

WTO Chairs Programme 2026 Annual Conference

Day 1 (Wednesday, 1 July) Room D

08:30 – 09:00 WELCOME COFFEE

09:00 – 10:00 **OPENING CEREMONY**

Keynote Address: Ambassador Xiangchen Zhang, WTO Deputy Director-General

Moderator: Harish Iyer, Head of the WTO Chairs Programme Unit, Technical Assistance, Coordination, and Partnerships Section, ITTC, WTO

Speakers:

1. Alix Rancurel, Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the WTO
2. Ambassador Alexander Kmentt, Permanent Representative of Austria to the WTO
3. Ambassador Yoon Seongmee, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva
4. Samer Seif El Yazal, Chief of the Technical Assistance Coordination, Partnerships and Internship Programmes Section, ITTC, WTO
5. Mark Wu, President of the WCP Academic Advisory Board

10:05 – 10:30 **SESSION WITH LOGISTICS UNIT**

10:30 – 10:45 COFFEE BREAK

10:45 – 12:15 **THEMATIC SESSION: THE 14TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AND FOLLOW-UP**

The 14th WTO Ministerial Conference was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 26 to 29 March 2026. This session will address the issues discussed at the conference, as well as the follow-up work that has been undertaken since then.

Moderator: Trudi Hartzenberg, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

Speaker: Joseph Gregorio, Trade Policy Analyst, Council and Trade Negotiations Committee Division, WTO

Discussant: Manfred Kouty, WCP Chair in Cameroon and Coordinator of the WCP Africa Network

12:20 – 13:20 **BOOK PRESENTATION – DIGITAL TRADE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS: PATHWAYS TO INCLUSIVE GROWTH**

This joint publication by the WTO and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie delves into the transformative impact of digital trade on global economic structures, particularly focusing on how appropriate regulatory frameworks can foster inclusive growth. It addresses the challenges and opportunities presented by the rapid digitalization of trade, aiming to bridge the digital divide among countries.

Opening remarks: WTO Director-General, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Moderator: Emmanuelle Ganne, Chief of the Digital Trade and Frontier Technologies Unit, Economic Research and Statistics Division, WTO

Speakers:

1. Ambassador Salomon Eheth, Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the WTO
2. Ambassador Henri Monceau, Permanent Observer of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie to the United Nations Office in Geneva

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Discussants:

1. Tabitha Kiriti-Nganga, WCP Chair in Kenya
2. Azzedine Ghoufrane, WCP Chair in Morocco
3. Charlemagne Babatoundé Igue, WCP Chair in Benin

13:20 – 14:50 LUNCH

13:30 – 14:30 LUNCHTIME SESSION: MEETING OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES (OACPS) - FOR WCP CHAIR REPRESENTATIVES FROM INSTITUTIONS IN OACPS MEMBERS¹ ONLY (*in-person only*)

15:00 – 15:45 **FIRESIDE CHAT WITH THE WTO DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

This session will provide an opportunity for the WCP Network to discuss work priorities with the WTO Director-General. WCP Chairs are expected to reflect the outcomes of this session in the activities to be undertaken in the framework of the WCP, including shaping the research agenda, customizing training activities, and targeting outreach activities to be of relevance to the WTO agenda and to policymakers and stakeholders in various regions.

Keynote speaker: WTO Director-General, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Moderator: Pierre Sauvé, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

15:45 – 16:00 **GROUP PHOTO WITH THE WTO DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

16:00 – 16:15 COFFEE BREAK

16:15 – 17:45 **THEMATIC SESSION: WORLD TRADE REPORT 2026**

The working title for the World Trade Report 2026 is "A Critical Juncture for the World Trading System". This session will allow the Secretariat to present the main contents of the Report, which will be published shortly after the Annual Conference.

Moderator: Lionel Fontagné, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

Speaker: Robert Staiger, Director, Economic Research and Statistics Division, WTO

¹ WCP Chairs in Barbados, Benin, Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Togo.

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Day 2 (Thursday, 2 July)
Room D

09:00 – 10:30 WCP REGIONAL NETWORKS BREAKOUT SESSIONS (Room B, D, E)

Chairs will convene in breakout rooms organized according to their respective regions (Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean) to explore strategies for solidifying and implementing lessons learned from regional collaboration and define priorities for collaboration in the year ahead. The breakout sessions will also be attended by the regional Heads of Desk in ITTC, to explore synergies between the work of the Chairs and the WTO's technical assistance activities.

