

25 years of the WTO

A photographic
retrospective





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Who we are

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the international body dealing with the global rules of trade between nations. Its main function is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible, with a level playing field for all its members.

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A publication of the World Trade Organization

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WTO Online Bookshop

<http://onlinebookshop.wto.org>

ISBN

Print: 978-92-870-4419-8
PDF: 978-92-870-4853-0

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25 YEARS



WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION

Introduction

25 years of challenges, successes and perseverance

In an historical context, 25 years is but a blink of an eye.

Yet, a quarter of a century in the life of an organization like the World Trade Organization is sufficient to provide a pretty fair vantage point from which to assess the WTO's impact on its 164 member governments and on the lives of the citizens they represent. Such retrospective assessment must also take into account the fact that while the WTO is only 25, its roots in shaping economic policy run far deeper because its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, was on the scene since 1948.

The WTO is an organization that has delivered successes but it has also, in some areas, fallen short of its goals. It has proven to be an energetic and resilient place, where members and Secretariat get knocked down only to rise to their feet and try again.

In the early days, there was great excitement at the prospect of an organization (which technically the GATT was not) where negotiations would flow continuously, where trade policies would be thoughtfully gauged and where disputes could be settled efficiently and effectively. The tiresome and ponderous process of conducting "rounds" of trade negotiations would be replaced by perpetual negotiations enabling members to swiftly adjust policies and adapt to the fast-changing trading landscape. To propel governments on their way, the negotiators who concluded the Uruguay Round in 1994 even provided a "built-in agenda" which in 2000 was to have kickstarted negotiations in agriculture and services.

Things have not worked out exactly as envisaged. A successful Ministerial Conference in Singapore in 1996 paved the way for a trio of important agreements on information technology products, telecommunications and financial services. Disputes that had dragged on for years were settled in the WTO's dispute settlement system, which was quickly dubbed the "jewel in the crown" of the organization. Trade Policy Review reports were seen as vitally important tools for better understanding the plumbing of a nation's trade regime.

In 1998, some of the 20th century's most famous people – Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Bill Clinton and Tony Blair among them – descended on Geneva to attend the 2nd Ministerial Conference which commemorated 50 years of the multilateral trading system. The WTO, it seemed, had the wind in its sails.

But there were fissures in the architecture that soon began to emerge. The built-in agenda foundered on the rocks as delegations worried that another round of agriculture negotiations would bring political peril. The 1997 Asian financial crisis had raised a host of questions about whether WTO trade agreements might impinge on governments' rights to regulate.

The WTO's anniversary party in 1998 revealed that not everyone was sanguine about an organization which many saw as the principle agent of globalization. From the very beginning, the organization had been controversial. In the early days, some journalists, academics and members of civil society fretted that the WTO would become an all-powerful hegemon, intruding into the lives of just about everybody. These fears were manifested in the riots in Geneva which marred the 2nd Ministerial Conference.

These riots came as a shock to many but were a harbinger of what was to come.

If there were one event that characterized the anti-globalization movement of the latter 20th century, it was quite probably the WTO's Seattle Ministerial in 1999. A surreal confab in which, as former Director-General Mike Moore put it, "the vegetarians marched arm in arm with the beef farmers" in opposition to globalization and the WTO. The meeting was chaotic and a substantive failure. But the aftershocks of Seattle also forced the organization to change and become more transparent and more open to stakeholders. The post-Seattle tremors swept away any lingering GATT-era cobwebs and made clear that while the foundations of the WTO may have rested on international law and economics, this was a far more political organization than the GATT ever was.

As the process of continuing negotiations stalled, delegations reverted to the Big Bang approach of large and complex rounds of negotiations. The first attempt at launching a round sank into Puget Sound at the Seattle Ministerial Conference. But the resilience of the WTO came into play in 2001. Following the horrific attacks on New York and Washington, WTO ministers agreed to meet in Doha – most other organizations had cancelled their meetings – and it was there they agreed to launch the Doha Development Agenda. While these negotiations have subsequently disappointed many, they have also delivered important outcomes including amending the Agreement on Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights to improve access to essential medicines, striking the Trade Facilitation Agreement and providing the platform for future reforms in agriculture and disciplines in fisheries subsidies.

Intensive efforts to conclude the Round in 2006 and 2008 collapsed and negotiations in the WTO essentially shut down for five years as the world entered the most precarious economic climate since the Great Depression.

Against a backdrop of limited success in negotiations, the dispute settlement system surged forward. Just nine years after the system began operating, it had already seen more cases initiated (300) than in the entire 47-year history of the GATT. The system was working well but some feared that it was working too well. As negotiations flagged, some believed that members sought to change rules through litigation rather than negotiation. Others said the powerful dispute settlement system made some members apprehensive of striking new deals for fear of being hauled into court by other members with far more resources.

In a way, the WTO has been a victim of both its own success and bad timing. The impressive early negotiating successes and effective dispute settlement system created anxiety in some quarters and an eventual backlash. Hugely significant events like the Asian Crisis, 9/11, the Great Recession, massive trade tensions and finally the COVID-19 pandemic created conditions in which success would always be difficult to attain.

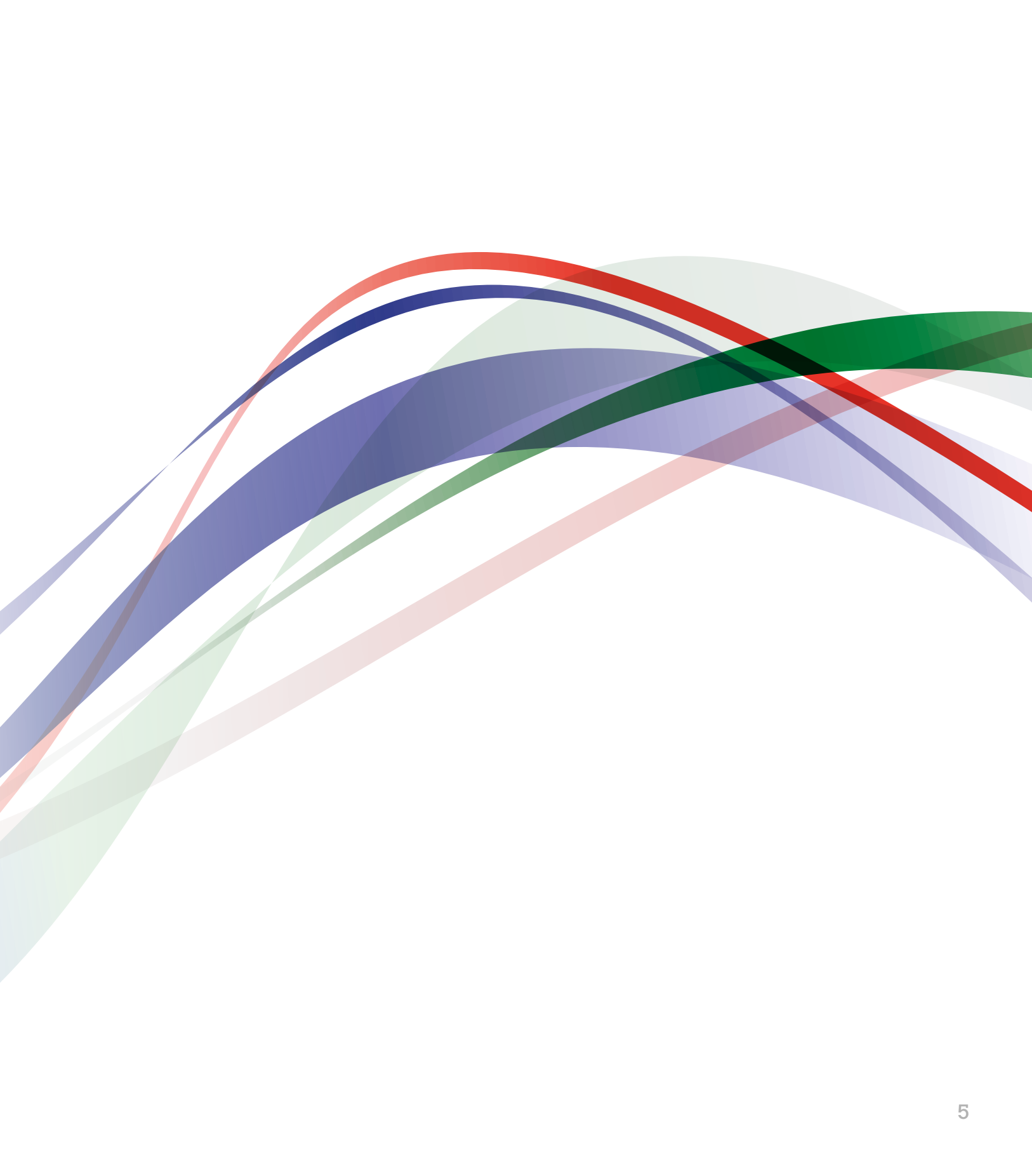
And yet, despite such difficult terrain, the WTO has posted notable achievements in recent years: the Trade Facilitation Agreement, the elimination of all forms of agriculture subsidies, and the extension of the Information Technology Agreement to cover 201 products worth US\$1.3 trillion in annual exports. In response to the financial crisis of 2008, the WTO also began to monitor trade measures to evaluate governments' trade responses. This monitoring activity was expanded in 2020 to assess government trade responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The consistently excellent work of the WTO's regular committees has ensured a more transparent trading environment. Hundreds of technical assistance programmes have revved up the capacity of developing country negotiators to participate in the global trading system. Outreach activities like the Public Forum have served to make the WTO more inclusive by bringing civil society and the business community into the conversation.

WTO delegations have begun to explore new ways of working, employing new technologies and different approaches to negotiations. New issues, pertaining to the environment, women's economic empowerment and smaller businesses, have come to the fore even as long-standing matters retain a central place on the agenda.

