

# Blame It On The Wto

## World Trade Organization

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The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an intergovernmental organization that regulates and facilitates international trade. Established on 1 January 1995, pursuant to the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement, it succeeded the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which was created in 1948. As the world's largest international economic organization, the WTO has 166 members, representing over 98% of global trade and global GDP. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

The WTO's primary functions are to provide a framework for negotiating trade agreements and to resolve trade disputes among its members. Its agreements, which are negotiated and signed by the majority of the world's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments, cover trade in goods, services, and intellectual property. The organization operates on the principle of non-discrimination—enshrined in the most-favoured-nation and national treatment provisions—but allows for exceptions for environmental protection, national security, and other objectives.

The WTO's highest decision-making body is the Ministerial Conference, which convenes biennially and makes decisions by consensus. Day-to-day business is managed by the General Council, composed of representatives from all member states. The organization is administered by a Secretariat led by the Director-General; since 2021, this position has been held by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala of Nigeria. The WTO's annual budget is approximately 200 million USD, contributed by members based on their share of international trade.

Economic studies generally find that the WTO has boosted trade and reduced trade barriers. However, it has faced significant criticism. Critics argue that the benefits of WTO-facilitated free trade are not shared equally, that its agreements may disadvantage developing countries, and that commercial interests have been prioritised over environmental and labour concerns. The organization has also been central to major trade disputes and stalled negotiations, such as the Doha Development Round and the paralysis of its Appellate Body, which have raised questions about its future efficacy.

## Least developed countries

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The least developed countries (LDCs) are developing countries listed by the United Nations that exhibit the lowest indicators of socioeconomic development. The concept of LDCs originated in the late 1960s and the first group of LDCs was listed by the UN in its resolution 2768 (XXVI) on 18 November 1971.

A country can be classified among the least developed countries when it meets the three following criteria:

Poverty – adjustable criterion based on the gross national income (GNI) per capita averaged over three years. As of 2018, a country must have GNI per capita less than US\$1,025 to be included on the list, and over \$1,230 to graduate from it.

Human resource weakness (based on indicators of nutrition, health, education and adult literacy).

Economic vulnerability (based on instability of agricultural production, instability of exports of goods and services, economic importance of non-traditional activities, merchandise export concentration, handicap of economic smallness, and the percentage of population displaced by natural disasters).

As of December 2024, 44 countries were still classified as LDC, while eight graduated between 1994 and 2024. The World Trade Organization (WTO) recognizes the UN list and says that "Measures taken in the framework of the WTO can help LDCs increase their exports to other WTO members and attract investment. In many developing countries, pro-market reforms have encouraged faster growth, diversification of exports, and more effective participation in the multilateral trading system."

## Doha Development Round

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The Doha Development Round or Doha Development Agenda (DDA) is the trade-negotiation round of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which commenced in November 2001 under then director-general Mike Moore. Its objective was to lower trade barriers around the world, and thus increase global trade.

The Doha Agenda began with a ministerial-level meeting in Doha, Qatar, in 2001. The aim was to put less developed countries' priorities at heart. The needs of the developing countries were the core reasons for the meeting. The major factors discussed include trade facilitation, services, rules of origin and dispute settlement. Special and differential treatment for the developing countries were also discussed as a major concern. Subsequent ministerial meetings took place in Cancún, Mexico (2003), and Hong Kong (2005). Related negotiations took place in Paris, France (2005), Potsdam, Germany (2007), and Geneva, Switzerland (2004, 2006, 2008). Progress in negotiations stalled after the breakdown of the July 2008 negotiations.

The most significant differences are between developed nations led by the European Union (EU), the United States (US), Canada, and Japan and the major developing countries led and represented mainly by India, Brazil, China, and South Africa. There is also considerable contention against and between the EU and the US over their maintenance of agricultural subsidies—seen to operate effectively as trade barriers. Since the breakdown of negotiations in 2008, there have been repeated attempts to revive the talks, so far without success. Intense negotiations, mostly between the US, China, and India, were held at the end of 2008 seeking agreement on negotiation modalities, an impasse which was not resolved. In April 2011, then director-general Pascal Lamy "asked members to think hard about 'the consequences of throwing away ten years of solid multilateral work'." A report to the WTO General Council by Lamy in May 2012 advocated "small steps, gradually moving forward the parts of the Doha Round which were mature, and re-thinking those where greater differences remained." Adoption of the Bali Ministerial Declaration on 7 December 2013 for the first time successfully addressed bureaucratic barriers to commerce—a small part of the Doha Round agenda.