❖ **WCP Africa Network** (Room E)

Moderator: Manfred Kouty, WCP Chair in Cameroon and Coordinator of the WCP Africa Network

WTO Secretariat:

1. Willie Chatsika, Head of English-Speaking Africa Desk, Technical Assistance Coordination, Partnerships and Internship Programmes Section, ITTC, WTO
2. Aimé Murigande, Head of French-Speaking Africa Desk, Technical Assistance Coordination, Partnerships and Internship Programmes Section, ITTC, WTO

WCP Chairs: Benin, Cameroon, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia

❖ **WCP Asia Network** (Room D)

Moderator: Georgios Dimitropoulos, WCP Chair in Qatar and Coordinator of the WCP Asia Network

WTO Secretariat:

1. Kenza Le Mentec, Head of AMEC & CEECAC Desk, Technical Assistance Coordination, Partnerships and Internship Programmes Section, ITTC, WTO
2. Usman Ali Khilji, Head of Asia & Pacific Desk, Technical Assistance Coordination, Partnerships and Internship Programmes Section, ITTC, WTO

WCP Chairs: China (Beijing), China (Shanghai), India, Indonesia, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Chinese Taipei, Türkiye, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Qatar

❖ **WCP Latin America and Caribbean Network** (Room B)

Moderator: Sofia Boza, WCP Chair in Chile and Coordinator of the WCP Latin America and Caribbean Network

WTO Secretariat:

1. Laura Gómez Bustos, Head of Latin America & Caribbean Desk, Technical Assistance Coordination, Partnerships and Internship Programmes Section, ITTC

WCP Chairs: Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru

10:30 – 10:45 COFFEE BREAK

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10:45 – 12:15

DISCUSSION ON UPCOMING CHAIR ACTIVITIES AND POSSIBILITIES FOR DEEPENING CROSS-REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Following from the regional breakout sessions, this session will allow Chairs to share information on their upcoming activities with the full network and explore the possibilities of deepening collaboration on a cross-regional basis.

Moderator: Giorgio Sacerdoti, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

Speakers:

1. Manfred Kouty, WCP Chair in Cameroon and Coordinator of the WCP Africa Network
2. Georgios Dimitropoulos, WCP Chair in Qatar and Coordinator of the WCP Asia Network
3. Sofia Boza, WCP Chair in Chile and Coordinator of the WCP Latin America and Caribbean Network

12:15 – 13:45

LUNCH

13:45 – 15:00

THEMATIC SESSION: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE WCP

Partnerships for the WCP can provide significant opportunities for Chairs to undertake work under the three pillars of the Programme and strengthen its impact. This session will allow the sharing of recent experiences with partnerships and explore potential future partnerships.

Moderator: Peter Van Den Bossche, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

Speakers:

1. Chahir Zaki, Chaired Professor of Economics, Université d'Orléans, France
2. Manfred Elsig, Professor of International Relations and Managing Director, World Trade Institute, Switzerland
3. Nicolette Butler, Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Manchester; Jasem Tarawneh, Reader in Commercial and Intellectual Property Law, Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom
4. Marina Larrea, Senior Higher Education Policy Coordinator, Obreal, Spain; Roberto Bouzas, Professor Emeritus, Universidad de San Andrés, Argentina, and Obreal Advisor

15:00 – 15:15

COFFEE BREAK

15:15 – 16:30

SESSION WITH WTO GROUP COORDINATORS (PLENARY)

Coordinators from selected developing and least-developed country groups of WTO Members will discuss with the WCP Network key areas of interest in applied research, customized training, and targeted outreach for their respective groups.

Moderator: Mark Wu, President of the WCP Academic Advisory Board

Speakers:

1. Ambassador Madsen Cherubin, Permanent Representative of Haiti to the WTO, Coordinator of CARICOM
2. Ambassador Muhammadou Kah, Permanent Representative of The Gambia to the WTO, Coordinator of the LDC Group
3. Ambassador Matthew Wilson, Permanent Representative of Barbados to the WTO, representing the Coordinator of the OACPS (Lesotho)
4. Ana Libertad Guzmán Villeda, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the WTO, Coordinator of the SVE Group

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16:45 – 18:00 SESSION WITH WTO REGIONAL GROUP COORDINATORS (PARALLEL) ROOM D, F, S2

Building on the previous plenary session, three parallel sessions will allow Chairs in the Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean networks to explore regional interests in applied research, customized training, and targeted outreach with the Coordinators of the African Group, the Asian Group of Developing Members + Pacific Group, and GRULAC, respectively.