Over this past quarter of a century, the WTO has met with successes and suffered setbacks. It has encountered criticisms – some fair, some less so. But the one constant throughout these tumultuous years has been the commitment of dedicated and determined delegates and Secretariat staff.

The images contained on these pages capture some of this commitment and reflect the importance that all of us attach to the work of the WTO. Perhaps this explains how the WTO's membership has grown by more than 30% since 1995. These past 25 years have brought a whirlwind of events and transformations that no one could have foreseen, including the most serious global pandemic in over a century. No one can predict what the next 25 will bring, but it seems irrefutable that whatever challenges the future holds, the prospect of meeting them will be far greater if we do it collectively.



Timeline

25 years at a glance

The WTO began life on 1 January 1995, succeeding the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade which had regulated world trade since 1948. Over the past 25 years, the WTO has made a major contribution to the strength and stability of the global economy, helping to boost trade growth, resolve numerous trade disputes and support the integration of developing countries into the trading system.

1994

April

Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO is signed.



1995

January

The WTO is born on 1 January.

May

Renato Ruggiero (Italy) takes office as WTO Director-General.

1996

December

First Ministerial Conference takes place in Singapore. Information Technology Agreement concluded.



1997

December

Seventy WTO members reach a multilateral agreement to open their financial services sector.

1998

May

Second Ministerial Conference takes place in Geneva.



1999

September

Mike Moore (New Zealand) becomes WTO Director-General.

November

Third Ministerial Conference takes place in Seattle, United States.



2000

January

Negotiations begin on services.

March

Negotiations begin on agriculture.



2002

September

Supachai Panitchpakdi (Thailand) is elected WTO Director-General.



2005

September

Pascal Lamy (France) becomes WTO Director-General.

December

Sixth Ministerial Conference takes place in Hong Kong, China. Aid for Trade initiative is launched. Hong Kong Declaration is approved.



2001

November

Fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar. Doha Development Agenda is launched. China becomes the WTO's 143rd member.



2003

September

Fifth Ministerial Conference takes place in Cancún, Mexico.

2004

July

General Council approves "July 2004 Framework" for advancing Doha Round negotiations.

2006

September

First WTO Public Forum takes place in Geneva.





WTO CHAIRS PROGRAMME

2007

November

First Global Review of Aid for Trade takes place in Geneva.

2008

July

Ministerial meeting in Geneva attempts to take big step towards conclusion of Doha Round.

2009

April

DG Pascal Lamy reappointed for second term of four years.

September

First WTO Open Day in Geneva.

November

Seventh Ministerial Conference takes place in Geneva.



2010

January

"Chairs Programme" launched to support developing country universities.



2011

December

Eighth Ministerial Conference takes place in Geneva.

2012

August

Russia becomes the WTO's 156th member.



2013

September

Roberto Azevêdo (Brazil) takes office as WTO Director-General.

December

Ninth Ministerial Conference takes place in Bali, Indonesia.

"Bali Package" adopted, including the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

2014

April

Revised WTO Agreement on Government Procurement comes into force.



2015

December

Tenth Ministerial Conference takes place in Nairobi, Kenya. "Nairobi Package" adopted, including abolition of agricultural export subsidies.

Expansion of Information Technology Agreement concluded.

2016

July

Afghanistan and Liberia become the WTO's newest (163rd and 164th) members.

2017

January

Amendment to the TRIPS Agreement enters into force, easing access to medicines.

February

Trade Facilitation Agreement enters into force.

September

Roberto Azevêdo begins second term as WTO Director-General.

December

Eleventh Ministerial Conference takes place in Buenos Aires, Argentina.



2018

October

WTO and UN Environment host leadership dialogue on expanding trade's contribution to sustainability.

2019

January

General Council appoints facilitator to help WTO members resolve differences on functioning of Appellate Body.

October

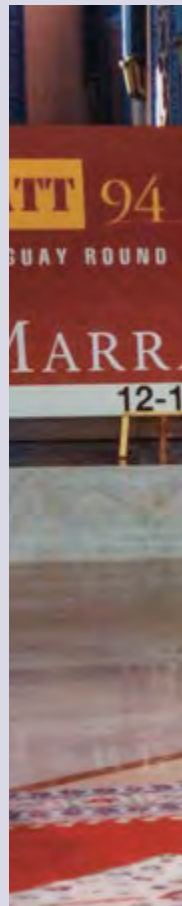
WTO hosts World Cotton Day.



November

Conference marks 30 years of the WTO's Trade Policy Review Mechanism.

1995

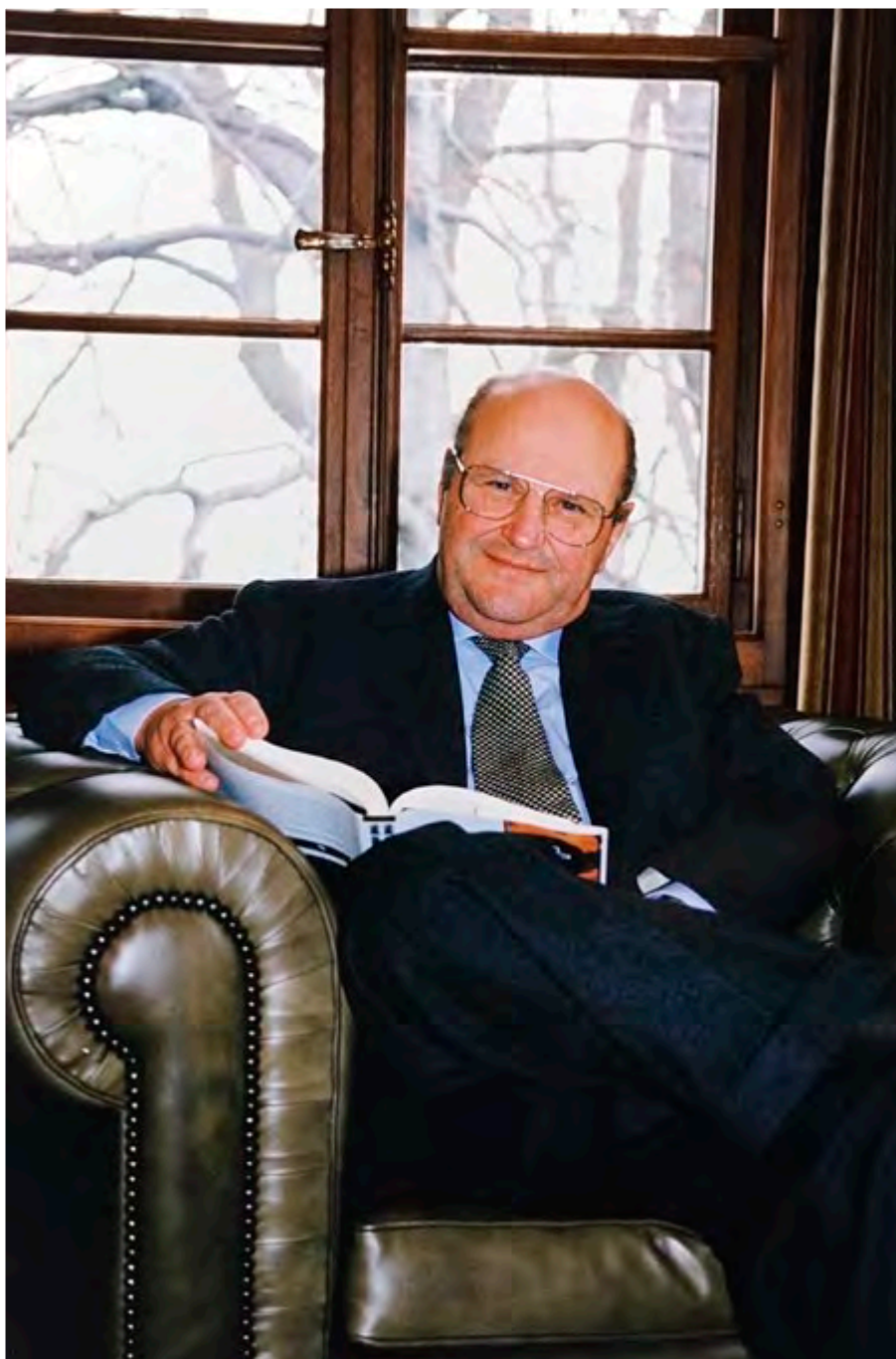




Signing of the Marrakesh Agreement on 15 April 1994. The Agreement formally concluded the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations and established the WTO, which came into being on 1 January 1995.

