The WTO and the Doha Round

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Agenda

- What is WTO?
- WTO: a brief history
- WTO: principles, functions and structure
- Doha Development Agenda
What is WTO
WTO is… a platform where countries negotiate trade deals
WTO is… a “court” where trade disputes are resolved
WTO is... a forum for trade and development
… and WTO is where people have fun
WTO is…

- A rules-based organization set up by governments to administer multilateral trade agreements (MTAs) and perform a number of other important functions

- Members: 159 Members and 25 acceding countries
- Secretariat staff: around 700 people
- Director-General: Mr. Roberto Azevêdo (Brazil)
- Location: Geneva, Switzerland
WTO membership
Agenda

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WTO: A brief history

- From 1948 to 1994: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)
  - 23 contracting parties
  - Rules with a “provisional” character
  - Negotiations were organized under “Rounds” (8 during the GATT)

- 1995: World Trade Organization (WTO)
# WTO: A brief history

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WTO: A brief history

Establishment of WTO

- GATT: on a provisional basis, no institutional framework
- WTO: legal framework, permanent organization
WTO: A brief history

Larger scope

• GATT: trade in goods
• WTO: trade in **goods and services** and **TRIPS (intellectual property)**

Enhanced rules

• Dispute settlement
• Trade Policy Review
Agenda

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WTO Principles

Stability & Predictability – Through binding commitments
WTO Principles

No discrimination

- Most Favoured Nation (MFN)
- National Treatment (NT)
WTO Principles

Transparency

– National trade policy reviewed regularly
– Monitoring of protectionist measures
– Specific measures and laws notified
WTO Principles

Encourage development

– Assisting developing countries to increase their participation in the multilateral trading system
WTO main functions

• Administering and implementing **trade agreements**
• Forum for multilateral **trade negotiations**
• **Dispute settlement**
• Monitoring national **trade policy**
• **Co-operation** with the IMF and the World Bank to ensure coherence in global economic policy-making
WTO Structure

Ministerial Conference – every 2 years

General Council
  – Dispute Settlement Body
  – Trade Policy Review Body

Councils
  – Council for Trade in Goods
  – Council for Trade in Services
  – Council for TRIPS

Committees and other subsidiary bodies
Ministerial Conferences

• Singapore December 1996
• Geneva May 1998
• Seattle November - December 1999
• Doha November 2001 - Doha Development Agenda
• Cancun September 2003
• Hong Kong, China December 2005
• Geneva November – December 2009
• Geneva December 2011
• Bali December 2013
Agenda

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Doha Development Agenda

• The 9th WTO Trade Round launched in Doha, Qatar in November 2001

• Officially the longest round of multilateral trade negotiations – 12 years and probably counting

• Development at its core – needs & interests of developing countries at the centre

• Members converged on the potential of the Round to deliver on growth and development
20 subjects in 9 broad areas:

- Agriculture (including Cotton added in 2003)
- Services
- Non agricultural market access (NAMA)
- TRIPS (multilateral system for registration & notification of geographical indications)
- WTO Rules (AD, Subsidies, RTAs)
- Trade and Environment
- Special and Differential Treatment
- Trade Facilitation (added in 2004)
- DSU (outside Single-Undertaking)
DOHA ROUND
« DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA - DDA »

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

GENERAL COUNCIL

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE - TNC

SPECIAL SESSIONS

- Council For Trade In Services
  - TRIPS Council
- Dispute Settlement Body
- Committee On Agriculture (SS on Cotton)
- Committee On Trade and Development
- Committee On Trade and Environment

NEGOTIATING GROUPS

- Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA)
  - Rules
  - Trade Facilitation
The DDA Journey

Pre-history (before UR): only goods

1995 Uruguay Round agreements, 
new WTO: goods, services, intellectual property

1996 MC, 1998 50th, 1999 Seattle MC
2000 Agriculture, services talks start March
2001 Doha Agenda launched November

2003 Cancún ministerial fails September
2004 Frameworks 1 August
2005 Hong Kong ministerial Dec
2006 - 2007 suspension 6 months

2008 – July Mini-Ministerial failure
2009 – Global Economic Crisis
2009 – 7th Ministerial Conference
2010 March stocktaking

2010 G20 process, Small groups
2011 Harvest “low hanging fruit”
2013 Bali Ministerial Conference

Now: revised rules
new commitments

Future: rules revised again, more commitments
Why So Difficult?

• Launch of Round not well prepared?
• Increase and diversity in WTO membership-153?
• Overloaded negotiating agenda?
• The Single Undertaking bringing together market opening and rule-making?
• Out-dated agenda?
• Diminishing of value of exchange rates (Ag & NAMA) with passage of time?
Why so difficult?

- Effect of the economic crisis?
- Reflection of the wider discontent in questioning globalization
- Current impasse is problematic, but not discomforting in some quarters
- Other avenues to pursue trade opening e.g. RTAs
- Electoral cycles
Where do we stand today?

- Majority of the technical work is done, but still no political will to conclude
- Ministers decided to harvest the “lower hanging fruit” since 2001
- Three lower hanging fruits for Bali conference – trade facilitation, agriculture, development
- DG Azevêdo started rolling consultations aiming at deliverables in Bali
Thank you!

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