradejusticemovement.org.uk/>;

the UK Department of Trade  
and Industry (DTI) at

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/ewt/whitepaper.htm>;

A World Connected at

<http://www.aworldconnected.org/article.php/560.html>;

and the World Trade Organization (WTO) at

[http://www.wto.org/wto/english/tratop\\_e/tpr\\_e/tpr\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/wto/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tpr_e.htm).

*Picture above: watering the vegetable patch, a staple for many families in rural areas*

## The WTO in Africa



## WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

### THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

The **Ministerial Conference** is the highest-level decision-making body of the **WTO**. It is made up of all **WTO** members, meets at least every two years and takes decisions on all matters under any of the multilateral trade agreements.

### THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The **General Council** is the **WTO**'s highest-level decision-making body based in Geneva. It meets on a regular basis and is made up of representatives from all member governments, such as ambassadors, and acts with the authority, and on behalf, of the **Ministerial Conference**. The **General Council** meets under different rules: that of the **Dispute Settlement Body** and **Trade Policy Review Body**.

### THE GENERAL COUNCIL AS THE DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY

When the **General Council** meets as the **Dispute Settlement Body (DSB)** it has the ultimate responsibility to resolve disputes between members of the **WTO**. These trade quarrels are resolved under the **Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU)** which enforces the rules and makes certain that trade flows smoothly. The **DSU** resulted from the Uruguay Round negotiations and the agreements are a result of negotiations between member countries. The **Appellate Body**. The **Appellate Body** is established by the **Dispute Settlement Body** and represents the **WTO** membership. It has seven permanent members who serve a four-year term. Each member has to have expertise in the law and international trade. The disputes are settled through **Dispute Settlement Panels**.

### THE GENERAL COUNCIL AS THE TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY

The **General Council** meets as the **Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB)**, which is open to all members, to undertake trade policy reviews of member states under the **WTO**'s **Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TRPM)**.

There are **Councils** which come under the **General Council**. They are for: **Trade in Goods**; **Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights**; and **Trade in Services**.

There **Committees** which come under the **General Council** are on: **Trade and Environment Committee**; **Trade and Development Committee**; **Trade Negotiations Committee**; **Regional Trade Agreements**

**Committee**; **Balance of Payments Restrictions Committee**; and **Budget, Finance and Administration Committee**.

There are various **Working Parties** which come under the **General Council**. The main one is on **Accessions** for countries that want to join the **WTO**.

There are also **Working Groups** under the **General Council** on: **Relationship between Trade and Investment**; **Interaction between Trade and Competition Policy**; **Transparency in Government Procurement**; **Trade, Debt and Finance**; and **Trade and Technology Transfer**.

There are two **Plurilateral Committees** - the **Trade and Civil Aircraft Committee**; and the **Government Procurement Committee** - under the **General Council**.

### WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION AFRICAN MEMBERS

MEMBER	DATE JOINED	MEMBER	DATE JOINED
Angola *	23 November 1996	Mali *	31 May 1995
Benin *	22 February 1996	Mauritania *	31 May 1995
Botswana	31 May 1995	Mauritius	1 January 1995
Burkina Faso *	3 June 1995	Morocco	1 January 1995
Burundi *	23 July 1995	Mozambique *	26 August 1995
Cameroon	13 December 1995	Namibia	1 January 1995
Central African Republic *	31 May 1995	Niger *	13 December 1996
Chad *	19 October 1996	Nigeria	1 January 1995
Congo	27 March 1997	Rwanda *	22 May 1996
Congo, Dem. Rep. *	1 January 1997	Senegal *	1 January 1995
Djibouti *	31 May 1995	Sierra Leone *	23 July 1995
Egypt	30 June 1995	South Africa	1 January 1995
Gabon	1 January 1995	Swaziland	1 January 1995
Gambia, The *	23 October 1996	Tanzania *	1 January 1995
Ghana	1 January 1995	Togo *	31 May 1995
Guinea *	25 October 1995	Tunisia	29 March 1995
Guinea Bissau *	31 May 1995	Uganda *	1 January 1995
Ivory Coast	1 January 1995	Zambia *	1 January 1995
Kenya	1 January 1995	Zimbabwe	5 March 1995
Lesotho *	31 May 1995	African Governments with Observer Status: Algeria, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Libya, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sudan.	
Madagascar *	17 November 1995		
Malawi *	31 May 1995		

Notes: \* There are 31 UN designated **least-developed countries (LDCs)** that are members of the **WTO**. Nine (Bhutan, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Laos, Samoa, Sudan, Vanuatu and Yemen) other **LDCs** are in the process of accession to the **WTO** and two others (Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe) are observers.

Source: **WTO Membership and Observers** (23 April 2004) at [http://www.wto.org/wto/english/thewto\\_e/whatis\\_e/tif\\_e/org6\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/wto/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/org6_e.htm)