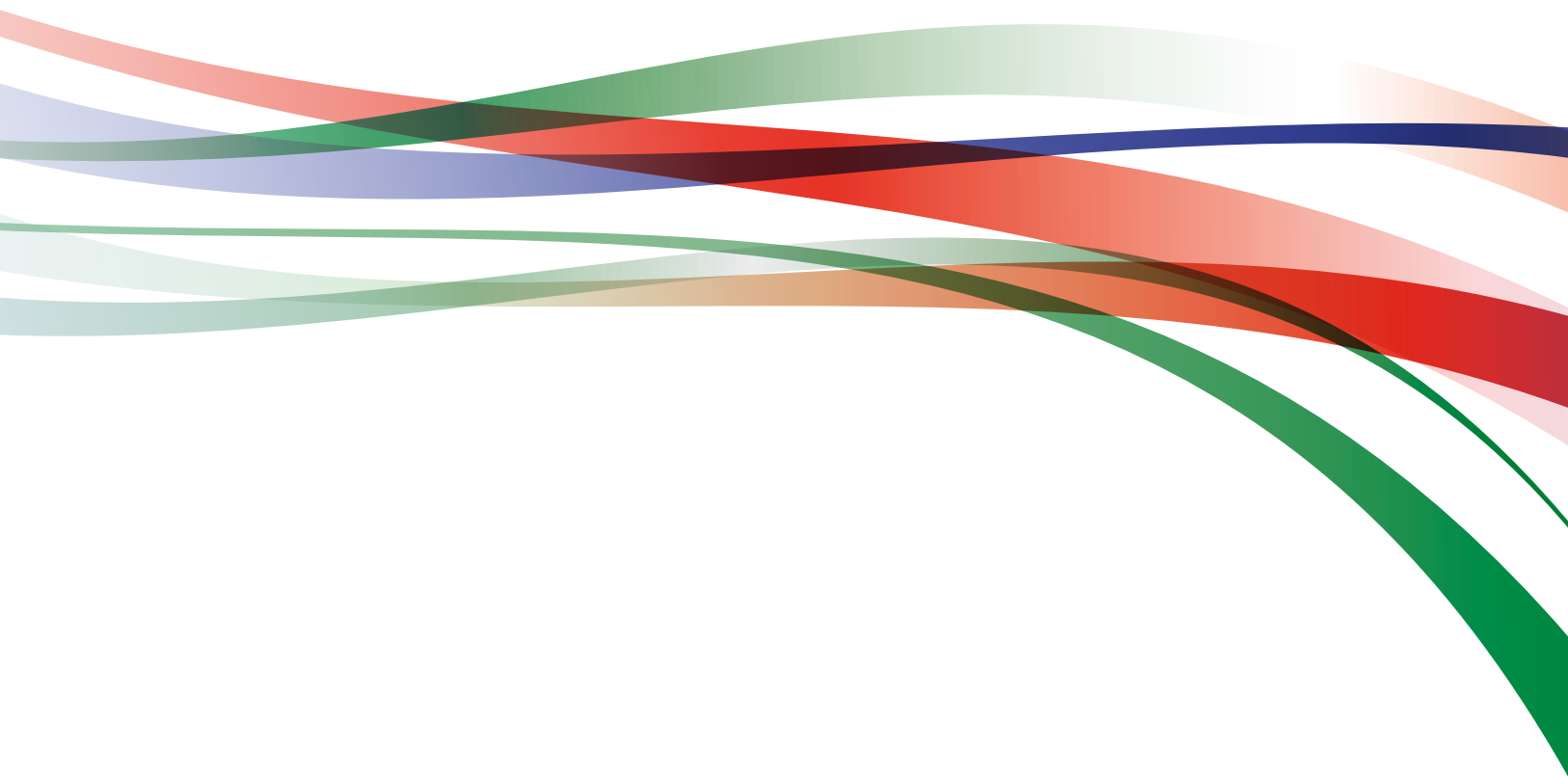
Peter Sutherland, WTO Director-General from January 1995 to April 1995.





Renato Ruggiero, WTO Director-General from May 1995 to April 1999.

1996





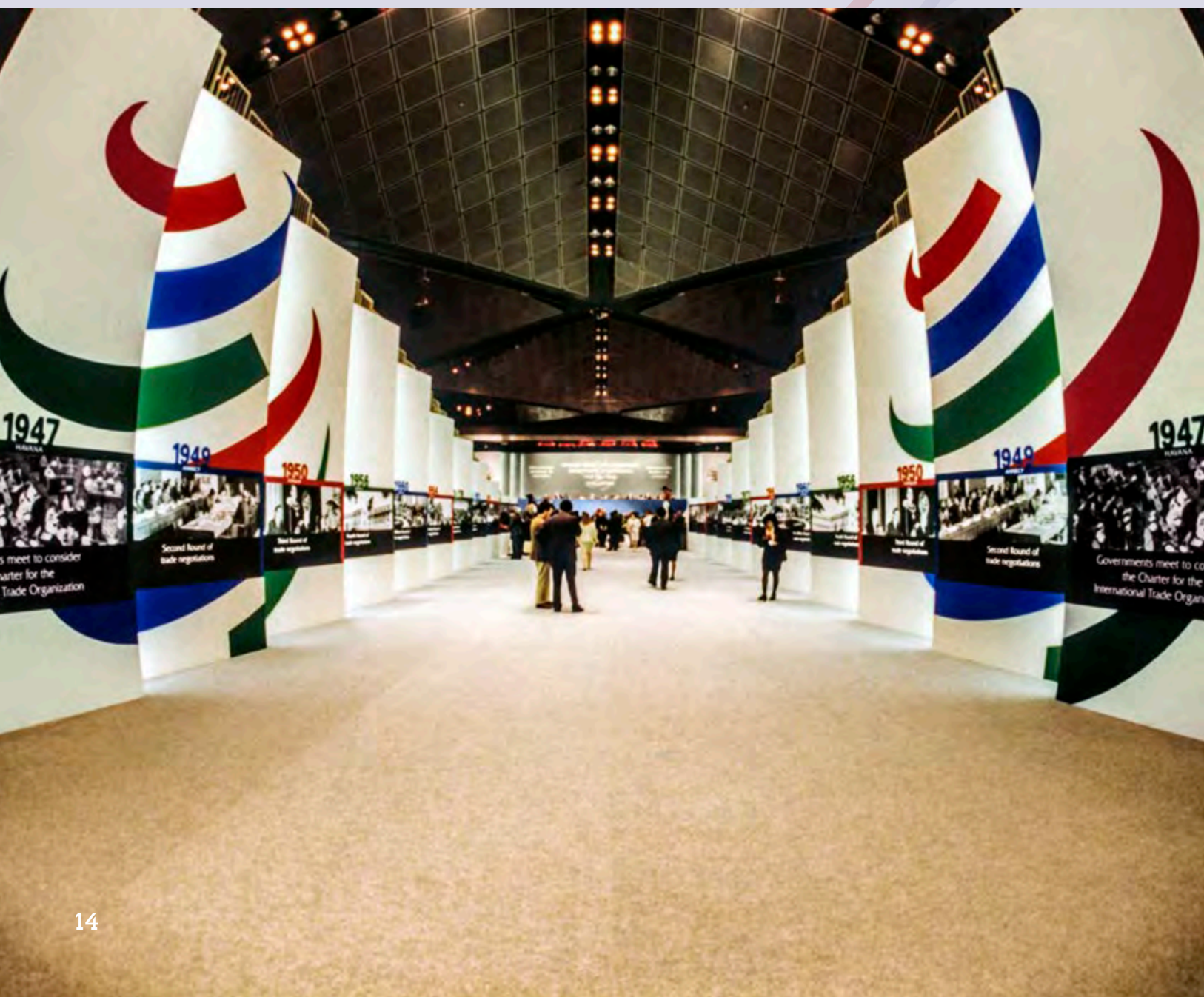
The First Ministerial Conference is held in Singapore on 9 to 13 December 1996.



Director-General Renato Ruggiero in conversation with the Conference Chair, Singapore's Trade and Industry Minister Yeo Cheow Tong, at the First Ministerial Conference.



Ministers from more than 120 WTO members and acceding governments participated in the Singapore Conference.





1997



Construction of the Council Room to provide additional meeting space at the WTO's headquarters in Geneva.

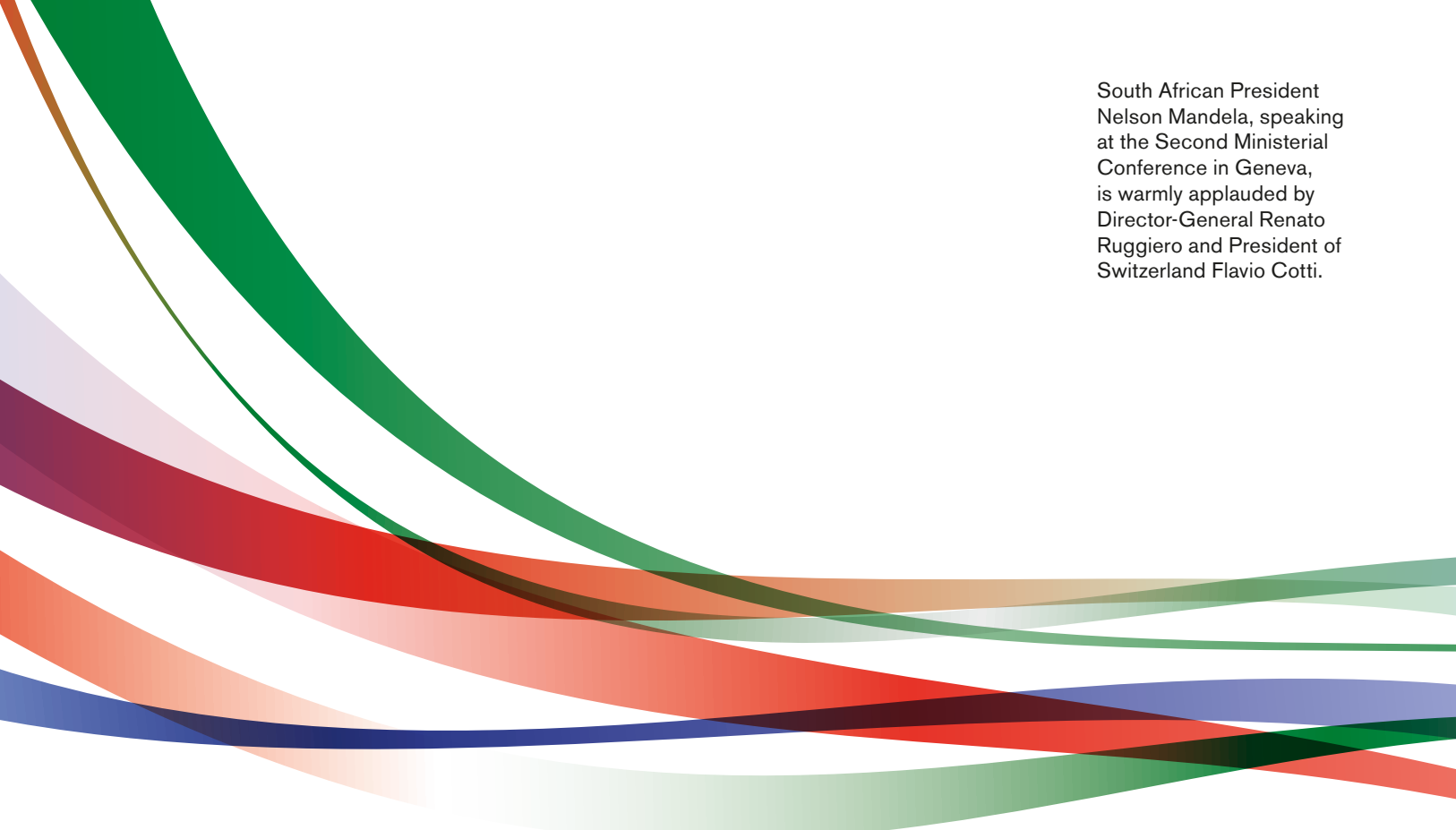


Demonstrators outside the gates of the WTO's headquarters in Geneva.