In 2015, the United States government called for an end to the Doha round, and by 2017 it was declared "dead" by numerous commentators, including the Financial Times. However, the World Trade Organization states that the 2015 Ministerial Meeting in Nairobi "agreed [that] a strong commitment remained among all members to advance negotiations on the remaining Doha issues", and many issues "remain open".

## Battle in Seattle

*directorial debut. The story is loosely based on the protest activity at the WTO Ministerial Conference of 1999. The film had its world premiere at the Toronto International*

Battle in Seattle is a 2007 political action-thriller film written and directed by Stuart Townsend, in his directorial debut. The story is loosely based on the protest activity at the WTO Ministerial Conference of 1999. The film had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 8, 2007. It

later screened at the Seattle International Film Festival in May 2008 and received a limited theatrical release on September 19, 2008.

Medea Benjamin

*of the Greek tragedy suggesting that Medea had never killed her children and was only blamed for it by patriarchal traditions".. She also joined the Students*

Medea Benjamin (born Susan Benjamin on September 10, 1952) is an American political activist who, along with Jodie Evans and others, co-founded Code Pink. She also co-founded, along with her then husband Kevin Danaher, the fair trade advocacy group Global Exchange. Benjamin was the Green Party nominee in the 2000 United States Senate election in California, running under the name Medea Susan Benjamin. She finished in third place with 326,828 votes (3.1%).

Jello Biafra

*short-lived band No WTO Combo to help promote the movement's cause. The band was originally scheduled to play during the protest, but the performance was*

Eric Reed Boucher (born June 17, 1958), known professionally as Jello Biafra, is an American singer, spoken word artist and political activist. He is the former lead singer and songwriter for the San Francisco punk rock band Dead Kennedys.

Initially active from 1979 to 1986, Dead Kennedys were known for rapid-fire music topped with Biafra's sardonic lyrics and biting social commentary, delivered in his "unique quiver of a voice". When the band broke up in 1986, he took over the influential independent record label Alternative Tentacles, which he had founded in 1979 with Dead Kennedys bandmate East Bay Ray. In a 2000 lawsuit, upheld on appeal in 2003 by the California Supreme Court, Biafra was found liable for breach of contract, fraud, and malice in withholding a decade's worth of royalties from his former bandmates and ordered to pay over \$200,000 in compensation and punitive damages; the band subsequently reformed without Biafra. Although now focused primarily on spoken word performances, Biafra has continued as a musician in numerous collaborations. From 1979 to 1981, he contributed to the San Francisco punk zine Damage. He has also occasionally appeared in cameo roles in films.

Politically, Biafra is a member of the Green Party of the United States and supports various political causes. He ran for the party's presidential nomination in the 2000 presidential election, finishing a distant second to Ralph Nader. In 1979 he ran for mayor of San Francisco, California. He is a supporter of a free society and utilizes shock value and advocates direct action and pranksterism in the name of political causes. Biafra uses absurdist media tactics, in the leftist tradition of the Yippies, to highlight issues of civil rights and social justice.

Tariff-rate quota

*US) /. WTO. 2008. p. 335. "Glossary".. WTO. Archived from the original on 2024-05-10. Retrieved 2019-06-23. "Swiss agriculture under fire at WTO";. SwissInfo*

In economics, a tariff-rate quota (TRQ) (also called a tariff quota) is a two-tiered tariff system that combines import quotas and tariffs to regulate import products.

A TRQ allows a lower tariff rate on imports of a given product within a specified quantity and requires a higher tariff rate on imports exceeding that quantity. For example, a country might allow the importation of 5,000 tractors at a tariff rate of 10%. However, any tractor imported above this quantity would be subject to a tariff rate of 30%.

Unlike a simple quota system, a TRQ regime does not restrict the quantity of imported products. The “in-quota commitment” is complemented by an “out-of-quota commitment”. The out-of-quota commitment does not set any limit on the quantity or value of a imported product, but instead applies a different, normally higher, tariff rate to that product. Imports face this higher duty rate once the in-quota quantity or value has been reached, or if any requirement associated with the “in-quota commitment” is not fulfilled.

