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Introduction

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With the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022, artificial intelligence (AI), and in particular generative AI – capable of generating high-quality text, images and other content based on the data on which it is trained – entered into public consciousness and has been experiencing rapid adoption.

AI is a general-purpose technology that is already having, and will continue to have, a pervasive impact on our societies. It encompasses a broad spectrum of technologies with numerous applications that have the potential to transform deeply the way we work, produce and trade.

Rapid advances in AI are expected to reduce trade costs, boost productivity and innovation, and reshape economies' comparative advantages, creating unprecedented new economic and societal opportunities and benefits. An international trade environment prepared to facilitate these changes is key to further developing AI and to reaping its related benefits and opportunities.

Through the rules and commitments contained in its agreements, the WTO can play an important role in this context, by ensuring that goods using or supporting AI can flow without encountering trade obstacles, and by providing a conducive climate for trade and investment in AI-related services.

However, AI is also giving rise to significant risks and challenges. The fact that it can already be used and applied globally means that any action taken to develop, apply and control it must also take place at a global level.

As the broader regulatory and policy landscape surrounding AI is taking shape, it is critical to establish a better

understanding of the intersection between AI and trade in order to ensure that AI's benefits for trade and economic growth are harnessed, and that related risks are mitigated.

This report discusses how AI impacts trade and how trade and trade policies impact AI. It explores how AI may shape the future of international trade and examines some of the key trade-related policy considerations that this technology raises.

It discusses how governments are responding to the new opportunities and challenges raised by AI, and the consequent potential risk of policy fragmentation, and it explores the role that the WTO can play in facilitating trade in goods and services related to AI, promoting trustworthy AI and addressing trade tensions. Finally, it discusses possible implications of AI for international trade rules.

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