Director-General Renato Ruggiero in conversation with Ambassador Terje Johannessen (Norway), Chair of the Council for Trade in Goods.



Director-General Renato Ruggiero with WTO Spokesperson Keith Rockwell and Su Yeang, designer of the WTO logo, at the unveiling of a plaque displaying the logo in the entrance hall of the WTO's headquarters in Geneva.



South African President
Nelson Mandela, speaking
at the Second Ministerial
Conference in Geneva,
is warmly applauded by
Director-General Renato
Ruggiero and President of
Switzerland Flavio Cotti.

1998



US President Bill Clinton, US First Lady Hillary Clinton and Director-General Renato Ruggiero (right) make their way to the opening session of the Second Ministerial Conference in Geneva.



US President Bill Clinton addresses the
Second Ministerial Conference in Geneva.



The Second Ministerial Conference, held in the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 18 to 20 May 1998, commemorated the 50th anniversary of the multilateral trading system.





Cuban President Fidel Castro speaking at the Second Ministerial Conference in Geneva.



1999

Protestors march in downtown Seattle the day before the Third Ministerial Conference gets under way.



Activists march down Sixth Avenue in downtown Seattle in protest against the WTO.



Director-General Mike Moore and the Chair of the Seattle Ministerial Conference, US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky.



George Yeo, Singapore's Minister for Trade, addresses the Seattle Ministerial Conference, which began on 30 November 1999.



2000

Director-General Mike Moore
addressing the General Council.





Director-General Mike Moore offers his congratulations to Ali Said Mchumo of Tanzania (centre), who is succeeded as Chair of the General Council by Kåre Bryn of Norway (right).



Director-General Mike Moore looks on as Croatia's Minister of the Economy, Goranko Fižulić, signs his country's WTO terms of accession.

Valdas Adamkus, President of Lithuania, and Director-General Mike Moore on their way to the General Council where WTO members approved Lithuania's terms of accession.





Mike Moore, WTO
Director-General from
September 1999 to
August 2002.

Director-General Mike Moore
greets Takashi Fukaya, Japan's
Minister of Trade and Industry.



2001





Director-General Mike Moore, Conference Chair Youssef Hussain Kamal and China's Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation Shi Guangsheng celebrate ministerial approval of China's WTO membership at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha in November 2001.



Conference Chair Youssef Hussain Kamal, Qatar's Minister of Finance, Economy and Commerce, addresses the opening session of the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha on 9 November 2001.



The opening plenary of the Doha Ministerial Conference.



中国加入世界贸易组织签字仪式 SIGNING CEREMONY ON CHINA'S ACCESSION TO THE WTO

11 November 2001, Doha



Chinese Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation Minister Shi Guangsheng signs his country's WTO accession documents.

2002

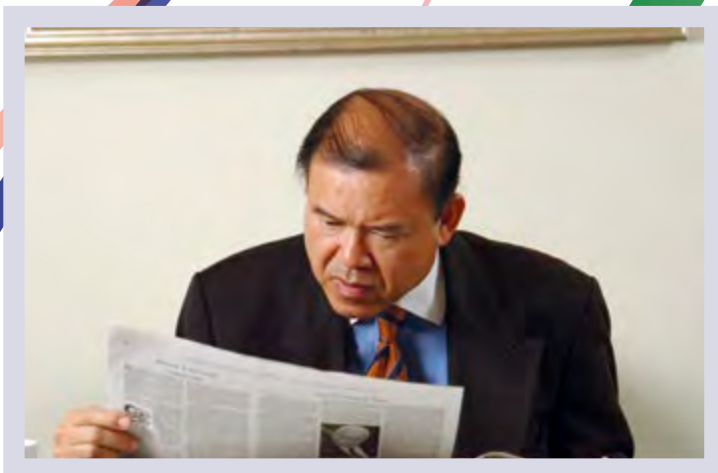
DG Supachai
Panitchpakdi and Maxim
Medvedkov, Russia's
Chief Negotiator for
WTO accession, answer
press questions after a
Green Room meeting on
Russia's accession.







Outgoing Director-General Mike Moore and new Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi answering questions from the press.



DG Supachai Panitchpakdi in his office, moments before his official portrait was taken.

Outgoing Director-General Mike Moore shares a joke with the new Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi and WTO Spokesperson Keith Rockwell.





Supachai Panitchpakdi,
WTO Director-General
from September 2002 to
August 2005.

2003





Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi presents the gavel to Luis Ernesto Derbez, Mexico's Foreign Affairs Minister and Conference Chair, at the closing ceremony of the Cancún Ministerial Conference.



Mexico's Foreign Affairs Minister and Chair of the Cancún Conference, Luis Ernesto Derbez, alongside Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi.

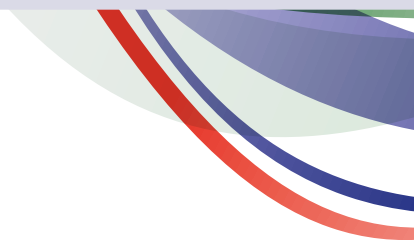


Mexico's President Vicente Fox gives the inaugural address at the Fifth Ministerial Conference in Cancun on 10 September 2003.

The Chair of the Cancun Ministerial Conference, Mexico's Foreign Affairs Minister Luis Ernesto Derbez, opens the meeting alongside President Vicente Fox.



2004



Panoramic shot of a General Council meeting.



EU Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler, US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, Brazil's Foreign Minister Celso Amorim and EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy in conversation prior to a Heads of Delegation meeting.





India's Minister for Commerce and Industry, Kamal Nath, holds a press conference at the start of a series of meetings at the WTO aimed at galvanizing global trade talks.



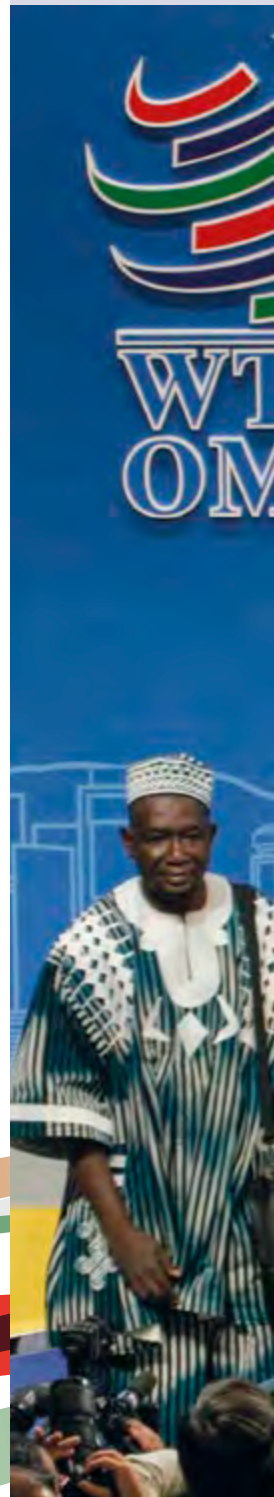
Director-General
Supachai Panitchpakdi
taking part in a panel
discussion at the
World Economic
Forum in Davos.



Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi reads his notes before reporting to Heads of Delegation on the latest phase of trade talks in Geneva. Seated behind him is Willy Alfaro, his deputy Chief of Staff.

DIRECTOR GENERAL

2005





Oxfam presents a petition calling for fair trade at a press conference on 16 December 2005 during the Sixth Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, China.



Grenada takes the floor on Day Two of the Sixth Ministerial Conference held in Hong Kong, China, on 13 to 18 December 2005.

Director-General Pascal Lamy speaking at the Sixth Ministerial Conference alongside Conference Chair John Tsang, Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology of Hong Kong, China.



DG Pascal Lamy
with DDGs Valentine
Sendanyoye Rugwabiza,
Rufus Yerxa, Alejandro
Jara and Harsha Vardhana
Singh after their first
General Council meeting.



Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of Hong Kong,
China, takes the floor at the start of the Hong
Kong Ministerial Conference.



2006

Director-General Pascal Lamy and US actor Ted Danson pose with Finley the Fish, a mascot used by environmental group Oceana in its campaign for major cuts in global fishing subsidies.





Director-General Pascal Lamy
in conversation with Watana
Muangsook, Thailand's Minister of
Social Affairs.



Deputy Director-General Harsha Vardhana Singh shares a word with Director-General Pascal Lamy at a meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee.



Director-General Pascal Lamy talks with Peter Sutherland, former Director-General and Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.



Antony Burgmans (Chairman, Unilever),
Ted Turner (Chairman, UN Foundation),
Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili (Prime Minister
of Lesotho) and Director-General Pascal Lamy
at the first WTO Public Forum in Geneva.





Amina Mohamed (Kenya) chairs a General Council meeting.

Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Pham Gia Khiêm sits opposite Eirik Glenne, General Council and Viet Nam Working Party Chair, at a signing ceremony to mark the country's accession to the WTO.



2007

Robert Zoellick, Chief Executive of the World Bank, and Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary General, share the podium with Director-General Pascal Lamy at the Aid for Trade Global Review.