A TRQ is generally used to protect domestic production by restricting imports. Under that regime, the quota component combines with a specified tariff level to provide the desired level of protection. In many cases, imports above the threshold may face a prohibitive “out-of-quota” tariff rate.

#### Australia–China trade war

*temporarily suspend the WTO action on China's wine import tariffs, pending an expedited review of the tariffs by China, which China announced it would complete*

The Australia–China trade war was a trade war between Australia and China.

The exact date of when the trade war began is debated, however it is understood it began in either 2017 or 2018.

#### Tariffs in the second Trump administration

*On March 4, 2025, the US notified the WTO that it would suspend contributions to its budget indefinitely. The US was set to provide about 11% of the WTO's*

During his second presidency, Donald Trump, president of the United States, triggered a global trade war after he enacted a series of steep tariffs affecting nearly all goods imported into the country. From January to April 2025, the average applied US tariff rate rose from 2.5% to an estimated 27%—the highest level in over a century since the Smoot–Hawley Tariff Act. After changes and negotiations, the rate was estimated at 18.6% as of August 2025. By July 2025, tariffs represented 5% of federal revenue compared to 2% historically.

Under Section 232 of the 1962 Trade Expansion Act, Trump raised steel, aluminum, and copper tariffs to 50% and introduced a 25% tariff on imported cars from most countries. New tariffs on pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, and other sectors are pending. On April 2, 2025, Trump invoked unprecedented powers under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to announce "reciprocal tariffs" on imports from all countries not subject to separate sanctions. A universal 10% tariff took effect on April 5. Additional country-specific tariffs were suspended after the 2025 stock market crash, but went into effect on August 7.

Tariffs under the IEEPA also sparked a trade war with Canada and Mexico and escalated the China–United States trade war. US baseline tariffs on Chinese goods peaked at 145% and Chinese tariffs on US goods reached 125%. In a truce expiring November 9, the US reduced its tariffs to 30% while China reduced to 10%. Trump also signed an executive order to eliminate the de minimis exemption beginning August 29, 2025; previously, shipments with values below \$800 were exempt from tariffs.

Federal courts have ruled that the tariffs invoked under the IEEPA are illegal, including in *V.O.S. Selections, Inc. v. United States*; however, the tariffs remain in effect while the case is appealed. The challenges do not apply to tariffs issued under Section 232 or Section 301.

The Trump administration argues that its tariffs will promote domestic manufacturing, protect national security, and substitute for income taxes. The administration views trade deficits as inherently harmful, a stance economists criticized as a flawed understanding of trade. Although Trump has said foreign countries pay his tariffs, US tariffs are fees paid by US consumers and businesses while importing foreign goods. The

tariffs contributed to downgraded GDP growth projections by the US Federal Reserve, the OECD, and the World Bank.

## Trade war

*(General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) (1947–present; modified by WTO formation in 1994–1995) World Trade Organization, created in the 1990s to avoid customs*

A trade war is an economic conflict often resulting from extreme protectionism, in which states raise or implement tariffs or other trade barriers against each other as part of their commercial policies, in response to similar measures imposed by the opposing party. If tariffs are the exclusive mechanism, then such conflicts are known as customs wars, toll wars, or tariff wars; as a reprisal, the latter state may also increase the tariffs. Trade war arises only if the competitive protection between states is of the same type and it is not valid in case of dumping exports. Increased protection causes both nations' output compositions to move towards their autarky position. Minor trade disagreements are often called trade disputes when the war metaphor is hyperbolic.

Trade wars could be escalated to full conflict between states as evidenced in the Massacre of the Bandanese after alleged violations of a new treaty. The First Anglo-Dutch War was triggered by disputes over trade; the war began with English attacks on Dutch merchant shipping but expanded to vast fleet actions. The Second Anglo-Dutch War was for control over the seas and trade routes, where England tried to end the Dutch domination of world trade during a period of intense European commercial rivalry. The Fourth Anglo-Dutch War started over British and Dutch disagreements on the legality and conduct of Dutch trade with Britain's enemies in that war. The Shimonoseki Campaign after unrest over the shogunate's open-door policy to foreign trade. The First Opium War which started after the Qing government blockaded its ports, confiscated opium contraband and confined British traders, resulted in the dispatch of the British Navy to China and engage the Chinese Navy in the Battle of Kowloon. The First Opium War eventually led to the British colony of Hong Kong, and the Second Opium War, which arose from another trade war with the same underlying causes, expanded the British possessions on the island.

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