❖ **WCP Africa Network Session with the Coordinator of the African Group**
(Room F)

Moderator: Richard Newfarmer, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

Speaker: Ambassador Elvis Toolouta Shiweda, Permanent Representative of Namibia to the WTO, Coordinator of the African Group

❖ **WCP Asia Network Session with the Coordinator of the Asian Group of Developing Members + Pacific Group** (Room D)

Moderator: Henry Gao, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

Speaker: Ambassador Manuel A.J. Teehankee, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the WTO, Coordinator of the Asian Group of Developing Members + Pacific Group

❖ **WCP Latin America and Caribbean Network Session with the Coordinator of GRULAC** (Room S2)

Moderator: Rohinton Medhora, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

Speaker: Gustavo Guarín, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Colombia to the WTO, Coordinator of GRULAC

18:00 WCP RECEPTION HOSTED BY DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL XIANGCHEN ZHANG (Atrium)

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Day 3 (Friday, 3 July) Room D

09:00 – 10:30

TOPIC-BASED RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING BREAKOUT SESSIONS (Parallel) ROOM D, B and S2 (*no interpretation, in-person only*)

Parallel breakout sessions will be held to allow Chair representatives to have detailed interactions with Secretariat staff on three topics of research interest to the Secretariat: The value of the multilateral trading system and WTO reforms, digital trade, and trade and sustainability. The objective is to generate knowledge sharing and help identify potential alignment in research by the Chairs and the Secretariat. Chair representatives may attend the session of most relevance to their research.

❖ **Breakout session on the value of the multilateral trading system and WTO reforms** (Room D)

Moderator: Clemens Boonekamp, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

Discussant: Roberta Piermartini, Chief of the Applied Economic Research Section, Economic Research and Statistics Division, WTO

❖ **Breakout session on digital trade** (Room B)

Moderator: Henry Gao, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

Discussant: Emmanuelle Ganne, Chief of the Digital Trade and Frontier Technologies Unit, Economic Research and Statistics Division, WTO

❖ **Breakout session on trade and sustainability** (Room S2)

Moderator: Richard Newfarmer, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

Discussant: Daniel Ramos, Legal Officer, Trade and Environment Division, WTO

10:30 – 10:45

COFFEE BREAK

10:45 – 12:15

THEMATIC SESSION: SYNERGIES IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHING

In this session, the Secretariat will outline recent initiatives in designing course content to include Chair representatives as resource persons. Possibilities will be explored to find further avenues for collaboration between Chairs and the Secretariat in curriculum development and teaching, including in the context of e-Learning and the re-designed WTO Regional Trade Policy Course (RTPC).

Moderator: Désirée Van Gorp, WCP Academic Advisory Board Member

Speakers:

1. Stefania Bernabe, Chief of the Course Design and Training Section, ITTC, WTO
2. Roberto Fiorentino, Head of E-Learning Unit, Course Design and Training Section, ITTC, WTO
3. Vonai Muyambo, Head of RTPC Unit, Course Design and Training Section, ITTC, WTO

Discussant: Pinar Artiran, WCP Chair in Türkiye

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12:15 – 15:30 LUNCH, INCLUDING TIME FOR VISITS TO DELEGATIONS

13:00 – 15:30 WCP ACADEMIC ADVISORY BOARD MEETING (ROOM B)

15:30 – 15:45 COFFEE BREAK

15:45 – 16:15 **BOOK PRESENTATION – TRADE AGREEMENTS AND WOMEN: TRANSCENDING BARRIERS**

“Trade Agreements and Women: Transcending Barriers” by Amrita Bahri, WCP Chair in Mexico, is the first and so far only dedicated monograph that comprehensively clarifies the intersection between trade agreements and women’s empowerment. The book is a recipient of the American Society of International Law Book Award 2025-2026.

Moderator: Alix Rancurel, Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the WTO

Speaker: Amrita Bahri, WCP Chair in Mexico

Discussant: Jan Yves Remy, Senior Advisor to the WTO Director-General, Office of the WTO Director-General

16:20 – 17:10 **SESSION ON WCP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

This session is organized for the discussion of the monitoring and evaluation of the WCP. Relevant information from the WTO’s Technical Assistance Annual Report for 2025 will be presented.

Moderator: Daniil Orlov, Economic Affairs Officer, WTO Chairs Programme Unit, Technical Assistance Coordination, Partnerships and Internship Programmes Section, ITTC, WTO

Speakers:

1. Armando Enrique Pelaez, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Section, ITTC
2. Fanan Biem, Project Officer, WTO Chairs Programme Unit, Technical Assistance Coordination, Partnerships and Internship Programmes Section, ITTC, WTO

17:15 – 18:00 **CLOSING CEREMONY**

Moderator: Harish Iyer, Head of the WTO Chairs Programme Unit, Technical Assistance Coordination, Partnerships and Internship Programmes Section, ITTC, WTO

Speakers:

1. Ambassador Xiangchen Zhang, WTO Deputy Director-General
2. Ambassador Elmer Schialer, Permanent Representative of Peru to the WTO, Chairperson of the Committee on Trade and Development
3. Dr Bright Okogu, Chef de Cabinet, Office of the WTO Director-General
4. Mark Wu, President of the WCP Academic Advisory Board