WTO Spokesperson Keith Rockwell and Janaina Borges, Head of the Audio Visual and Social Media Unit, in the control room of the former television studio during the recording of an interview with DG Pascal Lamy.





Chef de Cabinet Arancha Gonzalez has a quiet word with Director-General Pascal Lamy and Deputy Director-General Valentine Sendanyoye Rugwabiza at the Aid for Trade Global Review.

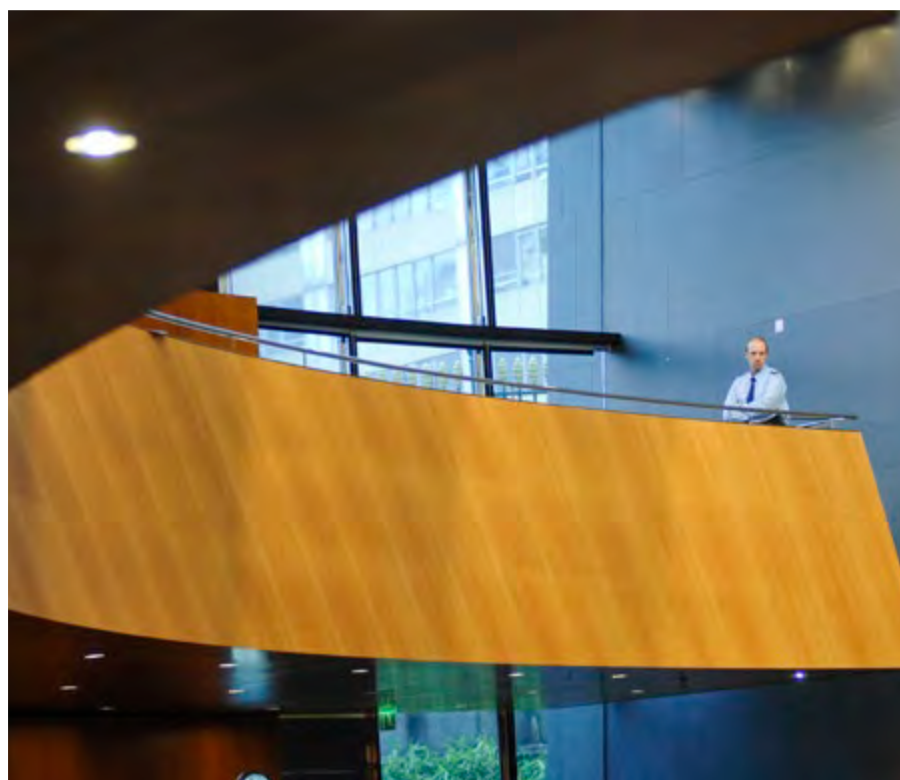
Director-General Pascal Lamy listening intently to Deputy Director-General Valentine Sendanyoye Rugwabiza at the Aid for Trade Global Review.



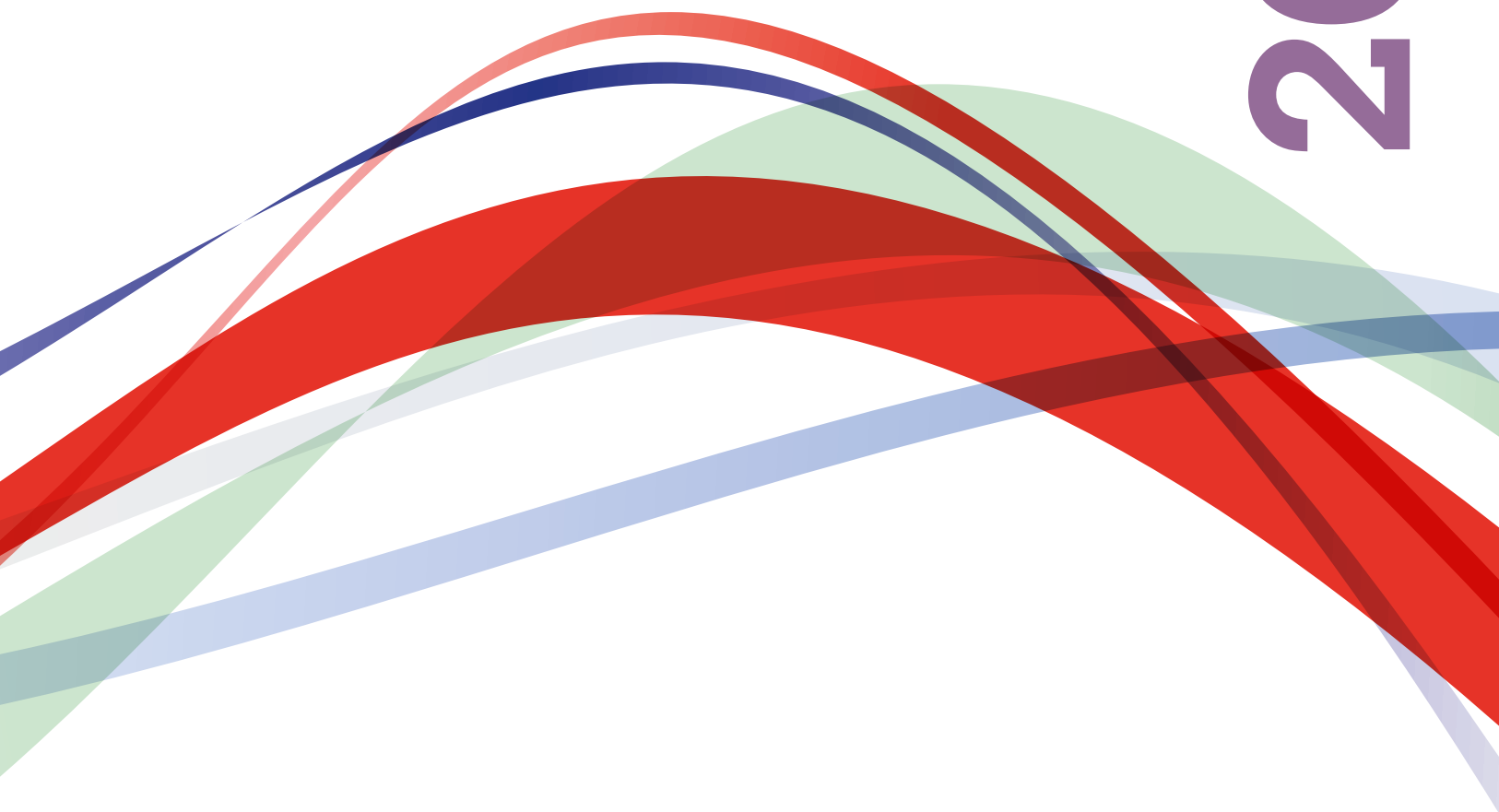


Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, addresses the Aid for Trade Global Review.

A security guard on the balcony of the Council Room during the first Global Review of Aid for Trade in 2007.



2008



70

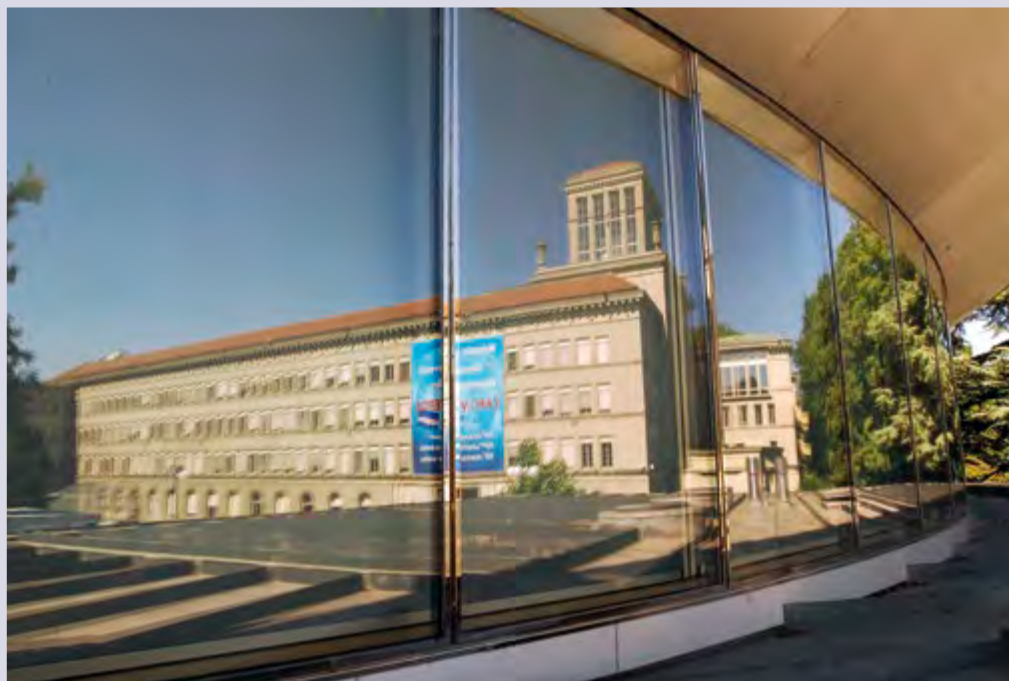
DDG Rufus Yerxa on his way to a General Council meeting at the start of the July 2008 mini-ministerial.



Staff members relax in the courtyard, which would later become the atrium of the Centre William Rappard.



Doris Leuthard, Switzerland's
Minister of Economic Affairs,
at a General Council meeting
in July 2008.



Reflection of the Centre William Rappard in the windows of the Council Room.



Celso Amorim, Brazil's Minister of Foreign Relations, leads members of his delegation, including the future DG Roberto Azevêdo, during the July 2008 mini-ministerial.

Peter Mandelson, European Commissioner for Trade, is interviewed by the BBC in the Centre William Rappard during the July 2008 mini-ministerial. DDG Rufus Yerxa looks on from the upper staircase.





