

SDG 17: Partnerships for Trade and development

KEY POINTS

- The WTO recognizes the need for partnerships with other international organizations and development partners to improve the capacity of developing economies and least-developed countries (LDCs) to participate more fully in international trade.
- WTO representatives participated actively in the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), which was held on 5–9 March 2023, taking part in two high-level roundtables and holding bilateral meetings with international organizations and development partners.

The WTO recognizes the need to work in partnership with other international organizations and development partners to improve the capacity of developing economies and least-developed countries (LDCs) to participate more fully in international trade.

Thus, by means of Aid for Trade, the Enhanced Integrated Framework, the Standards and Trade Development Facility and the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility, the WTO maintains partnerships with a variety of international organizations including, but not limited to, the Codex Alimentarius Commission for food safety, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

In 2022 and 2023, the WTO created several partnerships at the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), with the aim of further integrating LDCs into the multilateral trading system. Over 5,000 participants, including 130 ministers and 47 heads of state/government attended LDC5. The WTO was represented by Deputy Director-General Xiangchen Zhang. The international community took stock of the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2022-2031 (DPoA),³⁵ adopted in March 2022 during the first part of the LDC5 conference. The second part of the conference, which took place from 5 to 9 March 2023, concluded with the adoption of the Doha Political Declaration.³⁶

DDG Xiangchen Zhang participated in the UN Principals meeting, a high-level roundtable session titled “Enhancing the participation of LDCs in international trade and regional integration”, and a high-level roundtable session titled “Supporting sustainable and irreversible graduation from the least developed country category”. The WTO also organized three side events with other international organizations and held several bilateral meetings on the side-lines of LDC5, including with the OECD, UNCTAD, UN DESA, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), and with UN resident coordinators in Cambodia, the European Union and Nepal.

LDC graduation is a key priority for the WTO LDC Group and therefore, WTO rules and development cooperation assist in facilitating graduating LDCs' smooth transition. In this regard, the main deliverables from LDC5 included an online university, an international investment support centre and a sustainable graduation support facility (iGRAD).³⁷ LDC development partners made several commitments to support LDCs, including commitments of US\$ 60 million by Qatar, EUR 200 million by Germany, US\$ 80 million by the Green Climate Fund and a US\$ 800 million loan package by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In addition, the European Commission announced cooperation agreements with Africa amounting to EUR 130 million of investment.