The EU delegation, led by Peter Mandelson, exchanges words with members of the US delegation, including Sean Spicer, assistant for media and public affairs of the United States Trade Representative, at the 2008 mini-ministerial.



Peter Mandelson, European Commissioner for Trade, on the phone
on the last day of the 2008 mini-ministerial.



Night view from the courtyard of Centre William Rappard during the long 2008 negotiations.



Delegates catch a moment of sleep during the night-time discussions of the 2008 mini-ministerial.



An intense discussion between members of the G20, including ministers from South Africa, Indonesia and India, during the July 2008 mini-ministerial.



India's Minister of Commerce and Industry Kamal Nath answers journalists' questions during the 2008 mini-ministerial.



Members of the Japanese delegation take a break during Green Room negotiations.





WTO Spokesperson Keith Rockwell surrounded by journalists during a break in the July 2008 talks.

Susan Schwab, United States Trade Representative, talks to the press during the July 2008 talks.



DG Pascal Lamy
opening the 2009 Aid for
Trade Global Review.

2009





A delegate reads the International Herald Tribune in the Centre William Rappard during the 2009 Public Forum.





DG Pascal Lamy shows
UN Secretary General Ban
Ki-moon the Centre William
Rappard frescos at the 2009
Aid for Trade Global Review.

DG Pascal Lamy in
conversation with delegates
during the Seventh Ministerial
Conference in Geneva.





Chen Deming, China's Minister of Commerce, comes face to face with Ron Kirk, US Trade Representative, during the Seventh Ministerial Conference in Geneva.

DG Pascal Lamy faces the press on the opening day of the Seventh Ministerial Conference in Geneva.



Anand Sharma, India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, during the Seventh Ministerial Conference in Geneva.



Anand Sharma (centre), India's Commerce and Industry Minister, holds a press conference at the Seventh Ministerial Conference, accompanied by Ambassador Ujal Singh Bhatia (right).



The auditorium on the opening day of the
Seventh Ministerial Conference in Geneva.





A press conference led by Mari Pangestu, Indonesia's Trade Minister, Simon Crean, Australia's Minister for Trade, and Tim Groser, New Zealand's Minister of Trade.

The Chair of the Seventh Ministerial Conference, Chile's Finance Minister Andrés Velasco, and Director-General Pascal Lamy on the first day of the conference.





The Seventh Ministerial Conference is held in Geneva on 30 November to 2 December 2009.

DG Pascal Lamy has a light-hearted conversation with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon (left), Deputy Director-General Valentine Sendanyoye Rugwabiza and Islamic Trade Finance Corporation CEO Waleed Al-Wohaib before the start of the 2009 Aid for Trade Global Review.





2010



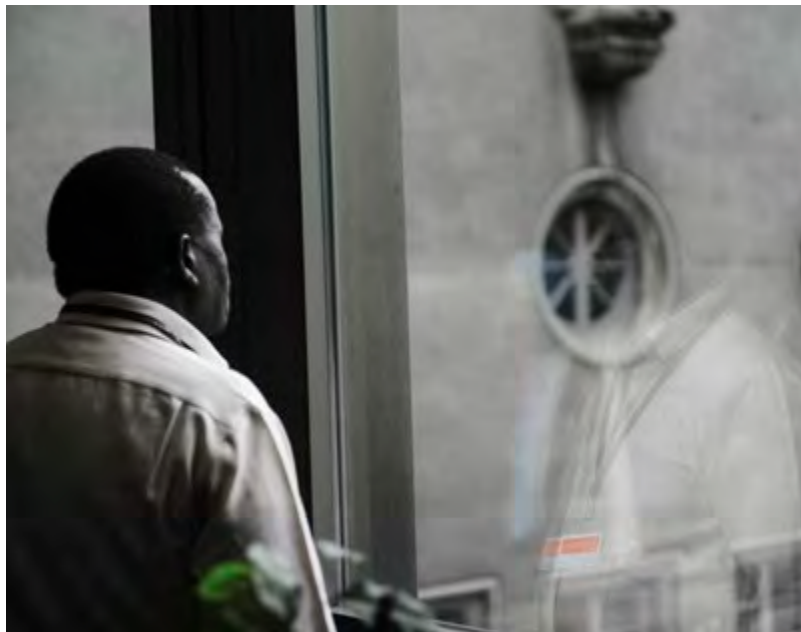
Brazil offers national drinks during the 2010 WTO Open Day.

The WTO welcomed close to 3,000 visitors
to its Open Day in September 2010.



A moment of hilarity on the side-lines
of the 2010 Public Forum.





A participant peers out of the second-floor windows of the Centre William Rappard during the 2010 Public Forum.

Deputy Director-General
Harsha Verdhana Singh
speaking at the Public Forum.



Members of the WTO security service during the 2010 Public Forum.



2011



Switzerland's Minister of Economic Affairs, Johann Schneider-Ammann (centre), alongside Luzius Wasescha (left), Swiss Ambassador to the WTO, during the Eighth Ministerial Conference in Geneva.



An inspection of the renovation work to create the new atrium of the Centre William Rappard.

The Samoan delegation
moments before their
accession signing ceremony.





Delegates chat during
the Eighth Ministerial
Conference in Geneva.





DG Pascal Lamy leads the speakers of the 2011 Public Forum opening plenary session to the Council Room.

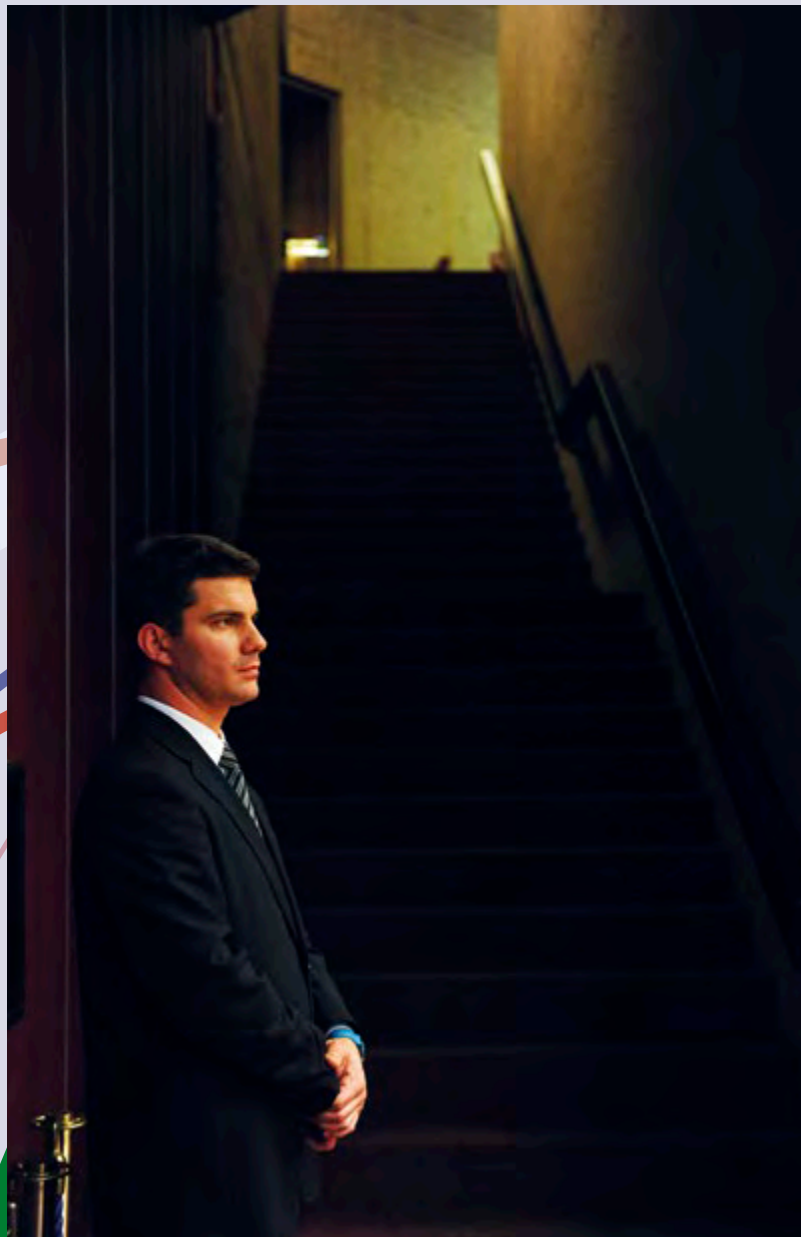
A delegate stands to take a photo during the Eighth Ministerial Conference in Geneva.



Ambassador Ujal
Singh Bhatia, WTO
Appellate Body member
and former Permanent
Representative of India
to the WTO, during the
2011 Public Forum.



Fernando Perenzin,
a member of the DG
Office, waits patiently
between sessions of
the Eighth Ministerial
Conference in Geneva.





The Eighth Ministerial Conference is held in Geneva from 15 to 17 December 2011.

Nigeria's Trade and Investment Minister and Conference Chair, Olusegun Olutoyin Aganga, speaking at the opening session of the Eighth Ministerial Conference in Geneva.





Russia's Economic Development Minister, Elvira Nabiullina, and Director-General Pascal Lamy celebrate the approval of Russia's terms of accession at the Eighth Ministerial Conference.

DG Pascal Lamy faces the press on the opening day of the Eighth Ministerial Conference in Geneva.



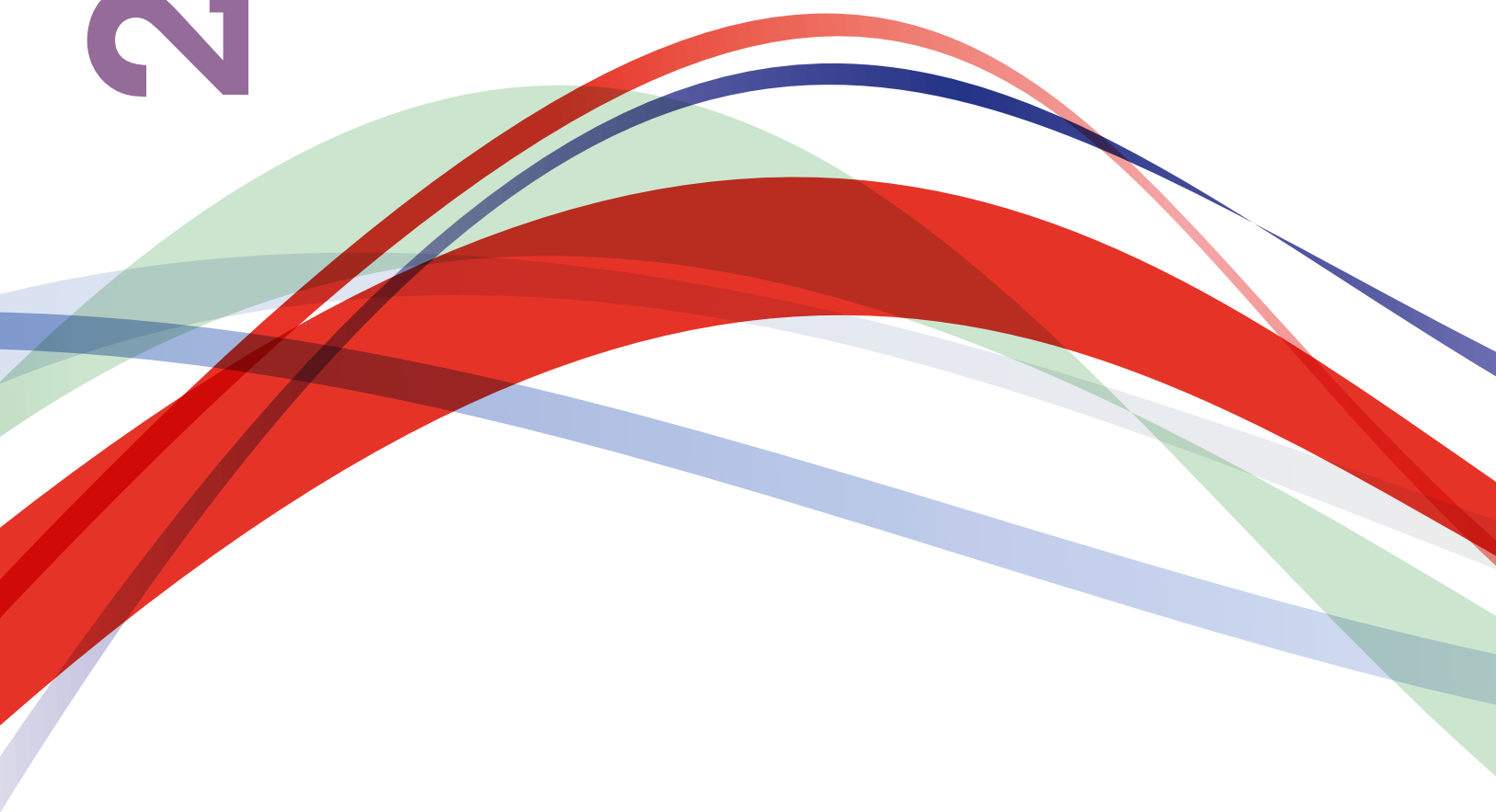
Media representatives at the Eighth
Ministerial Conference in Geneva.





A rare moment of calm during the Eighth Ministerial Conference in Geneva.

2012







The WTO celebrates the accession of Samoa and Montenegro.

Press conference led by Director-General Pascal Lamy to announce the WTO's latest trade forecast.





Elin Johansen (Norway) chairs a meeting of the General Council.



Director-General Pascal Lamy alongside Senator Donald H. Oliver (Canada), member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, at an IPU Parliamentary Conference held at the WTO.

Launch of the World Trade Report 2012 in the Council Room of the WTO's headquarters.





2013



Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (centre), Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and Indonesia's Trade Minister and Conference Chair Gita Wirjawan (right) make their way to the opening session of the Bali Ministerial Conference.



Delegates entering Bali's Nusa Dua Convention Centre for the opening session of the Ninth Ministerial Conference.



Indonesia's President
Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
strikes a ceremonial gong to
inaugurate the Ninth Ministerial
Conference in Bali.



The Republic of Korea
takes the floor at a
heads of delegation
meeting on the first day
of the Bali Ministerial
Conference.

Participants in Room W of Centre William Rappard during the Fourth Global Review of Aid for Trade in 2013.

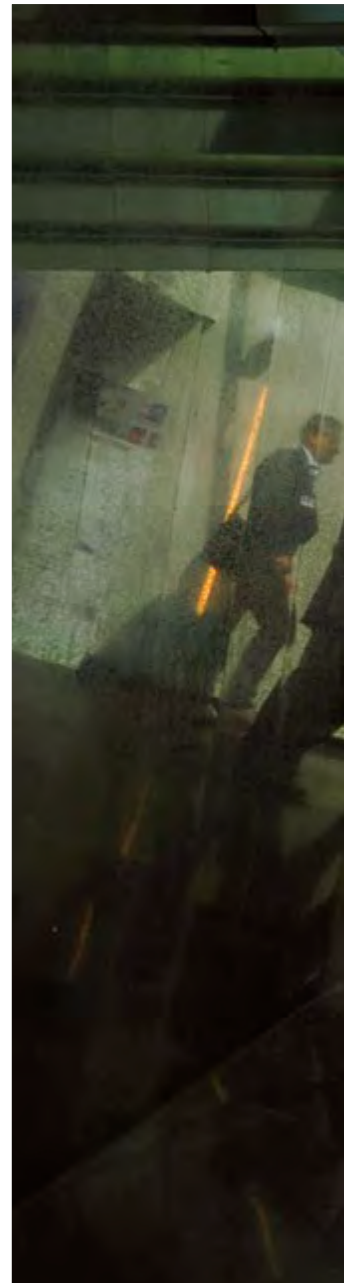


At the Fourth Aid for Trade Global Review, an attendee takes a quiet break in front of the Portuguese azulejos on the first floor of Centre William Rappard.





Michael Roberts, Head of the Aid for Trade Unit, confers with DDG Valentine Sendanyoye Rugwabiza during a session of the Fourth Global Review of Aid for Trade in 2013.



Light and shadows in the corridors leading to the new underground conference rooms of Centre William Rappard during the Fourth Global Review of Aid for Trade in 2013.





Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and the Conference Chair, Indonesia's Trade Minister Gita Wirjawan, celebrate the adoption of the Bali Package on the final day of the Ninth Ministerial Conference.

2014



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo at a press conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim following a high-level meeting in Berlin.





Hamid Mamdouh, Director of the Trade in Services Division, and Deputy Director-General Yi Xiaozhun at the launch of a new WTO book on addressing regulatory issues in services trade.





A meeting of the WTO Committee on Government Procurement in one of the WTO's new meeting rooms constructed during the renovation of the Centre William Rappard.



Seychelles' Minister of Finance, Trade and Investment, Pierre Laporte, signs his country's accession terms alongside Director-General Roberto Azevêdo. Far left is Chiedu Osakwe, Director of the WTO's Accessions Division.

Deputy Director-General
David Shark at the opening
session of the Public Forum.





2015



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo presents Amina Mohamed, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Conference Chair, with the gavel at the end of the Nairobi Ministerial Conference.



Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia, is accompanied by the Chair of the Conference, Amina Mohamed, to the opening session of the Nairobi Ministerial Conference.

Kenyan musicians and dancers
welcome participants to the
Nairobi Ministerial Conference.





Liberia's President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Director-General Roberto Azevêdo celebrate the approval of Liberia's accession to the WTO at the Nairobi Ministerial Conference.

Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and Afghanistan's First Deputy Chief Executive, Mohammad Khan Rahmani, celebrate the adoption of Afghanistan's terms of accession at the Tenth Ministerial Conference.



Kenya's President, Uhuru Kenyatta, welcomes
Director-General Roberto Azevêdo before the start
of the Nairobi Ministerial Conference.



2016





Director-General Roberto Azevêdo addresses delegates at a meeting of the General Council.



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo with General Council Chair Harald Neple (Norway) at a Heads of Delegation meeting.

Director-General Roberto Azevêdo shares a light moment with the Chair of the General Council, Fernando de Mateo (Mexico).



2017



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo is joined at the opening ceremony of the Eleventh Ministerial Conference by the presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay and the Conference Chair, Minister Susana Malcorra of Argentina.



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Director-General Roberto Azevêdo with staff of the DG's office at the closure of the Buenos Aires Ministerial Conference.



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo presents Minister Susana Malcorra with the gavel at the end of the Buenos Aires Ministerial Conference.



Vice-Chair of the Buenos Aires Ministerial Conference, New Zealand's Minister of Trade David Parker, alongside Deputy Director-General Karl Brauner.



A participant at the 2017 Public Forum takes a photo in Room W of the Centre William Rappard.



Security officers in front of the Centre William Rappard in the hours before the opening of the 2017 Public Forum.

Discussions among participants in the Council Room during the Sixth Global Review of Aid for Trade in 2017.





Lively discussions during a session encouraging debate among participants at the 2017 Public Forum.

A view from an upper floor onto the Atrium of Centre William Rappard during the 2017 Public Forum.





A session at the Sixth Global Review of Aid for Trade in 2017.





Vice-President of the Gambia, Fatoumata Tambajang, dances to live music during the Sixth Global Review of Aid for Trade in 2017.



Musical entertainment during the Sixth Global Review of Aid for Trade in 2017.

2018





DG Roberto Azevêdo and Jack Ma, co-founder of Alibaba, before the opening plenary debate of the 2018 Public Forum.

Director-General
Roberto Azevêdo at
the launch of the
World Trade
Report 2018.



Public Forum participants in
Room S1 of the Centre William
Rappard at the 2018 event.

Public Forum coordinator, Vonai Muyambo, and Bernard Kuiten, Head of External Relations, share a smile during the opening of the 2018 Public Forum in the Council Room.



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo welcomes panelists to the opening session of the Public Forum.



Taking a break on the lakeside terrace of the Centre William Rappard during the 2018 Public Forum.



A momentary siesta on the lakeside lawn of the Centre William Rappard during some down time at the 2018 Public Forum.



2019





Hun Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia, greeting General Council chair and Ambassador of Thailand to the WTO, Sunanta Kangvalkulkij, during the Aid for Trade Global Review 2019. Also pictured are Shishir Priyadarshi (centre), Director of the Development Division, and DG Roberto Azevêdo.

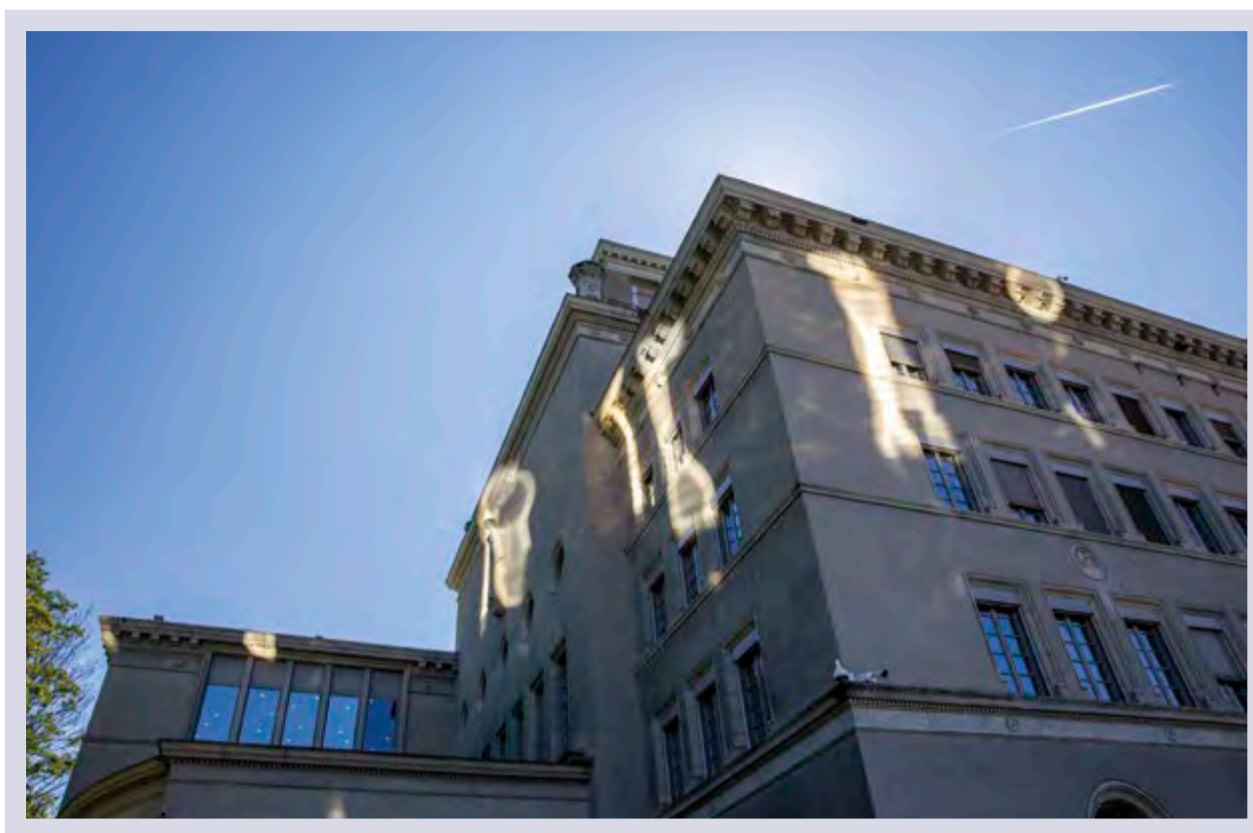


Children taking part in activities in the Council Room during the 2019 WTO Open Day.



Participants at the Aid for Trade Global Review 2019.

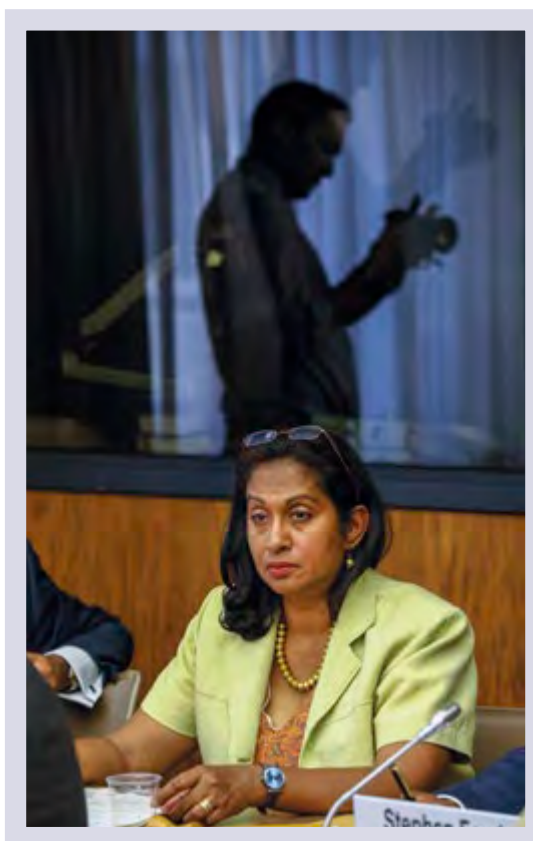
Sunlight reflecting off the glass panes of the Council Room onto the Centre William Rappard during the 2019 WTO Open Day.



DG Roberto Azevêdo and WTO Spokesperson Keith Rockwell make their way to the Council Room through the underground passage of Centre William Rappard on Day Two of the 2019 Public Forum.



Chef de Cabinet
Tim Yeend, DG Roberto
Azevêdo and WTO
Spokesperson Keith
Rockwell before the
start of Day Two of the
2019 Public Forum.



Shadows and reflections
at the Aid for Trade Global
Review 2019.



The Cambodian delegation in the Council Room during the opening of the Aid for Trade Global Review 2019.

Keith Rockwell (left), Director of the Information and External Relations Division, Bernard Kuiten (right), Head of External Relations, and David Tinline, Senior Advisor to the Director-General, during the Aid for Trade Global Review 2019.





Participants at the 2019 Public Forum as seen from one of the translation booths above Room W in the Centre William Rappard.



Benin's Trade Minister Shadiya Alimatou Assouman addresses participants at the inaugural World Cotton Day held at the WTO.

A “Meet the Author” session during the 2019 Public Forum.



Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and OECD Secretary General Ángel Gurría at the launch of a WTO/OECD co-publication at the Global Review of Aid for Trade.



The Directors-General

1995-2020

Six directors-general have been appointed since the establishment of the WTO. The WTO's first director-general was Peter Sutherland, who served from January to April 1995. He was succeeded by Renato Ruggiero (1995-99), Mike Moore (1999-2002) and Supachai Panitchpakdi (2002-05). Pascal Lamy, the longest-serving director-general, held office from 2005 to 2013. Roberto Azevêdo took office on 1 September 2013 and served until August 2020.



Peter Sutherland, first WTO Director-General,
January 1995 to April 1995.



Supachai Panitchpakdi, fourth WTO Director-General,
September 2002 to August 2005.



Renato Ruggiero, second WTO Director-General,
May 1995 to April 1999.



Mike Moore, third WTO Director-General,
September 1999 to August 2002.



Pascal Lamy, fifth WTO Director-General,
September 2005 to August 2013.



Roberto Azevêdo, sixth WTO Director-General,
September 2013 to August 2020.

The Deputy Directors-General

2020

At the General Council on 31 July 2020, it was agreed that following the departure of Roberto Azevêdo as Director-General on 31 August 2020 all four Deputy Directors-General would stay on and continue their existing responsibilities until such time as the new Director-General takes office.



From left to right:

**Yi Xiaozhun, Alan Wm. Wolff,
Karl Brauner, Yonov Frederick Agah.**

Chairs of the General Council

1995-2020



Krishnasamy Kesavapany
(Singapore) 1995



William Rossier
(Switzerland) 1996



Celso Lafer
(Brazil) 1997



John Weekes
(Canada) 1998



Ali Said Mchumo
(Tanzania) 1999



Kåre Bryn
(Norway) 2000



Stuart Harbinson
(Hong Kong, China) 2001



Sergio Marchi
(Canada) 2002



Carlos Pérez del Castillo
(Uruguay) 2003

Chairs of the General Council continued

1995-2020



Shotaro Oshima
(Japan) 2004



Amina Mohamed
(Kenya) 2005



Eirik Glenne
(Norway) 2006



John Gero
(Canada) 2010



Yonov Frederick Agah
(Nigeria) 2011



Elin Johansen
(Norway) 2012



Harald Neple
(Norway) 2016



Xavier Carim
(South Africa) 2017



Junichi Ihara
(Japan) 2018



Muhamad Noor
(Malaysia) 2007



Bruce Gosper
(Australia) 2008



Mario Matus
(Chile) 2009



Shahid Bashir
(Pakistan) 2013



Jonathan T. Fried
(Canada) 2014



Fernando de Mateo
(Mexico) 2015



Sunanta Kangvalkulkij
(Thailand) 2019



David Walker
(New Zealand) 2020

Photos

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A photographic retrospective

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ISBN: 978-92-870-4419-8



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